

Short Story **NO BRAKES**

True Story

Back in 2001, I wanted to give a special gift to my son for his birthday, something more than a physical thing or a birthday party. When I was growing up, every summer my dad would take our family on trips throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. Even today, I miss those times seeing and learning from traveling to new locations every year.

Now it was my wife and son that had planned a wonderful trip up into the northern states and down the east coast. It was exciting and so much fun to be able to drive through small towns and large cities, stopping to see skyscrapers, mountains, lakes, beautiful homes and breath-taking beaches.

When my father would take us on a trip it touched my heart in so many ways. Now it was my son that was getting excited to be able to take it all in.

Our last stop before heading home was to see the WW2 Air Force Carrier Yorktown in Charleston, South Carolina, that was sunk in the battle of Midway by the Japanese during World War II. After taking in all that we came to see at Yorktown, we decided to take a short boat trip down the river to take in Fort Sumter. All this took more of our time than we expected, but it was fun and educational.

It was the end of our trip. Now we just had to drive home.

As soon as we got back on the road we had to drive over one of the oldest bridges I have ever seen. It was steep and really old. The good thing was it has four lanes, two going east and two going west. I was driving down the other side of the bridge going fairly fast, when I realized that I had no brakes. Our little Ford van was gaining speed when all I could see was a red light at the bottom of the bridge.

Immediately, I started trying to get my hands on the emergency brake lever in-between the front two seats. I screamed, "We have no brakes!" I could not get to the parking brake because my Bible was on top of it and I had my eyes on the road. All of sudden I got my hands on my Bible, threw it to my son in the back of the van and pulled up the parking brake.

By the time we got stopped, we were in the left lane and about three feet over the line where we were to stop. I could see a small convenience store across the road from us. I rolled down the passenger window and asked the man driving the car next to us if I could drive in front of him in order to get to the store. He said, "No problem." He did not know the problem we were going through, but God did.

As soon as I parked in a small parking area behind the store, I opened the hood to see if I could find out what was wrong. A man came over to see what was going on. He introduced himself to me and started looking for brake fluid or something else that might stop the brakes from working.

He said, he had a lot of mechanical experience with old cars, but could not understand why the brakes were not working on the van. He said he used a place down the road called Pep Boys when he could not fix his own car. He called them and they sent a wrecker down to pick the van and us up. The problem was, it was closing time for everyone. The wrecker man drove up within minutes. This man drove like a mad man with all of us piled into the only seat with our van swaying in the breeze on the back of the truck.

When we got to the Pep Boys shop all the men came out and pushed the van into a safe, locked bay. I paid the wrecker man and asked about hotel accommodations in the area for the night. He said, "Try the one next door." I walked around the building with two big luggage bags, following my wife and son headed to the hotel next door." I registered us in, got a key, and started walking to the very back of the facility, with my wife and son following.

We were all worn out from walking all day and all I wanted was to take a shower and get in a bed. We were almost to our room when a lady came out of her hotel room shouting, "Please help me!!! Please help me!!!"

I turned to my wife, giving her my billfold and one of the bags. The other bag I gave to my son. I told both of them to go to our room and I would be there soon. I gave them the room number where I would be.

As I entered the room I kept the room door open. The lady said, she did not know what she was going to do with her husband. She said all she could do was to pray for help and that was when we walked up. Her husband had taken a bath and had lost all his energy to be able to get out of the tub. When he heard me talk to his wife he started screaming to his wife to get him some underwear. I informed him that I had worked in a jail and that nothing could embarrass me. He did not want me to see him this way, so his wife helped him get his underwear on the best she could.

Upon entering the bathroom, I could see that the man was frail and probably in his late eighties. I talked to him for a little bit and informed him how I was going to help him get out of the tub. I got in the tub behind him and lifted him up and placed him on the edge of the tub. I had his wife hold him as I picked up his feet and got them on the outside of the tub. She got under his left arm and I got under his right arm and we picked him up on his feet and ran him to the bed where he fell backwards on the bed. She immediately started crying. She said you are my angel." I informed her that I was not an angel. She said, "Yes you are." Then she wanted to pay me for helping her husband. I said, I thank you, but no thank you! It was nothing for me to help.

As I left, she was still crying.

I walked around to the back of the building and went into our room. I did not know whether we would have to pay a lot of money to get the van fixed the next morning or if we would have to split up. I started thinking we might have to rent a car in order for my wife and son to get back home in time for our son's birthday party.

Early the next morning I got a call from the mechanic telling me that the van was fixed. He informed me that it was a loose hose and the cost was nothing like I was thinking.

Since we had not eaten any dinner that night and the van was fixed it was time to get something in our stomachs. We hurriedly packed up and walked up to the hotel lobby. As I was paying for the room the hotel manager asked us to stay and enjoy a complimentary breakfast. I could not say anything, but thank you! All three of us sat at a table, eating like it was going to be our last meal.

I went over to Pep Boys, paid our bill and drove over to the hotel. We loaded up again and headed home. Friday night we unloaded the van, got some good sleep in our own beds and had a wonderful birthday party the next day, all because God intervened.

I thank God for the stranger that called Pep Boys, the wrecker man that drove like a mad man and the hotel manager that fed us the wonderful breakfast.

How has God intervened in your life? Write me and let me know!

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