

*"No one knew the song the way I did
All I thought I was, was a Rock'n'Roll Kid...
I was a Rock'n'Roll Kid with nothin' to lose
Except one thing baby, and that was you...
But there was always somethin' there on my mind..."*

I first started playing guitar when I was 10. Almost at the same time I started wanting to be a rock star. I remember watching "The Monkees" on T.V., and later "The Archies," and dreaming I was in their place. Something about music and playing in a band clicked with me.

In the seventh grade at a school dance I got my first taste of performing. I was given the bass guitar, because I was the only one who knew how to play it. We jammed on the song "Midnight Hour" by Wilson Pickett, and the crowd seemed to like it. For the next couple of days we were the heroes of the school. We played pretty well, considering we were all 12 to 13 years old. This experience reinforced my dreams. Playing in a band is what I wanted to do.

Years went by, and my dream kept getting larger. While all the other kids my age drank, or took drugs, or played with sex, I was obsessed with rock music. It took up my every waking hour. Sometimes I would stay awake at night dreaming I was important, dreaming of becoming a star.



But there was another part of my life that was equally important. I was raised in the Roman Catholic church. I even went to parochial school. Deeply ingrained into my system was the singleness of belief that there was a God who created me, and who loves me, and who I am accountable to. I never really tried to think about it, but I could never forget it, either. Though I only gave nominal credit to the church, I was fascinated with religion. I looked into every religious cult that my latest rock hero was into. I believed there was a God, but I didn't know my true spiritual condition.

During the summer vacation prior to my senior year in high school, my father offered to take me with him on a business trip to Boston so I could visit my sister. This was an opportunity I didn't want to miss, so I gladly agreed.

But while I was there, I did things I normally would never have done. As I boarded the plane to return to California, I had pang in my conscience. It felt that I had turned my back on God, and as a result, He had turned His back on me. This was the first time that I realized I was in sin.

I arrived home with troubled thoughts. I asked my parents if they could take me to see a priest for confession, and they readily agreed. But the priest couldn't help me - I could still feel the sin, and feel separated from God.

During this time I also learned the reality of the devil. One weekend my cousin Tim came to visit from L.A., and we took a tour of San Francisco. We jokingly decided to visit "Dr. Gardner's Witch Museum" on Fisherman's Wharf. But once inside, it was no joke. I remember one thing very clearly about the place: at the entrance to the museum was a portrait of Jesus Christ. For protection? I wondered.

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I became very ill after coming back from San Francisco. That night I could feel the hands of demons crawling over me, waiting to take me to hell. The priest couldn't help me - what could I do? On the second night I couldn't sleep, so I took a prayer book with me into the bathroom to try to pray while I was sick. I sat there and prayed the stations of the cross. When I reached the crucifixion, and Jesus' death, the demonic oppression stopped. For the first time I understood and believed what it said: Jesus Christ had died on the cross to forgive my sins. I believed that it happened - and more importantly, that it happened for *me* - and because this act of faith, I received forgiveness for my sins.

A short while after that, on a school field trip, I met a guy named Don who had just as big of rock and roll fantasies as I did. We became fast friends, and he invited me to join him in a band he was putting together. This was to be the "dream band" that both of us were looking for. I went with Don to meet John, the drummer, and the chemistry was just right. We were going to be the Premier rock band in San Jose, we told ourselves. We'd go on to be big stars. For Don and me, this seemed like the fulfillment of a dream. We had two guitars and drums. All we needed now was a bass player.

Don came through again - he found a bass player, Eric. He had only been playing for a little while,

but we didn't mind. We had a band! and that was all that mattered. After a few weeks of practice, John announced he got us our first gig. We were to be the opening act for a well-known California band he had once worked for.

We practiced five songs to perfection for that concert. We had thirty minutes to play, and we thought we had all the bases covered. But still, on the way to the concert I was worried. I was the singer. I had to be good. I prayed all the way there, and dedicated the concert to God.

We decided to dress fairly "glitter," and we had clothes made for the occasion. I had on my usual tight jeans, a black shirt, and a floor length silver glitter cape. Even though it was part of our image, I was nervous to be seen in public like that. As we walked out to the stage I was struck with a purple spotlight. "The cape! The cape!" the kids yelled after me. I swung the cape creating a Bela Lugosi-type effect in the shadows. I grabbed the microphone and shouted "You paid your cash, now you get some flash! That's how we TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS!"

We broke into the song, and the crowd went wild. For us, it was a dream come true. We felt we had made it, with only our first concert. The next month, however, we were to play again and fail miserably. At that one I forgot to pray.

After the second concert Eric came up to me in school, very troubled. "Jon," he said, "I have to quit the band." Eric was a born again Christian, and had problems playing our music. We let him go, but I couldn't get over Eric's convictions. He took being a servant of God seriously. I didn't take my faith seriously at all. God had consistently helped me and answered prayer, and I never gave Him credit for it. I believed, but I took God and his blessings for granted. I discovered that God hadn't turned his back on me - I was the one who turned away.

Later, an evangelist came to our school. His message hit home to my need. While I did believe, I did not take the step of obedience to God's commands and set apart my life for him. When the evangelist asked who wanted to dedicate their life to Jesus Christ, I stood up and publicly made that decision.

Now I sing a new song, one God has given me. I no longer desire to be famous, but a servant. The music I play now is for Jesus. I no longer have to chase dreams, because I know the truth (John 14:6). Don't base your life on records, books, or other things - they will never work out. But Jesus is the one sure thing you can base your life on.

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