

MAGNOLIA MINDS: The Youth Pastor and the Biker

*By Tim Glaze
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During my time as Baptist Student Union director (1988-1995) at East Central Community College in Decatur, I had the opportunity to grow in many ways. One day, a student dropped

by to tell me a story that has forever impacted my understanding of God's promptings in our lives.

Jamison (not his real name) was a youth pastor at a nearby church. He and his wife had taken their youth group down to the Gulf Coast for the day and on their return trip, they stopped to eat at a fast food restaurant in Hattiesburg. As they got out of the van and entered the restaurant, Jamison noticed a rough-looking biker in front of them in the line to order.

He had long hair and was covered in tattoos, and he was wearing all black and a leather vest decorated with patches. As Jamison's youth group got in line to order, they began to murmur amongst themselves about the biker's appearance. Jamison was sure the man heard them and felt their stares on the back of his head. He was worried that the biker might be offended by their smirks and pointing.

He was worried above all that this biker would approach the group.

The biker sat on one side of the dining room while the youth sat on the other side. It seemed to take an eternity to finish eating as the youth continued to talk about this man amongst themselves. To Jamison's relief, they finally finished eating and he hurried them out of the restaurant.

As they were leaving, Jamison stopped at the pay phone (this was 1990, after all!) to call his pastor to let him know they were getting back on the road and heading to the church. As he stood there with the phone in his hand, dropping the quarter in to make the call – it happened! Jamison clearly sensed God saying, "You need to talk to the biker." It was clear enough of a prompting for Jamison to begin to feel ill and weak in the knees. Again, God prompted him, "You need to talk to the biker."

At that point, Jamison's wife noticed he had gone pale and

didn't seem to be himself. She asked, "Are you OK?" He replied, "No, God told me to go talk to the biker." She replied, "OK, I'll sit with the youth in the van."

Jason hung up the phone and walked over to the biker sitting in the booth. Sliding into the seat that faced the rough-looking man, Jamison said, "God told me to talk to you, so what do we need to talk about?" At that moment, the biker looked at Jamison and began to cry!

In a tearful voice he said, "Thank you for listening to God. My mom passed away this weekend. She was a godly woman, but I have not lived a good life as she taught me. I asked God for a sign to let me know where she was."

After a pause, the biker said, "Thank you for obeying." Jamison replied, "You're welcome."

The point here is that through God's prompting, a young man was obedient to His voice and ministered to a broken heart in need of comfort.

I share this story to remind us that God works in mysterious ways. May we be courageous, like Jamison, to simply obey God's promptings in our lives as we minister to a broken world.

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