



A THRILL SEEKER COUNTS THE COST

BY JOHN JORDAN

*John came to a
crossroads with a
crooked trail behind
him, and a choice
before him . . .*

As a child, I had a good home and was raised carefully by my parents. Prayer and the reading of God's holy Word were a regular occurrence, as was attending our local church. If any of those things could make one ready for Heaven, I would have been well on the way. Instead, I found myself on a slippery path to a lost eternity.

After graduating from high school, I became engaged to my high school sweetheart. Paula was a godly young lady who had given her heart to the Lord out on a dirt road, kneeling beside her ten-speed bike. My wife-to-be desired to marry a Christian man, but I had no hunger for God. Instead of telling her that and breaking up with her, I lied and told her I was a Christian, and we soon were married.

Our first child was born a little over a year after we married, and after a time, we had two beautiful children. I was successful in my career and we were able to purchase our own home. Life should have been wonderful. Unfortunately, the root of sin deep in my heart often marred the tranquility of our little family. Many times I caused unhappiness and tears as my young wife tried to figure out what was wrong.

From the time I was young, I had always craved some sort of thrill. Morally, that meant doing things I knew were wrong, just for the momentary rush of "getting away with it." Physically, that

craving translated into all kinds of hazardous activities. I felt that the closer I came to the edge of danger, the better. Once, while rock climbing, a chunk of the rock face broke free and I went down with it. As the rock was coming loose, the voice of God spoke to my heart saying, "I've prepared this for you." In terror I saw a lost eternity approaching. Upon impact, the bones of my right hand were crushed by the rock, but God miraculously spared my life. One would think that would have been enough to bring me to my senses, but it wasn't.

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While I was living in sin, the Lord would often speak to my soul and tell me, “You’re going to have to make that right someday.” Usually that would happen just as I was contemplating whether or not to do something which I knew was contrary to the teachings of God’s Word. Often I would tell the Lord, “I know,” and then go right ahead and do what was wrong. I was making a mess of my own life.

How merciful God is! Finally one year at the Portland camp meeting, He cornered me up. The sinful things I once loved, I now despised, but despite my efforts to forsake them, I could not shake loose of them. I desperately needed God to help me, and I began to seek Him. However, before I could be saved I had to count the cost. I knew there would be a great price to straighten out the crooked trail behind me. I felt it could cost me everything I had and more, possibly even my freedom.

As I prayed that camp meeting, the devil was on the job, doing his best to throw every road block before me. Yet, the desire for God that was stirring in my heart was greater than my concerns about the past. Every time the devil brought up something else I would have to face, God seemed to pour a little more desire for Him into my heart. I knew nothing would satisfy my soul but real salvation; no halfway measure would do. Whenever a question of restitution came up, God gave me grace to say, “Yes, Lord; I’ll take care of it if You will help me!”

Eventually the long list of past wrongs came to an end, and I thank God that on July 13, 1982, the devil was defeated. He fired his last round of artillery and God gave me the grace to say, “I’ll take care of it with Your help!” As I knelt at the altar of prayer that day, I remember a little chuckle deep down inside when it dawned on me there was nothing more Satan could do.

I further realized that when it felt I was fighting the Lord, He and I had actually been fighting on the same side—God had been fighting *for* me, not against me! Then faith began to grow. I did not “feel” saved, but I recall saying, “Lord, if I never feel anything, I’ll still serve You,” and at that moment His Spirit bore witness with my spirit and I knew that God, for Christ’s sake, had forgiven my sins. It was wonderful! Peace flowed from Calvary down through my heart and I knew what victory was! That was thirty-five years ago and salvation is as real now as it was then.

No one told me to go back over my past life and make things right; God had already showed me what must be done, and I didn’t want to leave anything undone that might disturb the communion between my heart and the Lord. After the victory won at camp meeting, I was looking forward to doing what I had promised. As the weeks began to unfold, the Lord would point out one thing and then another. There was some apprehension on my part from time to time, but with every act of obedience came the sweet assurance of God’s favor on my life. Eventually, I actually came to the place where I was searching my life for those things that needed to be made right, recognizing how the Lord blessed and strengthened every time I followed through.

My wife and I spent the next six years or so straightening out a very crooked path. Our budget was tight because we felt that any money we had wasn’t really ours; it belonged to those I had wronged. Until we could pay back what was owed, our family ate simple meals like spaghetti and beans, and we didn’t dine out. My wife faithfully stayed by my side, supporting and praying for me, and the Lord saw us through.

There is no way I can ever repay the debt I owe to Jesus, who loved me and gave His own life for a miserable sinner like me. If ever there was one unworthy of the Blood of Jesus, I would be that one. Regrets about my past still come around from time to time, but then a cry comes out of my heart, “Lord Jesus, You’re my only defense!” and He helps me. How thankful I am for the Cross!

The day the Lord saved me, I was a young family man. Now I’m a grandfather and soon will be a great-grandfather. When I was seeking the Lord, the devil once told me, “Even if you get saved, you will never keep it.” After thirty-five years, I have proven that God can keep anyone who wants to be kept. The Lord once assured me in a very personal way, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” and now all I can say is, “Thank You, Jesus! Your Word is always true!”



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