

## The Gold Record

Cleveland, Tennessee, is roughly 30 miles from Chattanooga, a beautiful city that has done a remarkable job of downtown redevelopment, particularly along its riverfront. A major catalyst to its progressive thrust has been the success of the Tennessee Aquarium on the banks of the Tennessee River. It is the largest fresh-water aquarium in the world, and a site frequented by Life Care associates who come to our area for the Life Care Journey or the annual meeting of directors of nursing or the annual management meeting.

But Chattanooga is best known in music for the *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, a song performed in 1941 by the Glenn Miller Orchestra in the movie *Sun Valley Serenade*. The record sold more than a million copies in less than three months. As a publicity stunt, RCA Victor took a master copy of the song and sprayed it with gold lacquer. The music company surprised Miller with the “gold record” award during a live radio broadcast.

Ten years later, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) borrowed the idea of the Gold Record award and trademarked it. The benchmark for a Gold Record is the sale of 500,000 copies of a single song or an album – a definite mark of success. The RIAA awarded the first Gold Record single to Perry Como in March 1958 for his recording of *Catch a Falling Star*.

In Isaiah 14:12, the prophet uses the image of a falling star to represent failure rather than success. The verse refers to the downfall of the king of Babylon and Satan, who were both brought low by the same sin – pride. Neither of them was satisfied with his lofty position. Both wanted to climb to the highest heavens and be like God (Isaiah 14:13-14). Neither of them fell alone. Babylon was destroyed along with its king. When Satan fell, one-third of the angels joined him in his rebellion (Revelation 12:4).

We are all susceptible to pride. It starts out as a subtle self-centeredness. Pride doesn't seem as bad as sins such as adultery or murder. But if left unchecked, our focus shifts more and more off God and onto self, which is a form of idolatry. Proverbs 16:18 warns, “Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall.”

Perhaps we should remind ourselves of that each day in a song: “If we think a star is our calling, pretty soon we'll be falling.”

--Beecher Hunter