

A College Dream Fulfilled



The late Catherine Marshall, a native of Johnson City, Tennessee, was an author of nonfiction, inspirational and fiction works.

She was the wife of well-known minister Peter Marshall, who served as pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., and was chaplain of the United States Senate.

Her husband died of a heart attack in 1949, and in 1959, Marshall married Leonard LeSourd, editor of *Guideposts Magazine* for 28 years.

In her book *Beyond Ourselves*, Marshall tells how one of her first lessons in living by faith came when she faced a problem of financing her college education.

She and her family lived in a small town in West Virginia that had undergone severe financial struggles in the aftermath of the 1929 stock-market crash. The two railroad shops, which were the only industry in town, were nearly shut down. Her father, a minister, suffered along with everyone else.

Even with the promise of a small work scholarship and \$125 she had saved, Catherine was several hundred dollars short of what she needed to attend college.

One night, her mother came to her room and found her sobbing. Her dreams of college seemed dashed. Her mother said, “You and I are going to pray about this.”

They went to the guest room so they wouldn’t be disturbed. Her mother said, “Whenever we ask God for something that is His will, He hears us. If He hears us, then He grants the request we have made. So you and I can rest on that promise.”

The answer came quickly. Catherine’s mother was offered a job writing the history of their county. History had long been one of her mother’s loves, and she made enough in the job to pay for Catherine’s college expenses with a little to spare.

Catherine’s conclusion? “I learned that we must have faith *before* the fact, not after.”

But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind (James 1:6 NRSV).

– Beecher Hunter