

# Phileo Betrayed

A true story from [The Rocklore Files](#)

Of [Jamie Thompson](#)

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Back in the fall of 1970 my sister Nancy was taking horseback riding lessons and was generally interested in all things equestrian. Our mother had tried to interest me in taking riding lessons too but I refused to get out of the car the first time we arrived at the stables. The 1960's notions of what was and was not "cool" were still alive and well in our neighborhood culture and riding around on a horse in a cute little outfit, jumping over fences was definitely not in the domain of cool as I understood it.

Every fall season there was, and still is, a huge equestrian event in the Philadelphia area called the Devon Horse Show. My parents wanted to take all of us to see it but, of course, my brother Jake and I had zero interest in horses. We begged and pleaded to be excused but my parents were not willing to leave us home unsupervised. That is, they weren't willing to leave me home alone with Jake and his sociopathic druggie friends and they knew that it wouldn't go over well if I had to go and Jake didn't so, they insisted that we go along whether we liked it or not. Desperate to get out of suffering through a horse show, we proposed that they allow us to tote our bicycles along so that we could go for a ride in the Devon area while they watched the show. Much to our relief, they agreed.

Upon arriving at the horse show parking lot we agreed with our parents to meet back at the car when the show ended. They headed for the main gate while we hopped onto our bikes and hit the road pedaling. I actually didn't know where Jake and I were going... "To a nearby park," was all that he said. I was just supposed to follow him.

I remember not being very comfortable cycling in the Devon area. The roads were very narrow with little or no shoulder and bustling with heavy traffic. I was distracted by the challenge of staying as close to the edge of the road as possible without slipping over the edge while cars passed within inches of my handlebars and then showered me with tiny cinders and exhaust fumes.

We were going along that way when suddenly the road dipped into a steep grade. I was excited because going down hills meant it was time to shift into low gear and pump the pedals to achieve a high rate of speed with little effort... this was what bicycle riding was all about! I shifted my hands to the lower curved section of my racing handlebars, tucked my head down low for good aerodynamics, and pedaled with all my might.

Well, the road, which I had never been on before, got steeper and steeper and I was going faster and faster until I suddenly realized that I was going entirely too fast! The wind was whipping tears from my eyes and all stationary objects were going by so quickly all I could see on either side of me was a blur! My bicycle started rattling and shaking as the stress of going at such a high speed overcame the design parameters of the bike. I was so busy trying to get control that I didn't see the sign go by that warned of the right angle turn to the left that was situated at the bottom of the hill... I squeezed my brake calipers but the momentum of my descent completely overcame my braking system. The harder I pulled, the more unstable the bike became! Meanwhile, ***I was passing cars!!***

I watched in horror as the right angle turn approached very quickly. There was no way I could negotiate it! I closed my eyes and slammed head-on into the curb which collapsed my front rim and caused my bicycle's rear end to fly into the air. I was catapulted off of the bike and high into the air! I remember seeing the top of a small tree pass underneath me as my body followed a ballistic curve into someone's front yard! I landed on my back and slid over the grass for several feet. I felt a hot sting as sharp rocks that were embedded in the dirt lacerated my back. I sat up just in time to see my bicycle crash through a series of end-over-ends and come to rest in a heap on the side of the road. I stood up... my back was stinging.

Meanwhile, Jake had somehow managed to control his descent and successfully negotiate the turn. He was a hundred or so yards down the road

looking back when I caught sight of him. He stopped and turned around. Even at that distance I could tell by his body language that he was not pleased with this unexpected development. I limped over to my bike and picked it up. The front rim had a triangular dent pointing toward the hub. The fork was bent back. The pedals were all bent out of shape and the rear derailleur was mangled. There were scratches scrapes, and dents all over the frame. Then, just as Jake approached there was a loud **BANG!!** The front tire exploded! It sounded like a rifle shot!

"**MY TIRE!!**" Jake shouted in exasperation. He had loaned me the tire earlier that week until I could get a new one... now it was ruined. I was too stunned to say anything. "Well," said Jake, smirking. "I'm going to the park. See ya." With that he turned and rode off without looking back... leaving his twelve year old brother in the middle of nowhere with a wrecked bicycle and uncertain injuries.

I gathered my wits and decided I'd better get back to the horse show somehow. The problem was, I had no idea where it was. I had no idea where I was!! So, I dragged my bike across the road and stuck out my thumb in the direction from which I had come.

I must've been quite a sight! Only a few minutes later a family in a large station wagon pulled over to give me a ride. Their car was full of kids but they were able to pack me and my bike into the way back. "Where'ya goin'," asked the dad who was driving. God was watching over me... they were on their way to the horse show!

"What happened to your bike?" asked one of the kids. I described what happened.

"Are you all right?" asked one of the other kids.

"Well, I think so. But I feel some stinging on my back."

"Let's see." said one of the kids.

I twisted around and everyone gasped, "Ooooh!"

"Your shirt's all shredded. Lift it up." I lifted the back of my shirt.

"Eeewww!!" they chorused.

"You better get that looked at," said the mom. "It looks bad."

A short time later we arrived at the horse show. "Good luck!" they all shouted as they locked up their car and headed toward the main gate.

"Thank you!" I called, waving.

It took a little while but I finally found our car. I spent the afternoon sitting on the hood waiting for everyone to return.

When my parents and my sister Nancy finally arrived they were all amazed to realize that I had been waiting for hours and that my bike was destroyed. "Where's Jake?" asked my mother as my dad inspected the damage, shaking his head. The bike had been a Christmas present from him two years before.

"He went to the park," I said.

***"HE WHAT???"***

"Would you look at my back?" I asked while turning and sliding up my shirt.

"Eeewww!" squealed Nancy.

**"Oh my god!"** my mother cried. "You have lacerations! They look very deep!!"

Just then Jake pulled up on his bike seeming not to have a care in the world. My mother gave him holy hell for deserting me on the road the way he did. Jake didn't seem to understand what the problem was.

We drove home and then my mother took me to the emergency room. They cleaned my lacerations and taped gauze bandages to them. After telling the doctor what happened he told me that I was lucky to be alive. Then he gave me a tetanus shot and sent me home.

For the next several days I got a lot of mileage out of my lacerations with the girls at school. After I showed one girl she said "Eeewww!!!" and the next thing I knew girls were flocking up to see for themselves.

"Eeewww!!!" They all squealed... I was rather enjoying all the attention.

I had scars on my back for several years after that. They looked like I had been flogged.

When I look back on that whole incident it's amazing that it all turned out so well. I didn't hit my head on the curb, the road, the tree trunk, or even the ground directly. I didn't get hit or run over by a car. I had no spinal cord injury or broken bones of any kind... and I was literally catapulted at least six to ten feet into the air while traveling at least forty miles per hour! Even the lacerations, which were very long, very deep and quite hideous to look at, didn't bleed very much.

While hitch-hiking I might've been picked up by a psycho and never been seen or heard from again... but instead I was picked up by a nice family who took me right to where I needed to go.

God was watching out for me.

The hardest thing for me to deal with that day, unfortunately, was the important lesson I had to learn about Jake - A hard lesson that reverberates in my life to this very day.

God brings all things to good for those who believe and are called according to His purpose. God was indeed watching over me that day... and preparing me for another day.

The End

**PS:** If you're wondering why the heck I called this story "Phileo Betrayed," here it is: Phileo is a Greek word that means "love." The Greek language actually has several words that translate into English as "love." English is a pretty blunt communication tool when it comes to the meaning of the word love. Think about it - we love our children, we love our pets, we love our cars, we love to read the comics in the Sunday paper. As you can see, when someone says "I love you" in English it can be a seriously ambiguous claim... and from my experience, it is very often perceived differently than it was intended! Anyhow, Phileo means "brotherly love." The kind of love that one feels or expresses to members of one's family. The trouble with Phileo is that it is **not unconditional**. In other words, even your own brother may love you one minute and treat you like you're dead the next in the event that your existence becomes problematic for him. When I was younger, and more naive, I believed that my own brother's love (phileo) for me – for our relationship - was deep and meaningful... maybe even unconditional. I was simply wrong. And so, as events told in this story (and many others yet to be told) unfolded over the years of my family life, the deception of Phileo was betrayed for what it really is. That is, my illusion of my own brother's love that I foolishly embraced was betrayed by the reality. All this may sound somewhat bitter to you but, the truth is, my realization of the true nature of phileo led me to seek a greater love for my heart soul and mind. That quest propelled me into the realm of faith. I learned that God, you see, loves unconditionally and that true and perfect unconditional love can only be experienced in a living relationship with God. Jesus, you see, is the expression of God's unconditional love. That's a whole other can of worms! All this brings to mind the saying, "Blood is thicker than water." When I was younger I thought this saying meant that your family ties (blood) are stronger than any other ties... or something to that effect. I have since learned that I was completely wrong about the meaning of these words.

What they really say is that a relationship through a blood covenant is stronger than a relationship that shares the "water" of the womb. That means your own family and anyone else that was born. (that covers just about everyone!) The true meaning of these words has come into sharp focus for me in recent years as the power and meaning of being adopted into God's family has come into conflict with the compulsions and addictions of my earthly family. It's a tough road to walk but it is necessary for the transition to eternity.

JKT



Jamie Thompson is a writer, musician, songwriter, photographer, videographer, husband, and a stay-at-home-dad with two small children.

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