

# What Happened When Jan Crouch's Dad Stormed Into a Revival Tent to Protest

The person who taught me how to have a heart for worship was my dear mother. Mom had an inner awe in her heart toward the Lord, which showed in the way she honored others. She honored and loved my dad with everything she had. In fact, that was the same way she adored and loved her father.

All of this stemmed from her holy awe of God. She learned to worship and honor God with her whole heart by watching her parents, especially her father. My mother's father had been a stalwart in our Pentecostal world. D. P. Holloway was a tent evangelist in the early 1920s. On one occasion a Jewish young man who was about 18 years old went storming into my grandfather's tent meeting in Alabama to tear it down. My grandfather was no stranger to threats. Those were the days of Prohibition in the U.S., when "white lightning," as liquor made in the backwoods of the South was called, was shipped up the East Coast and illegally sold to different distributors. When they went about evangelizing, my grandparents traveled with armed guards, as many of the backwoods distilleries were shutting down because so many manufacturers of the white lightning were getting saved at the tent meetings. My grandfather lived with constant threats from the underworld. But he refused to stop worshipping God and giving others the opportunity to do so with him.

When the Jewish teenager stormed into the tent that night, my grandfather refused to be intimidated and told him he knew of a man a hundred times as tough as he was who had died on the cross to save him. That night, young Edgar Bethany fell at the altar, repented of his sin, and accepted Christ as his Savior. He was filled with a sense of awe and was determined to learn

to worship God as powerfully as the man who had called him out. When the young man went home and told his Jewish father what had happened, he was quickly thrown out of the house. My grandfather and grandmother were only about five years older than he was, but they ended up taking him with them on the road for three years and discipling him. They taught him the value of honoring God and guided him through those first rocky years of a new faith. That young man became a powerful force in the Assemblies of God. When my grandfather died in the 1950s, Dr. Bethany took his place in leadership over the Southeast region of the United States.

In time, Dr. Bethany got married and had three daughters, one of whom was the late Jan Crouch. She and her husband, Paul Crouch, founded the Trinity Broadcasting Network in 1973, honoring God's Word and taking His message to millions of people. Their network has brought worship and faith into millions of homes. My grandfather and that young man formed a relationship built on honor, and that relationship developed into a friendship that continues in our families to this day. While my grandfather was the evangelist, my grandmother was the one who taught my mom and her sisters to play music and sing for the Lord. All three of them were talented and used their musical gifts for Jesus their entire lives. My mom was the worshipper of the family when I was growing up, and she continues to show me what it means to worship God in Spirit and in truth. When I was a child, our home was always filled with music—not music from the radio or a record player but the music that came from my mother's heart. She was a wonderful keyboard player. When I would come home from school, I would often hear Mom playing the piano and singing the song of the Lord from her heart.

Our family was always quite musical (except for me). My father was an amazing guitar and bass player. He could also play the banjo, piano, trombone and a number of other instruments. Sometimes after dinner, Mom would go to the piano, and while

we were doing dishes, she would begin playing and singing. Sometimes Dad would grab a guitar and join her, saying, "Bonnie, you lead and I'll follow. Let's harmonize." I remember the two of them worshipping the Lord together in perfect harmony. They loved each other so much, and their mutual hearts of worship drew them even closer together. {eo}

*This article is adapted from I Choose Honor: The Key to Relationships, Faith, and Life (Charisma House, 2019) by **Rich Wilkerson Sr.** Wilkerson is the founder of Peacemakers and the senior pastor of Trinity Church in Miami, Florida. He is also an evangelist and author. Since 1973 Wilkerson has ministered to youths and families through evangelism and local church ministry. His humorous style and power-packed speaking have been the keys to seeing thousands turn to Christ. More than 1.5 million students have attended his presentations on over sixteen hundred public school campuses throughout the United States and Canada. The Wilkerson's also serve as Chancellors at North Central University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Wilkerson and his wife, Robyn, are ministering in the heart of Miami and continue to be committed to the local community through cutting-edge ministry outreaches. The Wilkerson's have been married for over forty years and have four sons, three daughters-in-law, and five grandchildren.*