



# GOD'S HIGHWAY

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A CHRISTMAS DAY RIDE

Christmas is a great time of year. Those of us living in Florida finally get some cooler weather (but probably no White Christmas). For many people their bikes are hidden away and won't be ridden again for a while; however, one of my best memories involves a very special ride on Christmas morning.

In December of 1975, I had purchased my first new motorcycle, a beautiful, three cylinder, two-stroke, 1974 Suzuki GT-380. It had become a major element of my life although bikes had never been part of my early days. (I did put a balloon in the spokes of my old bicycle, so it sounded like a Harley, but that was as close as it got.) My dad never had one, and only one wild black sheep cousin of mine rode one of them things.

My dad had been an alcoholic, so we never got along very well, but he had come to a crisis in his life and turned to AA. He eventually stopped drinking and had a few years of sobriety by that time. My only brother lived about 100 miles away, and on a visit he saw that I was riding a motorcycle, so he had to get one. It was a small Honda CB 125 that he stored in a shed at my dad's house. Dad learned how to ride it and would ask me to take a ride with him on occasion. He could hardly get up past 45 mph, so it wasn't much of a ride, but he seemed to get a kick out of it.

Dad was a small guy, and said he could never ride anything bigger than this little model; but I worked a deal and secretly bought him a slightly larger one. It was a smaller version of my bike, a 1975 Suzuki GT-250. On Christmas Eve I strapped it into the back of my old cargo van and took it to the folk's place. I opened the shed, replaced the little Honda with the new Suzuki, then relocked the shed and drove home. The next morning I got up early to watch Dad's face when he opened the shed. Surprise? It was on me. When I got there, the shed was open and empty! He had gone out to get the Honda and couldn't move it off the center stand for some reason. Only then did he notice that although it was the same color, it was bigger. It wasn't the same motorcycle. After the shock, he rolled it out, figured how to start it, and was gone when I arrived. He came back and made some remark about how it rode good. I don't recall him actually saying thanks, but he was never good at that sort of thing.

My effort to reach out to my dad worked, and we were able to enjoy doing something together for once in our lives. That was the whole purpose of the bike. On Saturday mornings, he would come to my apartment way too early and knock until I woke up, just so we could go for a ride to eat breakfast together. I soon realized that just like Professor Frankenstein, I had created a monster. But



it was OK with me.

A couple of years later his health became a problem and he gave the Suzi back to me since I had sold mine to finance a return to college. I rode it for years, but eventually it seized up and just sat in my garage next to the Harley. I took it back to the dealer and had him restore it to working order. Even after he passed away, it was a daily reminder of my dad and the way the bike had brought us closer together.

Dad's Suzuki that I gave him on Christmas so many years ago was a picture of what God has done for us. The bike was an evidence of love that reached out (as God did on the first Christmas Day). When things became broken (like sin breaks lives and relationships) Suzi was either going to end up in the junkyard (our soul can go to an eternal spiritual one too) or it had to go back to the one who made it in the first place (our broken lives can't be really fixed until we go back to our Creator too). That little bike wasn't really worth as much as it cost to fix it (and neither are we), but love paid the price anyway. Suzi was saved.

The only real difference is that Suzi had nothing to say about the matter. We do. As you enjoy this Christmas season, remember that God's love reached down in the little town of Bethlehem 2000 years ago. The Babe grew up and paid the enormous price so we might be healed and restored. Respond to His love as my Dad did when he took the gift and our relationship was restored. (Later, at approximately 70 years of age, Dad shed tears and prayed to receive God's gift, Jesus) Don't wait that long. Unwrap your gift from God right now, and it will be the best Christmas ever. Let's go for a ride together on God's Highway.

