

BREAKING BARRIERS

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The Right Tools

Mike Tulp is a Disability Concerns contact person in Orillia, Ontario.

I am not a handyman, but I do have experience with using tools. I'd like to describe some of the ones that have come in handy for me.

When I was a child I wore small, metal-rimmed glasses, firmly bridged and hooked behind the ears. I disliked glasses, even though they served a purpose. Besides helping me see more clearly, they kept me out of fights, especially after the one time when I pummeled my friend and burst into tears because I lost them. I was the only one in my family who wore glasses.

When I put my glasses aside during my teens and early twenties, new energy seemed to flow through my body, and I found that I could do without them! Yet there was a dark cloud shadowing my happiness. The cause of this shadow I was to discover in due time.

They should be more sensitive, I thought, speak more clearly, include me, face me when they're speaking. They don't seem to like me. Although I had many friends, I felt alone. Years later, when I flew across the ocean and saw glaciers floating far apart in the wide, dark ocean, I felt like one of them.

A Whole New World

When I started wearing a hearing aid, a new world opened up. I was 41 years old when my hearing was tested. The pharmacist succeeded in selling me a shiny brass ornament the size of a cigarette box with a white cord that would have snaked from my breast pocket up to my right ear, but I felt embarrassed and refused to wear it. I even stalled paying for the ear mold until the man came to my door requesting payment. Later on, when I acquired a behind-the-ear aid, I felt much more at ease. Gradually I realized what I had missed, and discovered the magic of having a tool that enabled me to do what I most wanted to do. I was a social worker, with ample opportunity for one-to-one contact that allowed me to feel the warmth of human interaction. Even when dealing with less pleasant situations, I wanted to find a way to come closer to people, connect with people. As Helen Keller once said, blindness cuts you off from things, but deafness cuts you off from people.

My capacity for listening expanded when I acquired a second hearing aid. I then marveled at the force and harmony of music and the magnificence of bird songs cascading from the trees. A "glacier" feeling still comes over me when I think I am missing out on a conversation between people. But when that happens, I get hold of a pen, or I use the keyboard to break the isolation and express my feelings. These are valuable tools as well.

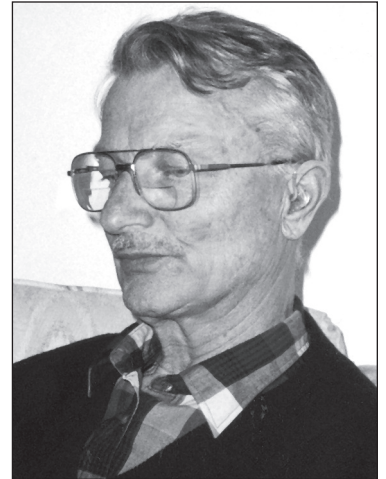
A few times I borrowed a delightful FM device (a frequency modulator) from the local hard-of-hearing branch, The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. This device can be placed in the center of the table; with the addition of my hearing aids I could hear the sounds of the vowels and consonants which formed the words I wanted to hear. I was elated. Though set apart, I felt included. Wow! The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association also has available a Pocket Talker useful for one-to-one conversation, a Personal Infrared device for the television, a Portable Phone Amplifier for traveling where phone amplification is not available, and a Flashing Strobe Light to see the phone ring. Isn't this wonderful?

At my church, two portable mikes have been obtained for use at congregational meetings or during the time for prayer requests. Now I and many others are able to hear, and I'm not making a fool of myself by repeating what someone else has just said.

Some Tools Take Getting Used To

Personally, I hate using a phone. When I turn up the volume, something they say I should do, today's phones transmit all kinds of unwanted, interfering noises.

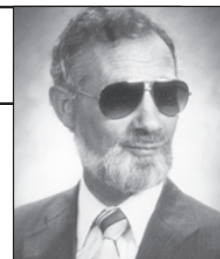
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From the Director



Does every disability necessarily involve suffering of some sort? It is certainly true that society's ignorance, indifference, and prejudice about disabilities generate suffering for people with disabilities, a good deal more suffering than is necessary. But it is impossible to give an accurate or useful answer to the question of whether every disability always involves some suffering. The "disabled" enjoy life just as much as do the "able-bodied." And yet the subject of suffering still comes up when people talk about disabilities. This is especially so for Christians, since we believe that God is good and always brings good.

I used to be scrupulous about distinguishing between suffering for the sake of the gospel on the one hand and suffering in general on the other. But I no longer think that distinction is helpful. When you look over the list of Paul's troubles in 2 Corinthians 11:25-27, you will see that some of them had little to do with persecution. They were the sort of troubles any traveler at that time would face. True, because Paul was traveling for the sake of the gospel, everything he suffered had something to do with serving God, but much of what he suffered was ordinary human misery.

The same is true for the rest of us Christians. Everything in our lives is related to serving God in some way or other, and this includes suffering. A few of us may suffer persecution for the sake of the gospel, but most of us just suffer the ordinary sorts of pain and misery all other humans suffer. Nevertheless, this too will be part of our service to God. It works like this.

- First, God puts us through the exact same troubles unbelievers suffer so they will learn that we believe in him not to escape suffering but to prove we love him, no matter what he sends. God does not shelter his children from what other people go through. In fact, the opposite is true: God tells us that following Jesus will involve extra suffering.

- Second, God puts us through the exact same miseries unbelievers carry so they will know we are fellow sufferers with them and share their troubles. Then we may be able to help them trust in the Savior as the God of strength, compassion, and mercy who is always with those who call on him.

Now, with these ordinary sufferings and disabilities in mind, read the following words from Saint Paul: "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh" (2Cor. 4:8-11, NRSV).

Paul is not saying these things just about himself and the other apostles but about all Christians and about everything that happens in their lives. These words are apt descriptions of life with disabilities, and living at peace with our disabilities out of love for Jesus is another way of suffering as a Christian testimony to any unbeliever who lives with disabilities. The distinction between suffering arising from persecution and suffering arising from other sources is irrelevant to anyone who serves Christ faithfully in this way, since all of life is serving him, even our disabilities and sufferings.

—Jim Vanderlaan

Letters are welcome in keeping with the purpose of *Breaking Barriers*. They may be edited for style and length.

—Rev. James Vanderlaan

Caregivers!

Using the following web community address, caregivers can ask and answer questions or make comments that they feel could benefit someone.

www.caregiver.guidedvision.com

Please try it out and let us know what you think.

—JV

You may now access
Breaking Barriers through
our website at



<http://www.crcna.org/crdc/index.htm>

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Letters

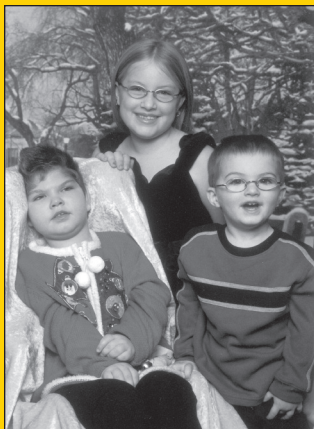
Dear Editor,

I appreciate receiving your newsletters from the CRC disability program! I read each of them and pass them on to others so that others may learn from them.

Recently I was at a friend's home and saw this poem and picture on the wall of his living room. Madyson is his granddaughter. I asked him for a copy so that your readers may be encouraged by its contents.

Lastly, I thank you for your ministry with those who have a disabling condition. I have a special passion for those who may have a disability, whether it is temporary or permanent. I have been blessed over the years having worked with 3,000-4,000 families where a moderate or severe disability is present.

In his grace and service,
Dick Tift
Director of Missions
Fair Haven Ministries
Hudsonville, Michigan



Madyson Van Beek, age 6 years, taken in 2004, with her sister, Rachel, 8 years and brother, Hunter, 2 years. Madyson has severe C.P. She cannot walk or talk, and whether or not she can see is questionable. She's fed through a feeding tube. But she has the most beautiful smile and laugh in all the world. She is a precious and priceless gift from God. This poem was written in 2000 by her great aunt Joni Babeldyk.

Madyson

Into this world
A child came
Embraced by love,
Madyson her name.

Hearts were broken
When news reached ears,
Complications, they said
Mom and Dad were in tears.

Questions were asked
An outcome to seek
Where were the answers?
It all looked so bleak.

Days passed by
Little Madyson grew
In stature and in strength
With a precious smile too!

What's deep within?
We may never know.
But God gave a promise
On her to bestow.

These little ones have Angels
The Bible says it's true.
They behold the face of Jesus
On a daily basis too!

Madyson, her Angel and Jesus
Have formed quite a bond.
She's God's precious child
And of her He is fond.

What goes on in her soul?
Our eyes cannot see,
Conversations with Angels
And in his arms she may be.

We only see the outside
Of this precious little one,
But the work that God is doing
Is far from being done.

Someday when our eyes are opened
May be then we can truly see
What Madyson has seen all along
Love, Angels, Jesus and a bright Eternity.

Dear Breaking Barriers,

I thought of writing you again. I have a Friendship Bible class on Thursdays from 6:45 to 8:00, one-on-one with a teacher. My teacher is from Hope College. She is in a wheelchair. She is paralyzed from her waist down. She is very special to me. And she is a Christian lady. I like being with her a lot. I have special people like that who have disabilities.

I work four days a week from 10:30 to 3:30 and I have 3 days off. I stay very busy all the time. I am very active in my church and I am a Christian. I love the Lord. It is so neat to see special needs children like this. We meet in my church and we have a special needs program once a month with a very young married couple. It brings tears in my eyes to see it, and it comes from the Lord. Thanks for sending me *Breaking Barriers*. I'd like to hear from you again.

With all my love,
Faith Scholter
My Sister's House
Holland, Michigan



Dear Editor

I appreciate *Breaking Barriers*. I read it from cover to cover. I do not have disabilities but have been close to many that have. I am thankful that more is being done now for the needy ones than in the past. Thank you for your work and may God continue to bless you.

Sincerely,
Geneva A. Bonnema
Willmar, Minnesota



Dear Rev. Vanderlaan,

What an encouragement to read your editorial in the Spring 2005 issue of *Breaking Barriers*! The biblical references as well as the observations from your personal experience articulate so well what we as parents of a daughter with cognitive disabilities need to hear. I'm sure I speak for other parents as well. It is "deeply moving", to quote you, "to hear this from the Lord and to know what a special place he has chosen for people with disabilities."

Judy Sprik,
Belmont, Michigan

"See that you do not look down on one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in Heaven."

—Matthew 18:10



Greetings everyone,

This is Susan, a member of Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Ancaster, Ontario. I'm the Disability contact person for my church, as well as a person with a disability—two in fact: Fibromyalgia and a bad back from injuries suffered in a 1997 motor vehicle accident. Although I'm not confined to a wheelchair because of these injuries, I do live with chronic pain every day.

However, through these injuries and illnesses God has blessed me with good friends who can empathise and sympathise. He has led me to a place where I am content, and for that I am thankful.

Still, my situation has challenges that can be quite overwhelming at times.

I have a B.A. from Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, and I am reasonably articulate on a good day. What frustrates me the most in dealing with disability issues is trying to get the government to take the concerns of people with disabilities seriously. I feel I can not get them to listen despite having the research on disability and poverty issues in hand.

I mention the following concerns as prayer items, and also as points of concern. There are many others, both in Canada and in the United States, who suffer similar situations. When Christopher Reeve's character in the remake of *Rear Window* was asked why he was spending so much money to renovate his apartment and buy expensive exercise equipment, he replied, "It's expensive to be disabled in this country." Christopher Reeve likely did not have to worry about the prohibitive cost of therapy and renovations to his home after his real-life tragic accident. But many of us are denied therapy, home equipment, physiotherapy, and the like, because of our poverty. Consider these facts:

- In Ontario, the province I live in, a single adult on Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) receives \$930.00 a month in benefits. The breakdown is this: \$414.00 for shelter and \$516.00 for all else, including phone, transportation, clothes, gifts, sundries, insurance, vehicle repairs, and so on.
- The availability of social (public) housing in Hamilton is eight years behind the need. This means that I will wait from 5-8 years to get into a suitable "geared-to-income" apartment. The average price of a market-rent one-bedroom apartment in this area is \$640.00, plus utilities, parking, and so on. It's easy to understand then that affordable housing is difficult to obtain. Many families are forced to decide between paying the rent and buying groceries. The use of food banks is on the rise.
- Another way to understand how poor the benefits are is to compare them to the national standard. STATSCAN, our Canadian National Records Agency, states that a single person with an income of less than \$18,000 a year is living in poverty. A recipient of ODSP receives approximately \$11,400.
- Our government representatives, known as MPPs (Member of Provincial Parliament) have not given recipients a cost-of-living increase since 1987, but a few years ago they gave themselves a 33 percent increase.
- The current Liberal provincial government is going to cut our benefits even further in April by de-listing medical services from our provincial health plan. This means that chiropractic and physiotherapy care will not be covered any longer. People who require therapy regularly, such as those with arthritis, Multiple Sclerosis and Muscular Dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy, accidental injuries, and so on, will no longer have these services provided.
- In Ontario, recipients of ODSP are allowed to work part-time and make an additional \$160 a month, but this level is set much too low and has not been increased recently. Those who are on ODSP and are able to work part-time are penalized if they earn too much.

The government keeps cutting benefits and does not seem to care that they are driving those with disabilities further into poverty. For those who do not have a family to assist them, or a church community willing to help, the situation can be very disheartening. Prayer and action are needed to ensure that our government does not continue to cut benefits.

I have attended advocacy meetings and talked with many people who do not have a faith community, and it makes me wonder how they can possibly live gracefully through these situations. Please pray for a change of heart for the representatives of the government and of "big business," as they control our finances. Also pray for advocacy groups that work on behalf of those with disabilities. Pray that they will be valued and recognized, and that their plans will be implemented forthwith.

Book Recommendation

Jim Vanderlaan, director of Disability Concerns

I have read the following book with fascination and spiritual enrichment, and I commend it to you readers.

***Nola: A Journey of Hope after Traumatic Brain Injury*
by Judy Sprik with Ron Sprik**

At the age of seventeen, Nola Sprik suffered severe head injury in a car accident. At first her family and friends hoped and prayed for her survival. Then they watched and waited, wondering if she would ever respond to them again. In this biographical account, Nola's mother, Judy, writes

of her family's journey with Nola through a lengthy coma and rehabilitation. It is a testimony of God's guidance along an unforeseen path, his grace to see through difficulties, and his hope to journey on. Included are letters from Nola's siblings, poems, and two chapters by Nola's father, Ron. Their prayer is that this book will bring encouragement to the reader.

You can read more about Nola or order a book at the following website: <http://nola.sprik.com> or call 616-863-4948.



An Outstanding Thrill

Gail Selfridge is Disability Concerns consultant for Classis Rocky Mountain.

For me that thrill was jumping out of an airplane at 17,500 feet and parachuting to the ground. Some people think that parachuting would be less scary for me because I am totally blind. But it was at least as vivid to me as it would be for anyone else. For twenty years of my life I had some sight, so I could picture the ground rushing toward me. I put all my concentration into the motion of falling.

Fulfilling a Dream

I had been dreaming of doing this for at least thirty years. Then I heard that a man who is blind had done a parachute jump using two-way radio in contact with someone on the ground. When I found out that I could do it in tandem with someone who'd done it thousands of times, I knew I had to try it at least once. I contacted the Mile-Hi Skydiving Center in Longmont, Colorado, and they said they had no problem with my doing it. The man who was to be my partner said he'd taken a number of blind people on jumps. He showed me the mechanics, including how to pull the rip cord. I asked how I'd know when to do that, and he said he'd tell me. It was very windy while we were falling but we could still hear each other. I also had a photographer jump with us to take a video of my jump. While we were falling, before I pulled the rip cord, he took my hand. That sounds impossible but it can be done. After the initial split second of fear, I relaxed and enjoyed the fantastic feeling of speed. My partner told me when to pull the rip cord and I did. He showed me the complete control one can have on speed and position. That was really surprising to me. He let me steer until we were about 250 feet from the ground and then he took over. We landed right in the center of our target and very lightly in a

sitting position. The experience was so exhilarating that I intend to do it again next summer.

A Glimpse of God's Power

When we were in freefall, after that first split second when fear touched me, I felt that I got a tiny glimpse of God's power. God could wipe me out with one quick thought, one spoken word. That left me in awe of God. I believed he wouldn't do that because he loved me and he was showing me the wonder and magnitude of his creation. But if God did choose to finish my life here on earth, it would be because he wants me to be with him, and that is the forever we all long for.

Did I put my life at needless risk by skydiving? I don't believe so. My life is in God's hands every minute of every day. If God chooses, he can take me to himself while I am asleep. If I am listening to God when I decide to do things that some people find risky, I will know when he doesn't want me to do something. He will give me a strong feeling or he will show me in some other way that the thing I'm thinking of doing is not a good idea. He may or may not always let me know why, but he will let me know if I listen and trust in him.



Thirteen years ago, on a summer evening, Pam slipped into a back pew in our church. Not many people spoke to her those first few weeks, since she would leave immediately after the service. Later, after we got to know her, she told us that she came because she sensed an emptiness in her life, and she remembered that in previous years she had experienced the love of God. She hoped she could find it again. Later that year, she received catechism instruction from our pastor, publicly professed her faith in her Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, and became a member of our church.

Pam experienced times of happiness and joy, but when she described her own life it was often in terms of pain, disappointment, frustration, and, sometimes even despair. Early in her life she had endured abusive relationships that deeply affected her in many ways. Often she found it difficult to think of herself as worthy of anyone's love. And how could God love her? Woven into this uncertainty was her notion that God could not look past a very obvious sin, in her case, food addiction.

Pam was always aware of her weight.

One hot Sunday evening, we held the worship service in our church basement. Before our congregational prayer Pam stood up and walked to the front of the small group. With tears in her eyes, and shaking with nervousness, she shared some of her experiences among us. She felt that many of our looks and comments showed that we were judging her and condemning her for her food addiction. She had hoped that our love for her would not be dependent on how thin or fat she was. She cautioned us not to judge her, since we had not walked in her shoes. Our love for her had emboldened her to speak up, and as a congregation we had much to learn from her.

Larger crowds were frightening to Pam, but she loved being part of a small group. Over the course of three years, while she could still walk, she came to trust the people in her group and experienced the family of God. Slowly she began to participate in the discussion, and often challenged us with her hard questions. On our way home she would continue to reflect on the discussion and give insights her struggle in life provided. Our group learned much from Pam and her simple faith.

But Pam continued to find it difficult to worship

with us since, in her own eyes, her "sin" was very obvious, and she was ashamed.

Few of us could demonstrate the love of God for Pam as well as the children did. When they visited her, sent her cards, or phoned her, her face would light up with delight. An envelope of drawings from a Sunday school class was precious to her.

Pam had long discussions with two good friends about God's love. She found it exceedingly difficult to accept fully God's love for her. How could God look past her sins, forgive her, accept her as she was, and even love her? She kept on coming back to such questions time and again. Her past abuse, low self-esteem, obesity, and poor health were factors in all of this. Slowly, over a period of several years, she came to accept and experience God's unconditional love for her. For her this was a matter of life itself, and it was within this context that she experienced friendship, affection, and love from people in our congregation.

In the summer of 2003 Pam's weight began to adversely affect her health, and she realized that something drastic had to be done. She decided to limit her food intake and asked a friend in confidence to walk with her in this and help "keep her honest." Every morning they would discuss her meals for the day. Over a three-month period Pam stuck to her resolution, but the price was very heavy. She experienced many days of despair and agony. Her kitchen was no longer a friendly place to her. She sometimes confessed she did not deserve a nourishing meal. But she persisted, and her demon retreated.

Despite these limits on her calories, her weight did not decrease, and she began to show signs of fluid retention. In September 2003 she had to be hospitalized and was at death's door, but she fought back. Over the spring and early summer of last year she tried hard to stay mobile, but by midsummer she was mostly confined to her bed at home. Still, she seldom complained. Last September she had a relapse and was admitted to hospital again, where she died peacefully two weeks later. Our congregation mourned her death in a moving funeral service, but we rejoiced that our friend Pam was now free, in the accepting arms of her God.

Pam's friends continue to think of her. We are privileged to have known her. She gave us much and taught us much. Her life revealed to close friends the extent to which abuse can injure and scar. But also it revealed the way relationships can be restored and freed. Remembering Pam assures us that God, in his unconditional love for all of us, does not remember past failings. Walking together and sharing our pain can help reveal that love. And then, through the Spirit, our disabilities and illnesses can become places of healing and spiritual growth.



Pam

My story is no different than that of many others who find their life turned upside down, whether through accident or disease. In September 1970, while driving home on my motorcycle after a day of work, I was hit by a drunk driver. Following two months in the hospital, strenuous physiotherapy, and learning to walk again, I returned home. I still carry the stainless steel pin in my leg. Since the accident I have had a bad back.

Then, in the fall of 1998, I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. I graduated from a stumbling gait to walking with a cane to walking with crutches to using a wheelchair in about two years. One morning I sneezed. The sneeze caused my back muscles to contract, which somehow caused the nerves in my lower back to be pinched. Waves of pain such as I had seldom experienced before spread through my back. I was helpless to move. By holding myself rigidly stiff and immobile, I could control the amount of pain, but any attempt to settle into a comfortable position in my wheelchair only increased my extreme discomfort.

My wife finally called for an ambulance and I was trundled off to the hospital. Morphine injections relaxed my muscles to the extent that I could lay flat on a bed. It took ten days of painkillers to get to the point where I

could turn from side to side in bed. During those ten days, since I was not using my legs at all, I lost my ability to stand and transfer myself from the bed into my wheelchair. It is surprising how quickly you can lose an ability if it is not used. I had been gradually losing this ability to the extent that my wife had to assist in my transfers to and from bed but the lack of use seemed to accelerate the process.

At this point the reality of the situation sank in. I had been adapting my daily routine to accommodate my lessening abilities while at the same time my wife was gradually assuming full responsibility for all the housework. How would I be able to do anything around the house if I couldn't even get out of bed? How would I provide for my family?

I stepped a friend and fellow worker. Unbeknownst to me, he set plans in motion to renovate our home from three to two bedrooms. The overall plan was first to get me home and then get me back to work.

Yellowknife is a small, remote city in Canada's north. Our remoteness has meant that many of us who live here have developed and maintain a certain independence. But we also have learned to come to the assistance of our neighbors when they are in need.

When my office organized a list of volunteers to help renovate our home, they had no difficulty recruiting a list of nearly 80 people! To me this was unbelievable. I didn't think that there could be that many people in this town who even knew who I was!

Businesses donated or provided supplies at cost. Electricians and plumbers donated their expertise. Office workers provided labor. Those with construction skills put their knowledge to work. After working a full

eight-hour day at their regular jobs, many of these volunteers put in an additional couple of hours in my home, often working late at night or on weekends. With amazing rapidity, walls were demolished, flooring removed, new walls installed, and laminate flooring laid throughout the living area of the house. Our three-bedroom home was renovated into a two-bedroom home with an enlarged washroom containing a wheelchair accessible roll-in shower area.

For three-and-a-half months I lay in the hospital as the necessary renovations for my safety and independence were planned, organized, and undertaken. For three-and-a-half months I lay in the hospital dependent on the goodwill and generosity of others. For three-and-a-half months I learned patience and humility. For three-and-a-half months I learned about the goodness within humankind.

When I finally arrived home in the middle of February, I could wheel about the house on new laminate flooring. I could take a shower. I could move about without damaging my knuckles on the doorframes. I could choose my own clothes from a wheelchair-accessible closet. I was in heaven on earth.

I have now returned to work on a part-time basis. The MS tires me out by the afternoon and I need to rest. I also need to be at home to use the washroom. I do what I can to help run our family. My wife still does the majority of the day-to-day work in and around the house, all the while maintaining a full-time job. When I need extra help around the house, my sons, their friends, or friends from the community have all responded to the call.

Such is my story. I have much to be thankful for, many persons to be thankful to, and a burden of gratitude which can never be repaid. This letter can only be a small part of that thanks.



Cornelius

Meditation: In the Way of Wisdom

Heidi Kortman

Text: Proverbs 4:11-19

I guide you in the way of wisdom, and lead you along clear paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hindered, when you run you will not stumble (vv. 11-12).

One gift God holds out to everyone is wisdom, which has been defined as seeing life from God's perspective. People who have mobility handicaps (I myself have Cerebral palsy) often learn more quickly than most that total self-sufficiency is not the way the world is designed to work. Interdependence has always been part of God's plan.

When we ask God for wisdom, what happens? First, God steps ahead of us as our guide. The paths he chooses are clear and straight. If we stay behind our guide, our lives are sure to be full of purpose and lasting satisfaction. Of course, we must also learn to see beyond our limitations. Even if our physical hindrances annoy us daily, the destination we will reach when we follow God's leading will be our home with him.

Today we will not likely see the literal fulfillment of God's promise "When you walk, your steps will not be hindered, when you run you will not stumble." In our times of deepest frustration, we cry out for that with tears as we pray. But even while Jesus was here on earth, he did not heal every handicapped person. Like those unhealed then, we too have a specific function to fulfill for the completion of God's amazing plans. Therefore, with our unsteady balance, spastic muscles, or arthritic joints, we will make daily progress down the path he chooses, however long.

Verse 13 says that besides guiding us, God will also be our instructor. What else does God want us to learn? First,

we must not surrender our wisdom for anything. Verses 14-17 and 19 warn us of detours we must not take. Doing evil, even provoking discord by our attitudes, is folly. Folly is taking on the devil's perspective. That fills God's people with horror.

What is the reward for building our lives on wisdom from God? Read verse 18: "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter until the full light of day." If we gain and keep God's wisdom, our lives can light the way for others, even as we reach the place where God himself is our light and there is no more pain.

The Right Tools, continued from page 1

I get names and numbers wrong and do not readily recognize voices. I would rather hold on to my solid, antiquated black dial phone because with it I can use my hearing aid phone switch. In my study it stands on an antique glass and wrought iron bed stand I once inherited. The stand and the phone comfort me; some tools may be nice but not altogether useful.

It takes time to get used to new tools. But that's another story.

I feel a tingle of pleasure creep up my spine when my little grandson gently fingers the molds in my ears and curiously wonders what these are for. Such hearing aids make a disability visible, I realize, and in the process of explaining I become aware that somehow, in some way and at some time in my life, I've taken ownership.



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