

Mere words cannot express Z88.3's impact...

Thank you for choosing me as your week 4 Disney's Night of Joy Package winner! This is a dream come true and the Lord never ceases to surprise me. I had a feeling that I might win – although I can't explain it. I've been trying to help a family through our church. Their Mom has only a few months to live and she has three kids 19, 18 and 15. Their Dad has virtually been non-existent in their lives. I thought if I won, I might give them the prize as they may never have the opportunity to do something like this. I then read that the prize is non-transferable and my wife mentioned that our kids would really enjoy this opportunity to get away.

I wasn't able to go last year due to the hurricanes and I had to help four homes prepare for the storms. The night of the concert I was on my Mother's roof patching shingles until after dark.

Over the last 18 months I've been a stay at home Dad and money has gotten tight. I mentioned this to my Mom and she gave me the money to buy a ticket for one night to this year's NoJ. I was going to get the ticket on-line yesterday when I got "the call" from Lisa. I expected to go crazy if I ever won, but instead I was beside myself and couldn't believe what I was hearing... I won... the Z has given me so much over the years... I don't deserve this gift. Just like we don't deserve God's grace and mercy, it is freely given to all who ask and repent of our sins. God is good – all of the time!

I took my wife to the Night of Joy in 2001. She was 8 months pregnant and we took my then 3 year old son. I wanted to share the blessing of live Christian music that I had been privileged to know. Unfortunately, the night was all but joyful. It rained that night, my son got sick and had to go to the infirmary, and my wife was miserable with the heat, rain, and caring around the future addition to our family. I think I saw Rebecca St. James before we all had to leave early. I've always felt a sense of guilt as my wife referred to it as the "night from #*%&." I'm hoping that this weekend will erase that memory and spark her liking for the music that I can't do without.

I had ah-ha moment one day when listening to Christian music years ago. The lyrics mean something – something meaningful – they're not just relaxing, fun, or emotional, but positive, soul-lifting, worship music to our savior! If you like concerts, try a Christian one – they're usually cheaper, family friendly, and definitely more uplifting. Unlike a secular concert, instead of going solely to be entertained, it's many people praising one Lord. During the last retreat formation I was on, I had the opportunity to go to a MercyMe concert at SpaceCoast Stadium with a couple of people from that group and it was an awesome experience! While we came from varied backgrounds and from traditional to contemporary musical tastes, I think the lyrics touched us all.

Another concert that moved me was a free concert put on by Z88.3 and Watermark in Orlando following hurricane Charley. My family and I went to donate some food to the storm victims and donate blood to the needy, but again, what I received in return was priceless. As I stood among hundreds of attendees whose homes were battered by the storms, we sang out in unison to the songs being played. We knew that in our weakness, the Lord would make us strong and only his healing presence could give us strength to carry on. I proudly held up my hands in praise and worship to the one who protected me through the storm and who would mend the broken hearts of those calling out to him. I was awestruck to be in that place and I felt his comforting touch on each of us.

For me, it is hard to believe that the Z has only been around for 10 years as they seem to have always been a part of my life. This year in December will be my 10 year wedding anniversary as well. We've been part of so many Z events that I don't know where to start. We've participated in the following events with them:

- Several Veggie Tales premieres
- Bibleman

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- Several Nights of Joy (2 or 3 times)
- Rock the Universe 2003
- Rekindling the Romance conference (with Steven Curtis Chapman as a special guest)
- Avalon, Mark Schultz, Across the Sky concert at First Baptist in Merritt Island
- Faith and Family nights (with Mark Schultz)
- Sonfest
- After School Games
- (Shoe)boxes of Hope

Each of these has impacted my family in various ways, but ALL positive! Some of the best memories I have are when I brought a friend to share the experience and getting to see the flame of the Holy Spirit ignite in them!

Another period that you impacted me personally was when I was going to school part-time to get my Bachelors degree. I left my job at Kennedy Space Center after 8 years to finish the last year of my degree – when I told my Pastor and I expected a word of encouragement, he said “what are you crazy, leaving your job at the Cape?”

I needed to take Span II and Calc II to graduate and I hadn't had the first part of the respective classes for ten years. I prayed about it and after getting Beverly's assurance that she would support me while I needed quite study time as well as being the sole breadwinner, I agreed.

I had to take most of my classes in Orlando and I wasn't really looking forward to the commute each day, but it would become my full time job over the next year. My wife and I also had to drop out of our church's small community group, which was very difficult. The occasional email that someone was praying for me, or a few words or encouragement in passing while leaving church on Sunday, helped me to persevere. I listened to a lot of Christian radio while in the car and Z88.3 kept me positive and optimistic. When we take our eyes off of the Lord, the devil can bring all kinds of doubt and fear in to our lives, but with the Lord and the Z to fulfill my commute, I don't remember ever feeling like I wasn't going to make it through.

The thing that impacts me the most about this radio family is their generosity. They give as the Lord gives, without reservation and expecting nothing in return. I've requested bumper stickers, music, license tags and they've sent me everything I've asked for without ever asking for any money in return. They've prayed for me when I've submitted prayer requests and they're always there when I turn on the radio and I need a friendly, familiar voice to listen to. When I go out of town and don't have access to a computer, I miss hearing the songs, the stories, their reflections on current events, the personalities... everything... but when I come home, and I get in the car and turn the radio on, it is a warm welcome like going home for the holidays.

I'm glad I'm taking the opportunity to let you know what a difference you've made in my life and in countless others that just haven't put their thoughts into words. While these two words aren't enough to express my gratitude, from the bottom of my heart, thank you. May the Lord bless you 100 (thousand) fold for ALL you do!

Sincerely,

Tom Crowell