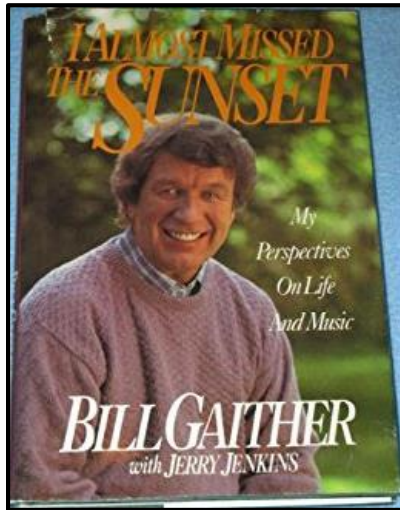


A Name That Tipped the Scales

William J. (Bill) Gaither is a singer and songwriter of Southern gospel and contemporary Christian music. He has written numerous popular Christian songs with his wife, Gloria. He is also known for performing as part of the Bill Gaither Trio and the Bill Gaither Vocal Band.



In his book, *I Almost Missed the Sunset*, he tells a personal story that is instructive for each of us.

He and Gloria had been married for a couple of years, and were teaching school in Alexandria, Indiana, where he had grown up. “We wanted a piece of land where we could build a house,” he said. “I noticed the parcel south of town where cattle grazed, and I learned it belonged to a 92-year-old retired banker named Mr. Yule.”

Yule owned a lot of land in the area, Gaither said, and word was he would sell none of it. He gave the same speech to everyone who inquired: “I promised the farmers they could use it for their cattle.”

Bill and Gloria visited Yule at the bank. Although retired, he spent a couple of hours each morning in his office. He looked at the young couple over the top of his bifocals.

Bill introduced himself and told him that he and Gloria were interested in a piece of land. “Not selling,” Yule said pleasantly. “Promised it to a farmer for grazing.”

“I know,” Bill said, “but we teach school here and thought maybe you’d be interested in selling it to someone planning to settle in the area.”

Yule pursed his lips and stared at Bill. “What’d you say your name was?” he asked.

“Gaither. Bill Gaither,” Bill replied.

“Hmmm,” Yule mused. “Any relation to Grover Gaither?”

“Yes, sir. He was my granddad,” Bill replied.

Yule put down his paper and removed his glasses.

“Interesting,” Yule responded. “Grover Gaither was the best worker I ever had on my farm. Full day’s work for a day’s pay. So honest. What’d you say you wanted?”

(more)

Bill told him again.

“Let me do some thinking on it, then come back and see me,” the banker said.

Bill came back within the week, and Yule told him he had the property appraised. “I held my breath,” Gaither said.

“How does \$3,800 sound? Would that be okay?” Yule asked.

If that was per acre, Bill thought, “I would have to come up with nearly \$60,000!” He repeated the number: “3,800?”

“Yup,” Yule answered. “Fifteen acres for \$3,800.”

“I knew it had to be worth at least three times that. I readily accepted,” Gaither said.

Nearly three decades later, Bill and his son were strolling that beautiful, lush property that had once been pastureland. “Benjy,” he said, “you’ve had this wonderful place to grow up through nothing that you’ve done, but because of the good name of a great-granddad you never met.”

Think about the implications of that story for us. Reputation is important. The word is defined by *Merriam-Webster* as “overall quality or character as seen or judged by people in general” or “a place in public esteem or regard.”

A person of good reputation would be one respected for honesty, credibility, and dependability. As noted in the Gaither story, such regard can even have a positive influence for later generations.

It is true for an individual or for an organization.

A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold (Proverbs 22:1 NIV)

– Beecher Hunter