

TAKING OUT THE TRASH

(Inspired by Max Lucado's book, *Give It All to Him*)

By Sandy Forman

CHARACTERS:

NARRATOR

WORRY (acts very nervous, wrings hands)

PAIN (acts very burdened and hurting)

SHAME (dressed in all black like a gang member)

FAILURE (business woman in a suit with briefcase)

NARRATOR: No one likes trash but we all have it. We go about our lives and suddenly we realize, right there in our hand is a bag of trash. Who gave this to us? How did we get it? How are we supposed to get rid of it? Nobody wants garbage. We all have too much garbage in our lives and we also try to find ways to dump it. Load after load—it all piles up.

WORRY: (*Enters wringing her hand, acting nervous and jittery and dragging a heavy black trash bag. With each question, the weight of her bag appears heavier and heavier.*) What if my bills aren't paid? How will I get my car out of the shop? How will I make my kids behave? Will I ever be able to afford my child's college tuition? Is it any wonder I have high blood pressure, heart trouble, migraine headaches, stomach problems...? (*Worry exits.*)

NARRATOR: Worry is a bag of burdens. It's overflowing with “what ifs” and “how wills.” We can't change one thing about our situations by worrying. Worry has never solved a problem or cured a disease.

PAIN: (*Enters, also carrying a large, filled trash bag that grows heavier with each statement*) Hi, my name is Pain. From the time I was a small child, I suffered abuse at the hands of my parents. Later, they abandoned me, and I went to live in a children's home. Now once again, I feel abused and abandoned. My husband has left me for another woman. I think my own children don't even know I exist; they never call. There's no one to turn to...no one to care for me...no one to love me.

NARRATOR: Pain—we all tote it around. Someone hurts our feelings and we can't forget it. Our heart aches and we want to fight back. Eventually we become bitter, angry with ourselves and with others. And we blame God for all the pain of our lives.

SHAME: (*Enters, sporting a prideful attitude and carrying a large garbage bag*) I don't know why I dress this way...why I look this way. I know it bothers my parents, but I do it anyway. I said some hurtful words to my mother this morning, and oh, how I wish I could take them back. How can my parents ever forgive me for all the shame I've brought on myself and upon them? But most of all, how can God forgive me? I feel so ashamed. If only I could change. If only I knew how to fix all the wrongs in my life.

NARRATOR: Shame drags us down. Guilt and shame can totally take over our lives. If we carry these feelings around long enough we begin to think, "I'm not worthy of forgiveness; God could never save or help a person like me."

FAILURE: (*Enters, in tears with a large garbage bag*) After 20 years at this job, now it's over.

Finished. And what do I have to show for it? Failure. I failed my kids. I was never there for them when they needed me, I was always too busy—too busy working. I'm a failure as a mother, a failure as a friend and a failure as a Christian. Caught up in business trips and overtime hours, I didn't attend church as I should. I'm a failure to everyone—even to God.

NARRATOR: Nothing bears more heavily upon us than an annoying bag of failures. Life—if we could do it over, we would all make different choices. But we can't change what's already happened. Our past is the past. All we can do is work on the present. As we turn our eyes to Christ, He will help us overcome our feelings of failures. (*Background music, "Open the Eyes of My Heart, begins playing softly, as narrator continues.*)

What if our spiritual baggage were just as visible? We, too, carry bags of worry, anger, shame, pain and failure. But God wants to lighten our load. He calls us to be free. He asks us to drag our garbage not to the curb, but to the cross and let him take it away. All the stink and filth of our lives along with a list of all our mistakes were nailed to His cross; His blood covered them forever. Take your trash to the cross today and lay it there. Never pick it back up again.

(*Sing "Open the Eyes of My Heart" as an invitation for prayer and commitment.*)

