

COMMITTED TO Quit

My piano skills weren't improving, even after years of practice. My parents said I could quit on one condition: I had to learn 50 hymns.

By Gretchen Blackburn

I stormed into my house, eyes flooding with tears after yet another disappointing piano lesson. It was my fourth year taking piano, and I had barely improved past “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” My teacher had tried to find something positive to say about my horrific playing, but I only felt worse. My parents were paying money for piano lessons that I didn’t want and had no hope for.

I wanted my parents to let me quit. “Please,” I begged. “I’ll do anything. What will it take?”

After discussing it between themselves, they said, “If you learn 50 hymns, we will let you quit.”

I started practicing right away. I wanted to quit so badly I was willing

to spend extra time on the piano.

The first hymn, “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” (*Hymns*, no. 19), took nearly a month to master. I was still intent on quitting, so I continued practicing.

An interesting thing happened: the hymns got easier to master. I felt happier throughout the week. I found myself humming hymns during the day and singing louder in sacrament meeting.

Eventually, I stopped keeping track of how many hymns I knew. As I became more skilled on the piano, I realized I could learn a new hymn almost perfectly in less than 30 minutes.

When I finally did add them

all up, I had learned way over 50 hymns. And there was no way I was going to quit playing piano. I had become much more confident in my abilities to play and had felt the power of the hymns in my life.

Hymns are like scriptures; they speak truth. When I play the hymns, I feel like I am immersing myself in the scriptures. Learning how to play the hymns has been a kick start to building my testimony and learning truth. I find myself going through the words of different hymns to help me throughout my day. Playing piano has strengthened my testimony and has opened doors for me wherever I go.

The author lives in New York, USA.

