

TAGGART'S ALL RIGHT

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Amanda Taggart's cell phone chirped with a ring remarkably like a bird call a little after nine o'clock in the morning. She was driving home on a sunny September day after dropping her two girls at Wardlaw Day School. With one hand on the wheel Amanda flipped her tiny phone open with the other hand: "Hello?"

"Hi, honey, it's me," a familiar voice announced.

"Russ! What's up! Didn't you just get to the office?"

"Yeah, but something's come up--something big."

"Wait a minute--let me pull over. Okaayy... So tell me."

"Well...let's chat a minute first. How are my sweet, beautiful girls?"

"Heather and Megan are fine--no different from when you saw them two hours ago. I just dropped them off. What's this about?"

"I love you, Amanda. I am sorry I have spent so much time building up the business. If I were to do it again I'd do fewer deals, fewer meetings, less prospecting...and I'd do more things with you and the girls."

"Now I know something's wrong. You would do nothing of the sort. You're Russ Taggart of Taggart, Smith, and Liefeld, and you could never give less than your all. It's one of the reasons I love you. I knew what you were like when we married."

"Amanda, do you remember the time we took the twins on that horrible day trip to Manhattan?"

"I remember. How could I forget?"

"You were going stir crazy being cooped up with the kids all day long. We thought they'd love New York...just like we do. Hah! We thought they'd love the water, too, but the whole ferry ride to Staten Island and back turned into a nightmare of screaming. Who knew?"

"I sure didn't, sweetie."

"Have you seen the television this morning?"

"No, why?"

"Listened to the radio?"

"No."

“Good. Tell me about the time you bought me the original Sarah Swigart oil painting. How in the world did you pull that off?”

“Oh, that was easy! I had Simon make all the arrangements. You probably even heard him talking to her about the project and didn’t know it! I sent her photos of all of us, and she worked them into a French street scene as if we had been sitting there. Simon even paid all of the up-front costs so nothing would show up in the bills to tip you off.”

“That Simon! He has been a good business partner and a great friend.”

“What do you mean ‘has been?’”

“Oh...I just meant, you know, so far.”

“Russ, you’re scaring me! Aren’t you usually busy at this time of the morning?”

“Actually, my morning appointments were unexpectedly canceled. Let’s not talk about business. You remember those conversations I’ve been having with Wyland? They’re what I really called to talk to you about.”

“Ok... Wyland is...different.”

“Yeah, I always thought so, too. And now I know why. Talking with him has given me such a great sense of peace. I used to worry so much about the future. Enough was never enough for me because I was always afraid that I had not saved enough to make us secure.”

“And?”

“Wyland showed me that plan would never work. I would always be worried. But all that’s changed now. I was afraid to tell you...but Wyland has helped me to believe in God.”

“Really.”

“Please listen like you’ve never listened before. Since praying to receive forgiveness from Jesus Christ the fear has gone! I didn’t believe it would work, but it did! I feel at peace, even if I were to die today.”

“Don’t talk like that!”

“No, it’s a good thing! Promise me you will go this very night with the girls and talk to Wyland and Millie about it. He’s off today and should be home tonight.”

“Why? Where will you be?”

“Don’t worry. I’m going to be all right. I love you so much, Amanda. I want to spend forever with you and my girls. Will you promise?”

“I’m not sure why, but I promise.”

“Great! Because, frankly, at this moment I am trapped here--for good, I think. Out my window I can see smoke billowing from the floors below me. I thought a bomb had gone off...the whole tower shook...I freaked out for a while, but then a peace came over me. And then I saw a jet fly straight into the North Tower. There’s no way to get down. The elevators don’t work and the stairwells are full of fire and smoke. It’s over...but not if you believe in Christ, too, Amanda!”

“Russell!”

“Hug the girls for me. And go see Wyland! I love you.”

At that moment--nine fifty in the morning--the South Tower of the World Trade Center fell out from under Russell Taggart, senior partner of Taggart, Smith, and Liefeld, and child of God.