

## A TATTERED NOTE CHANGED A LIFE

In one of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books, there is a touching story about a young man, a veteran, ready to marry and settle down. But he had a problem directly caused by fear.

He couldn't keep a job, and he was discouraged. Why? Because he stuttered quite badly.

He heard that a candy company in Plant City, Florida, might be looking for a route driver, and that the owner, a man named Miller, was a former stutterer who had somehow learned to control his condition. And, thought the job candidate, he might be inclined to hire him. But in the interview, Mr. Miller declined. "Oh, don't get me wrong," Miller said, "I think you'd do well; it's just that I don't have an opening right now."

Then he reached into his desk drawer and pulled out a piece of paper, worn and tattered, and said, "I'd like you to take this home and read it every night for a month."

Dejected, the young man took the paper, stuck it in his pocket, and went home. In his disappointment, as he was about to tear up the paper, he paused to read it. On it was this prayer: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

One thing the boy had learned in church was that when he sang, he did not stutter. It seems that when a stutterer speaks, air gets trapped in his throat, but when he sings, for some reason, the breathing apparatus works normally and there is no stutter. Not only did he loving singing in church, but he realized he had a gift for writing songs.

Encouraged by that prayer on the paper handed to him by Mr. Miller and armed with some of his songs, he went to Nashville. One day, he got an appointment with Minnie Pearl, one of the biggest names in country music. The audition went well, and she hired him as a backup musician and songwriter.

In 1970, Glen Campbell invited him to be on his new television show and discovered that this young man had a terrific sense of humor, and his stutter only added to the humorous impact that he had. By now, some of you know that this is the true story of the late country music superstar Mel Tillis. He would tell people that without his faith in God, he would have been defeated long ago – defeated by his fear.

And a simple piece of worn-out paper with a prayer on it helped him deal with his anxiety and find his purpose in life.



(more)

Jesus asked His disciples why they were afraid. He asks that same question of us.

Are you letting your fear keep you from being all God created you to be? The best way to conquer fear is with faith. Not just faith in anybody or anything, but faith in Jesus Christ.

*Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous hand (Isaiah 41:10 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter