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Danny Riddle



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Danny Riddle • “Following His Dream”

By Jennifer Campbell



At the young age of eleven years old, a little boy began a journey, a journey into the field of music ministry. Then, at the age of fifteen, his life started to unravel. Instead of giving in to despair, Danny Riddle prayed a simple prayer: “God, if you will give me a voice, I will sing for you the rest of my life.” God answered that prayer and the doors quickly began to open for this young teenager striving to share the Gospel in song.

By his sixteenth birthday, he had already recorded his first single, which received extensive airplay throughout his home state of Florida. Following a guest appearance on a radio program, he was offered the opportunity to host a Gospel Music radio show. He faithfully accepted the challenge. The show was called “Reach Out.” This radio show was on the air for more than eleven years and was syndicated to several different radio stations across the country.

In his late twenties, Danny decided to leave the Christian Music industry to pursue other goals in life. Then, in the year 2000, a friend talked him into re-releasing several of his earlier recordings on CD. After another period of prayer and soul searching, God began once again to work in Danny’s life. Later that year, he released “Old Time Religion,” a collection of many old-time hymns that Danny had always dreamed of recording. Since then, Danny has released a CD titled “In a Different Light.” He also released a third CD titled “You Raise Me Up” in the summer of 2004.

Danny’s style is primarily Southern Gospel. Danny delights audiences with one familiar standard after another, such as “The Old Gospel Ship” and “First Day in Heaven.” Additionally, he also introduces original compositions that feature Southern Gospel stylings as well as contemporary ones. His endearing personality combined with his personal commitment to spreading the Gospel to the nations is evidence that Danny is completely dedicated to the cause of Christ.

Let’s Talk With Danny Riddle

Jennifer: Who has had the greatest influence on your life?

Danny: I would have to say that my Grandfather, Gerald Bailey, had the greatest influence on my life. He was strong in the Word, and always gave the best advice for me while I was growing up. I leaned on my Grandfather a lot for answers to all my questions and for guidance. The most important thing that he taught me was integrity and that it is always important to be a person of your word.

Jennifer: What song ministered to you during the hardest trial of your life?

Danny: When I was 18, I recorded the song, “Joy Comes in the Morning,” written by the Gaithers. My family was going through some tough times, including the passing of my father. It was hard seeing the family fall apart, but as I sang this song at one of my performances, the lyrics really hit home for the very first time. “Hold on my child, joy comes in the morning, weeping only last for the night. Your darkest hour means dawn is just in sight.”

Jennifer: Name a song that you would have liked to have written and tell why.

Danny: Wow. That is a tough one. There are so many inspiring songs being written today. I have written a small handful myself, but nothing compares to the lyrics of the classic song by Benny Hester, “When God Ran.” Every time I hear that song, the lyrics just melt my heart. The song takes the story of the prodigal son and puts it to music, in a way that it is bound to lift your spirit. Imagine the God of the universe running, not away from something, but running straight to you, so excited to see you turn to Him, and taking you in His arms to tell you that He loves you. Wow. That is an awesome thought!

Jennifer: If you had one wish, what would it be?

Danny: One wish, hmm.... to win the lotto! No, seriously, I would have to say that my wish, or more importantly, my prayer has always been that my music and my life will be an inspiration to others.

Jennifer: Tell me a little bit about your family.

Danny: I really love my family. I am thankful everyday that God saw fit for me to be a part of this family. I have a

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wonderful mother, who is also the world's greatest friend. My sister Debbie really amazes me! You can hand her life's worst predicaments and she quickly turns them around and accomplishes something impressive out of it. I really admire her. I do have an Angel that I admire, too. She is my niece Shayna. In fact, when she was five, I had the opportunity to record the song, "God Bless America," with her and we had so much fun recording together. However, I do miss all the loved ones who have gone on. It can be hard sometimes, but knowing we will see each other again makes life exciting.

Jennifer: Are there any certain aspirations that you have and would like to accomplish?

Danny: One of my biggest dreams or aspirations has been to start a recording company, and to be able to give aspiring new artists a chance to record their first album, with very little cost to them, helping them to start their own music ministry. Many talented artists out there just need a chance and an opportunity for their music and talents to be heard.

Jennifer: What is your most embarrassing moment?

Danny: I was in my early 20's and I was making a guest appearance on a live radio show. I knew the DJ's, Kathy and Bill, from a previous appearance and I knew that they were always known for joking around. The radio show was near its completion when I was singing the hymn, "The Old Rugged Cross." While I was singing the chorus, I opened my eyes and looked into the sound booth where I could not see any DJ's. All I could see was Kathy's feet up in the air kicking, her head popping over the mixing board and down she went again, as if they were wrestling over something. Well, I lost it and started laughing. I tried my best not to laugh, but I could not help myself. Needless to say, I was never asked back as a guest on that show!

Jennifer: What is your earliest memory of Southern or Country Gospel Music?

Danny: My father always listened to country music when I was a kid, however, most of the records my Dad had were Southern Gospel records of the LeFevres and Rex Nelon. I remember listening to them as a child and trying to sing along with them.

Jennifer: If you could send someone back in time, what messages would you send to yourself as a child?

Danny: Now, that is another tough question to answer. I really have not thought about that. I really would not want to know about my future, mistakes or accomplishments. Life is full of learning experiences and I would gladly go through each one of them again.

Jennifer: Is there anything that you could tell me about you or your family that you think would surprise the readers of this magazine?

Danny: Well, yes, there is! I usually do not share this. My father always told me that we were "Kin" to Rex Nelon. Rex always called my father "Little Jimmy." I remember as a child seeing Rex Nelon on several occasions while our family was visiting in North Carolina. My Aunt Dixie Nelon always made sure I had one of his newest LP's. I know we were related, but I am not exactly sure where

the connection is, however, those childhood memories are very dear to me. When I was in my late 20's, I had asked Rex Nelon for an interview for the radio show that I was hosting at the time. Of course, he had not seen me since I was a wee little child. However, as soon as I mentioned my dad, he said with a big smile, "You're Little Jimmy's Boy."

Jennifer: What would you consider as the most wonderful day of your life?

Danny: When I was 16, I was given the opportunity to host a Southern Gospel Music radio show. We called the show "Reach Out." The syndicated radio show stayed in the Top 10 programming list for close to 11 years. That was an exciting time in my life and in my music career. Besides doing interviews with well-known artists, the main goal and vision for the radio show was featuring independent artists from around the country, giving them a chance for their prospective ministries to grow. The most wonderful day of my life was when one of the artists that appeared as a guest on the show came up to me, years after we were off the air, and thanked me for giving them the opportunity to share their music and how that really made a difference in their ministry. It is always such a blessing when the ministry ministers back to you!

Jennifer: What advice could you give to aspiring young artists?

Danny: Take the chance and dare to dream. Never be afraid to follow your dreams. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "The Future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

Jennifer: Do you have any exciting news within your ministry that you would like to share with our readers?

Danny: I am so glad you asked that question, as I am very excited about the new project, "Here Today," that I am presently working on. This project features several songs written by Dee Gaskin and her son Dick Gaskin, as well as many songs written by friends of mine. This project is very dear to me, as it is going to have a Bluegrass/Mountain music feel to it. My friend BK Cummings has just completed recording and mixing the music tracks for me. He is an awesome musician and I know that you'll love the way he plays a fiddle! We also have many concert dates booked up for the rest of this year and for the upcoming year, so look for us at a church near you.

"I am excited and thankful every day about all of the new adventures God is bringing into my life," says Danny. When all is said and done, he wants to be remembered as "the boy who sang his songs for Jesus Christ."

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