



## Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

February, 1997



Dear friends,

Jackie and I greet you once again in Jesus glorious name! We hope you are doing well, and that you are experiencing the presence of the Lord. Whether or not you “feel” His presence, remember His promise: *“I will never leave you, and I will never forsake you.”*

We would all probably like to get to a point where we feel God all the time, and are always aware of Him at work around us. However, life requires that we walk by faith and not by sight — even life filled with the Holy Spirit. Or should we say *especially* life filled with the Holy Spirit. Faith is one of the primary results of getting filled with God. 2 Corinthians 4:13 speaks of a spirit of faith. Have you experienced the spirit of faith?

### A guitar lesson...

I remember one of my first real life lessons in faith and receiving from God. It was twenty six years ago. I was a young minister on the staff of a new Bible School, serving full time and without salary. Faith decisions were necessary every day, for even daily bread depended on God’s supply.

I had been asked to lead a home Bible study in another part of our city. The group consisted of elderly ladies, and most of them were hard of hearing. Actually I was grateful for that, since I had just started learning to play a guitar and lead worship. These dear ladies seemed highly appreciative of my worship leading, but I suspect that was due to their deafness. It was a blessing for me, however, to be able to practice on them the three chords I had learned on my borrowed guitar.

As months passed I came to know four guitar chords. It was now time, I felt, to have my own guitar. I had one basic choice — ask God for one -- so I did. I tried as hard as I could to believe that he heard my prayer. But, like many of us, I became impatient after a few months had gone by with no answer. I really wanted a guitar. Finally, a day came when we had money in our checking account longer than two hours before we had to spend it. Though I had suspected that the money in the account 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 and a price tag of \$200. It was my guitar dream fulfilled. 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. 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 words “rationalization”, “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 proved to be a great help at this point. Had I lived closer, I know I would have been back to get the \$160 guitar. Furthermore, it became evident that God wanted to talk to me on the way home. As I drove home in my frustration, my eyes fell on my open Bible on the seat next to me. A verse came into my line of vision: *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death.”* Hmm. I suspected the Lord was making a point. Hmm. I decided it was time to admit I had been wrong. I humbled my heart, and admitted that I was striving to make this guitar thing happen. I put my eyes back on the Lord, 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. A great peace came, and I thanked the Lord for protecting me from making a mistake.

Fifteen minutes later, I was still driving along praising Him. Quite unexpectedly, something happened inside of me. From deep within me came a knowing, a settled realization, a conviction of something I could not see. Faith came. True faith. A spirit of faith. Faith for THE guitar. Into my heart and mind came the assurance of this thing hoped for, the evidence of this thing not seen. It was done, and I knew it. I now had the guitar that I wanted most. The \$200 one. I had it. I knew that I knew I had it. It was mine. It was done.

I think I became pregnant with a guitar. Why not? The great Korean pastor 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 in my heart that it was already mine.

I walked into the house, and said to Jackie, “I have my guitar!”. “Which one?”, she asked. “The best 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 -- *do you?* Then I told her the story. She was relieved; she hadn’t wanted me to buy the second rate one anyway.

It was a short guitar pregnancy. Two days later, an unexpected check arrived in the mail, with \$200 extra beyond our household needs. Two hours after that, I held my beautiful guitar in my hands. This great “memorial to God’s goodness” guitar served the Lord for twenty five years. She died of a broken face in the humidity of Indonesia last spring. And wouldn’t you know -- at Christmas, Jackie’s niece presented to me her very nice guitar, unused for ten years. This one is now serving God with seven or eight great chords!

*“Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”* Desire something good to happen. God is good. Begin to reach out to God for it. It will finally bring you to your knees, broken in your own ability to make it happen. Then, out of brokenness and while fixing your eyes on Him, true faith will come. It will come as you hear His rhema word to you. (Rom. 10:17) It will come as a gift to you. (I Cor. 12:9). It will come measured to you from a loving God. (Romans 12:3) You’ll become spiritually pregnant!

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*“Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession.”*

And what He conceives in your spirit will be better than what you could bring about yourself! His dreams for you are always bigger than your abilities to make them happen.

Unfortunately, it is possible for many of His children to never experience His dreams for them. This is for one reason: a crisis of faith will come to them, requiring a decision to go beyond their known resources, to put themselves on the line where God must do what only He can do. (The test will be somewhat greater than which guitar to have!) Many are not ready to face this crisis of faith, and many shrink back to second best. They would rather be in a safe place where they know what they are doing, and how they are going to get it done. (and where they will get the money!)

I have come to the conclusion that all of God's assignments are big ones — at least to us. I love the following quote from Henry Blackaby, in his book "Experiencing God": *"Some people say, 'God will never ask me to do something I can't do.' I have come to the place in my life that, if the assignment I sense God is giving me is something that I know I can handle, I know it probably is NOT from God. The kind of assignments God gives in the Bible are always God-sized. They are always beyond what people can do, because He wants to demonstrate His nature, His strength, His provision, and His kindness to His people and to a watching world. That is the only way the world will come to know Him."*

So then... are you shrinking from a high road of faith to take a safer route? Perhaps you need to have the spirit of faith renewed within you. When you are filled with this spirit of faith, you can make decisions, not from what your natural eyes and ears tell you, but according to the eyes and ears of your heart. Through faith you can see and hear what God sees and hears. When is the last time you made a decision out of the Spirit of faith? I hope it was this morning. Or last night. ...not months ago...or years.

*May the faith in your heart be refreshed by the Holy Spirit. May your life be ordered to need miracles, and your heart get pregnant with them before you see them! May the eyes of your heart be sharper than your natural vision, to see as God sees. May those who know you have to take notice that God is alive, and that He has intervened for you! May the Lord grant you the spirit of faith in such quantity that you can fulfill the "God-size assignments" that He has given you!*

#### **Ukraine outreach...a God size assignment in progress...**

A great big "Glory to God!" for what has happened so far in preparing to go: The majority of our travel expenses has been provided for! Our visas are in hand! \$1665 has been given for Bibles for the believers. We can use much more, since we are believing for a "truckload". (We haven't said to the Lord what size truck.) This will be paid for here in the USA, and then picked up by the church leaders in Ukraine, or Russia...we are still looking for the best buy on Bibles. \$2115 has been given for the pastors conference. \$2000 of that was from one man whom we have never met, who was owed a large amount of back salary. Instead of suing for it, he told the Lord that he would trust Him to cause the debtors to pay what was owed, and honor Him with giving "off the top" when it came through. It did and he did. Praise the Lord! \$680 has

come for medicines, plus donations of medicines. We have plenty to carry, and hope to send more in a shipping container of medical supplies to hospitals in Krivoy Rog, after we return. We are believing for major releases of medical aid!

#### **Our itinerary:**

##### **Thursday, March 13:**

9:40 p.m. Leave Minneapolis on KLM flight #664

##### **Friday, March 14:**

12:30 p.m. Arrive in Amsterdam. Stay overnight.

##### **Saturday, March 15:**

10:25 a.m. Leave Amsterdam, KLM flight #283

2:20 p.m. Arrive in Kiev, Ukraine

7:00 p.m. Board the train for Krivoy Rog

##### **Sunday, March 16:**

7:00 a.m. Arrive in Krivoy Rog

Church meetings most of the day.

##### **Monday - Friday, March 17-21**

Pastors conference: Meetings morning, afternoon and evening. Our team are the ministers for this conference. Please pray for the anointing of the Spirit, supernatural wisdom and knowledge to feed these young pastors. Please pray for an impartation of the Spirit in us and through us, and that God will sovereignly fall on all of them, with a great refreshing, with healing of spirit, soul and body, and healing of marriages, etc. Cover us in faith with the blood and name of Jesus, and with the spirit of praise and worship, and proclaim the Word of God over us all!

##### **Saturday-Tuesday, March 22-25**

Meetings in as many churches as is physically possible!

##### **Tuesday evening: 7:00 p.m.**

Begin the journey home, boarding the train to Kiev.

##### **Wednesday, March 26:**

A day in Kiev, visiting the YWAM base there.

##### **Thursday, March 27:**

3:20 p.m. Leave Kiev on KLM flight #284

5:30 p.m. Arrive in Amsterdam. Stay overnight.

##### **Good Friday, March 28:**

3:00 p.m. Leave Amsterdam on KLM flight #665

4:50 p.m. Arrive in Minneapolis. To our own beds!

Thanks heaps for praying for us. By now you know that we know how important your prayer covering is to us. Please pray with us for wonderful things to happen to these pastors and churches, because that is what they need, and that is who God is -- Wonderful! And pray for safety, health, wisdom and unity in our team.

Thanks again to those of you who are able to give, not only to our own personal support, but to the Ukrainian church. Please pray for our personal finances. We always have a large need! Also, a major reduction in our support from our home church has taken place, due to a strain in the church income. This requires us to lean on God more and more. He is faithful, and we are still convinced that your prayer releases His provision for us, as we press in to do His will and trust Him with all of our heart.

May the Lord bless you and your family. May you find yourself stepping out in faith to walk in *your* God-size assignments with all of your heart. God is totally trustworthy!

With love, **John and Jackie**

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*Remember: for tax purposes, write checks to Prayer International, with note attached "for the Matthews"*

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