



Illustration by Steve McInturff

The Wrong Speed

The harmony was wrong and the rhythm was terrible!
By Marlene Bagnall

For months we had been looking forward to vacationing at a state-park cabin nestled in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania. The Loyalsock Creek offered excellent game fishing for my husband and me and swimming for our two youngsters. Wooded trails and breathtaking vistas awaited us. There would be time to play and to relax, but getting there and making it happen was another story.

There was laundry to do, clothes to pack, food to buy and prepare, and all our "fun" equipment to gather. In addition, I needed to pack half my kitchen; the cabin had a stove and refrigerator but no cooking utensils. There was so much I needed to remember and to do, added to a schedule that was already jammed. Switching into high gear, I worked faster, determined not to lose any of my precious vacation time in packing.

"Why can't you help?" I yelled at the children for the umpteenth time as I caught them watching television or trying to sneak out the door to go play with their friends. "Why do I have to do everything? I'm going to be too tired even to enjoy our vacation."

Silently I scolded myself for waiting until the last minute to get things done. But what else could I do? There were

never enough hours in the day to accomplish even half the things on my "to do" list. I was tired, so very tired, of constantly rushing.

One of the tasks on my list was making tapes of some of our favorite stereo albums to play in the car. I had trouble getting the tape recorder to work, but finally I managed to get one tape made. Somehow everything else also got done. Not quite as bright (it was raining) or early (it was 10:00 A.M.) as we had planned, we left on vacation.

With a sigh I flipped on the tape and settled back for the long ride. I glanced at my husband, puzzled by the strange expression on his face. Suddenly he began to laugh.

"What's so funny?" I demanded.

By now the kids were also doubling over.

"Your tape," he choked.

"Oh, Mommy," my little girl giggled. "Your music is playing too fast."

"I don't believe it!" I groaned as I realized what I had done. "The stereo must have been set on the wrong speed when I recorded the tape." Then I, too, began to laugh. Julie Andrews did sound like a chipmunk. The hills were alive with music all right—music that was playing as fast as I had been rushing.

"But it didn't sound funny when I recorded it!" I exclaimed.

"Of course not," my husband replied. "You were going at the same speed."

Everyone continued to rock the car with laughter. I sat there half laughing and half crying, knowing I'd never live this one down.

There was time on our vacation for relaxing and reflecting. The Lord used that tape to show me how He had wanted me to slow down so He could speak to me. But I had been too busy—throwing things into suitcases and throwing orders at my children—to listen to Him, or to my husband when he tried to tell me, repeatedly, that I didn't have to do everything or be everything to everyone. My rushing had made me so uptight and irritable that it took two days for me to unwind and begin to have a good time.

"God, forgive me," I prayed, as I saw how I had allowed time pressures to squeeze Him into an increasingly smaller corner of my life. The results were the same as when I played that record at the wrong speed. The beautiful harmony and rhythm that He wants to bring to my days was lost.

I've kept that tape. Sometimes I still play it as a reminder of how God got my attention. ■