

Trust and Obey



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“Train children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not turn from it”
(Proverbs 22:6, NIV).

“Teach the little ones the songs of Jesus, and Jesus will teach them the songs of life.”

I was spitting mad, angry, disgusted, and didn’t care. After a few days of very difficult and long hours of work, my sergeant had just chewed me out over a small matter that was not my fault.

I was so steamed and hot under the collar that after the shift was over, I took a long walk through the old English countryside that surrounded the base where I was stationed in 1962. As the sunlight of my miserable day was fading into darkness, a lorry (or truck to us in the New World) drove by, just about ripping off my fatigues, and blew me into the weeds.

That experience cleared my head for an instant. Then, just as fast, my sorry self was back. I was so frustrated and lonely and full of self-pity I didn’t care what time it was or even that a lorry had almost hit me. If some temptation offered itself I probably would have fallen. I was still spitting mad.

I walked through a town or two—

I really don’t remember how many—I just kept walking. By the time I had turned around and began heading back to the base the first light was prying its way through the ever-present clouds.

The brisk and moist air of a British morning brushed my face and the promise of a new day brought cooler refreshed thinking to my miserable soul. Instead of my sergeant’s vile attitude, my thoughts crossed the Atlantic to the sights and smells of my home in Minnesota.

I thought of Mom and Dad, proud of their only son serving in the military, still in deep sleep at home. I thought of my sisters, friends, neighborhood, school, and church back home in Minneapolis. Of all the things that morning the memories of Sunday school filled my tired mind.

As I thought about my experiences there, I thanked God for the pastors, superintendents, and teachers from my Sunday-school years at First Covenant Church in Minneapolis. God knows them all by name and he knows they did their jobs well. They planted and watered the Scriptures, songs, attitudes, and examples that bore fruit in my life and in the lives of many others. There are thousands of us who will join the multitudes in heaven because of what we learned from faithful Sunday-school teachers and the songs they taught us.

As the morning light and cool breeze was calming down my anxious heart, I discovered some thoughts that showed me the real strength in the simple Sunday-school songs I learned as a child. In the fast pace of life in the forty years since that night in England, the messages of those little ditties and simple songs have remained with me.

As a child, I learned how to spell “The B-I-B-L-E,” I learned of the “Wonderful Grace of Jesus” and that “Jesus Loves Me.” I could say, “Thank You Lord for Saving My Soul” even though I didn’t know what that meant at the time, and I sang about “Heavenly Sunshine.”

I did wonder, as a child why I wanted to fish for men and why a guy wanted to build his house on a rock—wouldn’t it be hard to nail boards to a rock? My favorite was “Be Careful Little Eyes What You See.” Because of its repetition it was easy to learn.

In the song time of the primary department at my home church, these simple songs planted the seeds that grew into the behavior and attitudes I’ve learned to call on all my life. The importance of what little eyes see—or don’t see—and building a house on the rock now make perfect sense.

I noticed how the name of Jesus was so dominant in those songs. As I was singing and learning these songs, I had

no idea what they meant or why we had to sing them. We sang these songs simply because our Sunday-school teacher said, "We're going to sing this song."

I was just a little red-headed kid clutching the sides of the old wooden chair and swinging my feet. I know she felt her job was important, but I wonder if she (or any Sunday-school teacher) knows how the Lord will use these simple Sunday-school songs.

I didn't know it then, but someday God would make that song time important to me. The endless Bible stories were sowed deep in my heart and mind, but it was the memories of these simple songs that calmed a storm that night in England. On that long walk I found muscle in those songs that has carried me through a lot of warfare in my life.

Near the end of my pilgrimage that night, I started to hum the tunes. Then I whistled them. As my pace picked up and my shoulders squared, I began to sing out loud. With this night of discovery coming to a close and with the morning mist cooling my soul, I truly felt that "Glory Divine."

When my walk was over and I arrived back at the base my mind was clear and I felt good even without a night of sleep. I could say, "Thank You Lord for Saving My Soul." Again I was reminded that "Jesus Loves Me." I had "Blessed Assurance," knew that Jesus cared for me and I could "Trust and Obey."

I found out "What a Friend I Have in Jesus" meant that night. I could shine "This Little Light of Mine" and "I Would Be True" because "I Have That Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart."

I finally felt that I could "Stand Up for Jesus" in that moment. I washed up, changed my clothes, and walked back into work the next day saying "Good morning, Sergeant" and dove head first into the pile of work waiting for me.

"Hallelujah, What a Savior!" □

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