



THE PASTOR'S PEN

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Sitting on Your Talent

Truth is oftentimes stranger than fiction. In the pages of American History and in the history of entertainment, many odd and unusual stories are recorded that are so fantastic, that they are hard to believe. Yet, they are real. Here is one of those true stories for you to think about.

There was a man who made his living playing the piano in a bar. He was a fairly good piano player and played well enough that people came out to the bar where he worked just to hear him perform at the keyboard. He played for several years and was able to make a modest living with his skills. At least he did, until one night when a patron came in and told him he didn't want to hear him only play the piano anymore. No, the customer actually wanted him to sing a song as well.

The pianoman replied, "I don't sing." Then he went back to playing his piano just as he always had and ignored the patron.

Well, the customer was not use to being told no. He became persistent and told the bartender, "I'm tired of listening to just the piano. I want that guy to sing! If he doesn't, then I'll take my business somewhere they've got a singer."

Reluctantly, in order to hush the man up and keep the commotion in the bar down, the bartender shouted across the room, "Hey buddy! The patrons are asking you to sing! If you want to get paid, sing him a song."

With a fair amount of hesitation and some nervousness, the pianoman did as he was ordered. He sang a song. Now picture this in your mind. Here was a piano player who had never sung in public. At the insistence of a bar patron, he did so for the very first time, nervously and without any practice or warm up for his voice. When he finished his song, the entire bar was silent. For you see, nobody had ever heard the song *Mona, Mona Lisa* sung the way it was sung that night by Nat King Cole.

Nat was a very good piano player, but he had an even greater talent that he was sitting on and not using! He may have lived the rest of his life as a no-name piano player in a no-name bar because that was comfortable for him. However, because he *had* to sing, he went on to become one of the best-known entertainers in the history of twentieth century America.

The point of this history lesson is simple. You, too, have skills and abilities. God has blessed you with at least one, and maybe even more, talents or abilities. You may not feel as if your "talent" is particularly great, but it is probably better than you think! After all, we are usually our own worst critics. With persistence, most skills can be improved and some new ones can even be learned. To sit on whatever talent you possess is the same as if you had no ability at all! Now we know that God does not make mistakes. If He gave you some ability, He expects you to use it. So, the question that we should not be asking after reading this story is, "What ability do I have that is useful?" Rather, God expects us to be asking, "How will I use whatever ability I have been blessed with for service in His Kingdom?"

It was the Spanish philosopher and writer George Santayana who said, "Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it." So, what will you learn and take away from the story of Nat King Cole? Hopefully, you will realize that God expect you to use your gifts and then you will use them to the best of your ability for Him. Otherwise, you can only expect to sit by yourself on your piano bench while patrons go elsewhere.

Reviewing my notes from history,

James

