

THE GUITARS

A Story

**Suffering is necessary to grow to full maturity.
Self-discipline and efforts are wanted for Self-improvement.
Take responsibility for your failures
Be a helper not a rescuer.**

Thrust of the Story

- ✓ *To realize that nothing great can be accomplished without effort, suffering and pain.*
- ✓ *To be aware that most of our failures are due to our aversion to self-discipline.*
- ✓ *To identify the "tuners" in our lives - and learn to love them, even if they cause us pain.*
- ✓ *To realize how unsound and unwise some of our prayers are.*
- ✓ *To learn to accept responsibility for our failures and misfortunes.*

THE STORY;

Narrator: There was a combo group, all of them expert guitarists. They used to give mega concerts to hundreds of guitar fans. In a little room they kept their guitars when not in use. One day, previously to one of their concerts, they called an expert tuner to tune and fix up their guitars. The tuner stepped into the room and began his job right in earnest. He picked one of the guitars and began pulling and tensing the strings. The guitar cried with pain:

Guitar: Ouch! Ouch! You beast! Can't you see you hurt me?

Narrator: When the other guitars saw what was going on, began trembling with fear...One of them said:

Guitar: Look at this brute! He is heartless....He seems to enjoy making our comrade suffer...do you think he is going to treat us in the same way?

Narrator: With that all the guitars started crying. The tuner, however, went on with his work with pitiless unconcern. He took on the guitars, one after another. At the end, all the guitars were weeping and wailing. They cursed that barbarous and sadistic tuner. In a remote corner of the room, there was a guitar half hidden from the sight of the tuner. She was concealed behind a chair. She prayed in earnest to God from the depths of her heart:

Guitar: Oh God! I beseech you, spare me that torment. I do not want to be tuned. Keep me away from the hands of this torturer, from this beast! Please, please!

Narrator: To her good luck, her prayers were heard. She went unnoticed. She was spared the agony of being tuned. She was so glad. She cried for joy. She prayed:

Guitar: Thank you, God! How fortunate I am! You spared me that torment. I am so happy! Thank you, God!

Narrator: In the evening the guitarists came to the room to pick up their guitars for a concert. There and then, they began trying out their guitars. All of them were giving the sweetest and most harmonious sounds ever. The guitarists were very pleased with the guitars. One of them remarked:

Guitarist: Oh! How lovely these guitars sound! Our tuner has done a perfect job! They give the sweetest, clearest and most melodious notes I have ever heard!

Narrator: Needless to say, the guitars felt very flattered and proud of themselves. Then, one of the boys spied the guitar that was half concealed behind the chair. He picked it up and struck the strings. Gosh, what a raucous sound it gave! Then, one of the guitarists jokingly said:

Guitarist: What a lousy guitar! It sounds like a frog! Croak...croak...croak! Ha. Ha. Ha! Who will ever like to play with her? It's useless.

Narrator: The boys had a hearty laughter at that guitar. She felt highly insulted and began to cry. She felt humiliated, not good, not wanted. By now, the players having picked their guitars, except the croaking one, left the room and went to the concert hall. Our guitar was left all alone by herself in that dark and dingy little room. She wept and wept. She wailed:

Guitar: I am useless! I am not good. Poor me! Nobody likes me. Nobody wants me!

Ideas and Applications of the Parable

- We need self-discipline, but we fear it
- No success is possible without effort and sacrifice.
- There is no short-end to life's goal, no easy way to face the perils of life's journey.
- Without tuning the best guitars are useless.
- Unless the strings of life are kept taut, no sweet music can be plucked out of them.
- Without self-discipline, even a gifted man will be wasting his talents.
- There is no growth without trimming, cutting, pruning, tuning.
- Man learns and progresses through suffering.
- We should be willing to make efforts to improve ourselves though it entails pain
- We have to be grateful to those who help us, even when they cause us pain
- Those who sincerely love us, will make us suffer.
- We have to kiss the hand of the "tuner", not curse it!

- God, the great Tuner, knows, not without pain, how to bring the most melodious music out of the most unpromising instruments.
- Let us not ask the Lord to take away from us suffering, but to give us the courage to bear it in the belief that it will work for our good. .
- Often enough we pray like the "scared" guitar then, when we fail we indulge in "self-pity"
- No use crying over lost opportunities. Let us seize them when they come and make the best of them.
- It is easier to sit and blame others when we fail, than through effort and pain change ourselves.
- We must have the honesty and courage to take responsibility for our failures.
- We should be kind, yet firm in our dealings with those under us, and not make things too easy for them
- It would indeed be foolish to rescue others from the pains of growth and learning.
- It is our duty to tune up those under our care. We must help them produce the sweetest music ever!
- Let us eschew all "paternalistic", "maternal" and "protectionist" attitudes towards people.
- We have to help people bear their sufferings, not "rescue" them from them.
- No one can keep his foot-prints on the sands of time sitting down
- No pain no gain
- Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it will not bear fruit
- Through suffering to the skies...

N.T. Quotes in keeping with the theme of the Parable

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| Mt 5/10-12 | Persecutions and sufferings. Be glad! Great rewards wait for you. |
| Mt 10/16-23 | Coming persecutions. You will be saved. |
| Mt 13/44-46 | The hidden treasure and the pearl of great value. Sell all you have to secure them. |
| Mt 16/21-23 | Peter remonstrates against suffering. Jesus calls him Satan. |
| Mt 16/24-26 | If you want to save your life, you will lose it |
| Mt 26/36-46 | The Agony in the Garden. Jesus had to suffer... |
| Mk 9/30-31 | Christ announces his impending sufferings. |
| Lk 4/1-13 | Temptations in the desert. Jesus gives up comforts, honors and power. The great "pruning". |
| Lk 24/13-27 | Emmaus: Was it not necessary that Christ should suffer and thus enter into his glory?" |
| Jn 12/22-25 | "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies..." |
| Jn 15/1-2 | God prunes every branch that does not bear fruit... |
| Jn 16/19-22 | Your sadness will turn into gladness... a woman at child-birth is suffering, afterwards, rejoicing..." |
| Phil 2/1-11 | Christ was exalted because he suffered. |
| 2 Cor 11/30;; 12/9-10 | Paul glories in his sufferings. |
| Phil 3/8-11 | All gains are loss... |
| Col 1/24 | I rejoice in my sufferings... |
| Rom 8/16-18 | All the sufferings of this life are nothing in comparison.... |
| 1 Pet 2/19-21; 4/12-13; 5/1 | by suffering with Christ and like Christ we shall also Rejoice like him. |

