

Keys of Faith

By Janice Porter



There was an increasing urgency to my prayer as I huddled over the local newspaper, scanning the classified ads for “Used Musical Instruments.” Again none were listed. I had been praying and searching since early September and here it was three days before Christmas, and I had yet to find a secondhand piano to purchase for my young teenage son. As a single mother of three the meager savings I had put aside would surely have limited my options, but up to now I had found no ads or leads anyway.

Maybe I hadn’t been motivated by the Lord after all to seek such a significant gift for my son. Perhaps the reverie of his future was only my own imaginings. He probably wasn’t ready for such a challenge anyway. Besides he was much more interested in practicing bass guitar for hours on end in his bedroom, mimicking riffs from his favorite songs. He wasn’t aware of what my heart had noted. That after everyone withdrew from church to the basement for refreshments each Sunday, whenever he quietly seated himself at the aging grand piano in the front of the sanctuary the sounds created under his untrained fingertips were uniquely soothing. I would linger on the landing out of his sight, eyes closed to embrace the notes more fully. It was hard to not see a composer in the making during those moments, although the rest of the week his hands blared out harsh electric chords and reverberations.

The apportioned money was spent on something else and the passing flurry of Christmas gave way to other pursuits. In January our church began to clean out its storage space. The caretaker of the church approached my son with an unusual offer. An old upright piano unnoticed for years had surfaced. The man told my son that he could have the piano if I agreed and could move it out.

An unexpected enthusiasm shone in my son’s eyes as he told me what the man had said. As encouraged as I was by both his interest and the sudden provision of a secretly prayed for piano, I found myself hesitating before responding to his burning plea. A theme I had been sharing with my children was that we should seek God in prayer about everything, trusting that He would show His will to us

in personal ways. Prompted by a desire to apply this lesson with my son, and by my concern of how I would ever get someone to transport a piano to our house, I suggested that we pray right then and there. We asked God to confirm to us that if He wanted my son to have a piano that He would clearly let us know, make simple arrangements for its delivery, and strengthen our faith.

When church service ended we went to inspect the piano, and our faith test began. Visible damage of its bubbled and peeling veneer was only surpassed by the warped sounds made when touching nearly any chipped and yellowed key. Dampened hope shone now in my son's eyes, leading me to shield from him my own disappointment. I reminded him we had a prayer pact with God and we would wait for a clear answer.

Two nights later I received a phone call from a woman in our church, offering us another piano if we were interested. I was now bewildered with the options before us. I could say yes to an unsightly instrument that would need repair and transport or agree to accept this woman's offer that could surely cost me even more. I had no extra money to say yes to either, yet didn't want to diminish the faith nor potential of my son by refusing both. I heard myself saying, "I would like to pray about it," to which she responded, "Of course, dear. Call me tomorrow night with your answer."

When I called her with the answer God had given me, which was a tenuous yes, the woman replied, "I knew you would agree! You see, dear, the Lord had told me way back in September that I should provide a new piano to your family, but I didn't do it right away. Please forgive me for the delay. You'll just need to go to the music store on Route 139 and pick out the one you want and they'll deliver it right to your door."