

## A Guitar Story

I remember one of my early lessons on making decisions in the spirit of faith. It was twenty six years ago. I was a young minister, on the staff of a new Bible School, full time without a salary. Faith decisions were therefore necessary every day, for everything depended on God's supply.

I had been asked to lead a home Bible study in another part of our city. The group was largely elderly ladies, and some of them were hard of hearing. Actually I was grateful for that, since I was trying to learn to play a guitar and lead worship. These dear people were highly appreciative of everything I did, even using the three chords I had learned on my borrowed guitar. Some months later, when I was up to four known guitar chords, I began to desire to have my own guitar. I had one basic choice -- ask God for it.

The Lord knew I needed to learn what true faith was, and what it was not. What it was not was trying to help God provide for my new guitar. But, like most of us, I became impatient in waiting for God to answer my prayer for a guitar. On a certain day we happened to have some money in our checking account longer than two hours before we needed to spend it. Though I had the suspicion that money was to be used for certain bills, I ignored these suspicions and decided to go buy a guitar.

I had already shopped and found one with beautiful sound with a price tag of \$200. I had also seen one in the same shop, not quite as nice, but acceptable, for \$160. On this day when I decided to go and buy one, there was not enough money in my account to buy the \$200 guitar, so I decided to get the second best for \$160. Bills could wait a little while, and I really NEEDED a guitar NOW. Have you ever heard the word "rationalization"? How about "striving" or "manipulation"?

Off I went on the forty five minute drive to the guitar store. I picked up the \$160 acceptable guitar and placed it on the counter, and took out my checkbook. To my chagrin, I had no checks in the checkbook! I meekly placed the guitar back on the rack, and sheepishly got in my car to drive home. The forty five minute drive was a great advantage at this point. Had I lived less than ten minutes from the guitar store, I know I would have been back to get the \$160 guitar. As I drove home, my eyes fell on my open Bible on the seat next to me. There a verse came into my line of vision: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death." Well, I was cornered by my gracious Father and His wonderful Word into admitting I was wrong. I humbled my heart, and laid down my striving to make this guitar thing happen. I put my eyes back on Him, and put my delight in Him. I laid my desire for a guitar at His feet, and let the vision for it, so it seemed, ...die.

Fifteen minutes later, I was still driving home, praising the Lord for protecting me from a mistake. And then, unexpectedly, it happened. Up from deep within me it came, from beneath my consciousness right into my mind. It was a knowing, a settled realization, a conviction of something I could not see. Faith. True faith. A spirit of faith. A gift of faith, it was. Into my heart and mind came the assurance of a thing hoped for, the evidence of a thing not seen. It was done, and I knew it.

I had the guitar that I wanted most. The \$200 one, I mean. I had it. I knew I had it. It was mine. It was done. It was settled. I guess I became pregnant with a guitar. (Why not? David Youngi Cho became pregnant with a desk and a bicycle!) It was no longer a thing of striving, of hoping that it would happen, of wishing it would happen. It had happened. I knew it in my heart, and it was already mine.

I walked into the house, and said to Jackie, "I have my guitar". "Which one", she asked. "The good one", I said. "Let me see it.", she said. "You can't.", I said. "Why not?", she said. "It's not visible yet.", I said. "Oh.", she said.

She knew what I meant, and then I told her the story. I think she was relieved, and then I realized she really hadn't wanted me to go buy that second rate guitar anyway.

Two days later, an unexpected check arrived in the mail, in an amount beyond our household needs. Two hours later, I held my beautiful guitar in my hands. It served the Lord for twenty five years, and died of a broken face in the humidity of Indonesia. Last Christmas, Jackie's niece gave me her very nice guitar. This adventure with God continues!

His word is true. *"Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart."* Don't accept second best. Go for the gold. It will take you into fellowship with God; He will give you vision and hope. That vision will bring you to your knees eventually, for all miracles go the way of the cross. His dreams for you are always bigger than yours. His plans for you will take you to a life of faith in Him.

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