

“Nobody ever did it for me...”

I remember the first year in college. Now this goes way back. Nine months of a great college education for a total cost of nine hundred dollars a year. That first year bill was paid for by my parents at the rate of one hundred dollars a month. And back then one hundred dollars a month was a struggle. It was such a struggle that the next two years were loans and the last year was an athletic scholarship. After graduating the loans were repaid over a period of time. My family did their best to deal with the cost of education but it was difficult.

I remember when my wife and I had the desire to stop paying rent and move into a home. That seemed like such an impossible thing to accomplish but with a lot of encouragement and support we were able to pull it off. As I write I am still living in the home that we built from simple plans drawn on a small sheet of paper with a contractor who had the know how to turn that small piece of paper into a reality. A lot of changes occurred in our life in order to see that dream come true. It was difficult at times and we were able to accomplish our goal of home ownership.

I remember the first new car that my wife and I ever owned. My wife was working and I was finishing my last year in school. We were in need of transportation that we could count on and little by little the money was saved by my wife so that new car could be purchased. We were young and we did not think that it could not happen. Youth at that time had a distinct advantage. We knew it could happen and were willing to work and save for that better transportation.

It is great when people are able to offer help to others in times of need. It was wonderful that my parents did pay for that first year of school but....It was wonderful to plan and actually realize that new home with sacrifices but....It was good to have reliable transportation after money was saved and saved but....Yes, it was hard at times. Yes it was good to have assistance but when push did come to shove, when it was time to put up or shut up we also realized that we had to do most of that for ourselves. And we did just like you. We worked, we struggled, we sacrificed and we did realize a goal achieved was worth the work and sometimes the wait.

I stood before a group of people in a church once. I proposed to them a hypothetical situation. That situation was simple. I told them I had in my possession a ticket. A paper ticket that was a one way trip to heaven. No strings attached. All you had to do was outbid the next person. I started the bidding. I reminded them that was their only way and this was all hypothetical. It was as if everything they had was worth sacrificing to buy that one ticket....the only ticket offered this way, the only way to heaven. If that was real it would be unfortunate for all of us who could not afford the ticket. There would be more losers than winners but the winner of the ticket could stand and proclaim...”Look what I have! Look what I have purchased! Nobody did it for me. I did it all by myself by outbidding every one of you.” The hypothetical ends when we actually realize that “*somebody did do it for me.*” There is no auction and no bidding process. We have the absolute ability to be all winners because there was this one Friday,

this one day, for a matter of six hours that our Lord went to the cross. Our lives might be filled with many examples of what we had to do all for ourselves, but when nobody could do for us what had to be done to secure our eternity; Jesus stepped in and said... it's my turn.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33 (NIV)

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