



Miracles that follow the plow :: Prayer for a Phoenix Pastor & Wife

Prayer for a Phoenix Pastor & Wife - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/6/4 16:59

Please pray for this pastor here in Phoenix. My wife and I do not know him, but two of our friends attend his church. He sent out the following email.

Quote:

-----It is June 2, 2003, 11:00 PM.

Today was our 31st anniversary. I spent it having to face what life might be without Trish. That's not a good way to spend one's anniversary.

I can't get my mind and heart around this possibility of loss. So most of the time I am just numb. Then my knees will get weak. That's when I want to just go sit and stare at the wall. A few times, today I have gone to a private place to weep. No one told me how to prepare for a day like this. So I really don't know how one is supposed to behave in our situation. The truth is, these past two days, I have felt lost and lonely and I don't know what to do with those feelings.

Trish shares all my memories. We have the same mountain heritage. We were raised in the same little Pentecostal denomination. Trish learned Spanish as we pastored our first church in Managua, Nicaragua so she would speak our family's second language. We traveled the Amazon and the Andes together. We learned French so we could pastor two little churches we founded in Montreal. We went to Nashville where we raised our children and expanded our lives. We moved to Phoenix. We went through several years of Hell together that felt like it would never stop. But it did stop, thanks be to God. We walked through the marriage of our children. We grieved our empty nest for a while. Then we discovered that our adult children and sons-in-law were wonderful and that they wanted us in their lives. We went to school to earn a Masters in psychology so we could make better sense of the world and be of more help to others. Then, in this last year, we found a common source of bliss in our two beautiful granddaughters. Finally, our church had become a place of rest and blessing for us. All these memories and a thousand more like them are ours together. It takes two to carry such memories. How can one person possibly hold the weight of such beauty, grace and mystery?

But now here we are, 31 years after we first began our journey together, and Trish does not know what day it is. She fights for her life to the sounds of computers beeps. There are tubes running from her head to drain the blood that has been soaking her brain. A machine breathes for her because she cannot breath on her own. The doctors say that when she recovers (as I believe she will) she will remember nothing of this day, or this week. It is possible that she will remember nothing even of this month. So I am trying hard to be both her memory and mine. I am trying to record all the sounds, recall all the names of those who pray, and make mental descriptions of the visual backdrop against which this new act of our life's drama is being played. This is my anniversary gift to her: I will tell her the memories of these days that she cannot record on her own. I will give these to her so we can share them just as we have shared all the others.

Yesterday, Trish went to work at the Salvation Army in South Phoenix. She volunteers her time to work in their drug rehabilitation program. She wants to help people made in God's image to get free of Satan's bondage. She helps them heal from the destruction that evil has inflicted upon their lives. She had been talking to some of these very men when she suddenly felt ill. She said simply that she had a headache. So she walked toward her car, getting ready to go home. A man who is recovering from cocaine addiction took it upon himself to call an ambulance simply because he didn't think she looked right and the ambulance got there before she could leave.

The paramedics convinced her to go with them to the hospital. That's where I met her. We talked while the doctors tried to figure out what was happening.

She told me how ill she felt. Then she whispered frantically "HEADACHE!

HEADACHE!" and the light went out of her eyes. She stopped breathing. I didn't know it yet, but a little vein just under the top of her head, a piece of her that had been desperately trying to hold back the blood collecting under a thin place on its surface, suddenly gave way. That's when my wife, my friend of 31 years, entered the valley of the shadow of death.

In a split second she left my side and went to a place I could not go. But she was not alone. The great Psalm assures me that believers are never alone when they walk that deep and dark valley. I wasn't with her but her Lord was with her.

In my heart of hearts, I don't believe it is her time to walk into eternity.

I believe she will recover. The signs are good that I am right about this.

In the meantime, our only connection is the God whom we have served together these many years and whom we serve today. When I met with him today, He was meeting with her. That's how Trish and I were joined this anniversary. We met together in that "place" we call the communion of saints.

For about three weeks, Trish and I have had the conviction that God was about to do something new and wonderful in our lives. We have been very happy, waiting for whatever this new thing this was. We have talked a lot about it. Some great change was coming and our next season would be joyful.

We didn't expect what happened yesterday. But tonight, on this anniversary night, I choose to believe that Trish and I have been right these past three weeks. Somehow, this is all going to turn out well. Somehow, all that happens will simply make more memories that we can share. Next year, on our

32nd anniversary, we will recall these memories that I am now collecting for her. I will share my memories with her. Perhaps she will also have some special memories of her encounter with God during these days to share with me. We will laugh and cry and hold each other and be grateful for a few more years with each other and with our children and grandchildren. We will be happy to see then how God has worked to take us into a new season of fruitful and joyful ministry.

Today, my sister-in-law went to thank the man who called the ambulance that saved Trish's life. When she thanked him he said, "O, me? I'm just a crack head." Lisa replied, "no, to our family you are an angel of God."

Something isn't it, how God uses the likes of all of us! He makes a feeding trough into a cradle for a king, a nasty rugged old tree into the source of all grace, a "crack head" into a messenger of peace and, it takes a scary, lonely and weary anniversary and makes it into a day of overflowing with love and devotion. A God who can perform such alchemy can surely make all the memories of this difficult day into a story worth telling.

So please keep praying. Wherever you can, take time to meet Trish and I in our special meeting place -- the presence of God. I leave you with four special truths that we learned together today. These truths make up the beautiful gift that God gave us for our anniversary today:

Life is brief.

Life is fragile.

Life is wonderful.

And in Christ, life is indestructible.

Glory to God!

Dan Scot

Thank you!
Matthew

Re: Prayer for a Phoenix Pastor & Wife - posted by ravin, on: 2004/6/4 17:36

I pray knowing the christ that you both love and charish also loves and charish's you and that he knows the heart.He ca me to heal the broken hearted and to set the captive free. God knows. he'll answer. in these times I pray for your strengh t to come from he in whom we can do all things. I believe that the lord whom you love is with her now even as we are lifti ng her up in prayer he is with her and giving her the streghth that she needs. I also lift you up to the one who is healer, co unselor and high priest, and ask that the comforter holy spirit give you peace at this time

Re: Prayer for a Phoenix Pastor & Wife - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2004/6/4 21:41

Quote:

-----It is June 2, 2003, 11:00 PM.

Is this a typo or is this email a year old?

Also, I live in Phoenix too, which church does this man pastor?

In Christ,

Ron

Re: Dan Scot - posted by Gideons (), on: 2004/6/4 22:29

Thanks for sharing this Matthew,

Let's join in prayer for this couple. Romans 8:28 is what I cling to in times like these "And we know that all things work to gether for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Even if we don't understand his purpose in all of this, let's choose to believe Him. Pastor Dan's wife and Pastor himself are in my prayers.

Ed

Re: Update on Pastor's Dan wife - posted by Gideons (), on: 2004/6/24 12:20

I've been following Pastor Dan's wife condition over the last couple of weeks. Praise the Lord she has regained conscio usness. If you would like to see what the Lord is doing in her life, here is a link: <http://www.valleycathedral.org/Letters/Letter17.asp>.

Let's keep them both in our prayers...

Re: - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/6/24 12:38

Ed,
Thank you for the update. I had planned on posting an update myself...

Ron,
I apologize I didn't answer your question that Dan is the pastor at Valley Cathedral, I must have missed your post. Two of our friends attend that church and that is how we were alerted to the situation. Praise the Lord for her improvements!

Where do you and yours attend? The Lord has us at Camelback Bible Church. It is a huge blessing! (Feel free to PM or email me. Thanks!)

Appreciate the prayers,
Matthew

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/6/24 13:32

Quote:
-----Let's keep them both in our prayers...

AMEN lets expect God to restore Him for Gods glory and thank you brother Ed for keeping us informed. What a wonderful thing it is to pray for the body of Christ we are all family what an awesome fact that is.

Re: Update - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/7/1 11:55

Praise the Lord! Pastor Dan's wife is getting better. Here are some of his emails.

19 - Friday, June 25, 2004 8:44 AM

When I arrived at the hospital yesterday, I asked Trish what she had done earlier.

"I learned to get out of a chair and to sit down in it again," she said.

Trish is busy this week learning to walk, eat and otherwise care for herself.

Trish is relearning behaviors that most of us perform many times a day without conscious thought. It turns out that these behaviors are far from simple. I have been watching as her therapists teach her the serious business of walking. She very slowly rises out of her wheelchair (with the help of two strong men, named, I kid you not, David and Obed!) She carefully ponders about what to do next.

"Grab the bars of this walkway," the therapist says. "Bring your right foot forward. Now, shift all your weight to the right side. Good. Now put your left foot forward. Shift all your weight to that left side. Great. Now lets do the same thing again with the right side."

----- (abridged)

Well, my brave and persistent wife is laughing her way through learning the simplest of things. Just a month ago, she could do those things while she thought about other, apparently more important things. Today, once again, she will practice: "right foot forward, shift the weight, That's right. Now the left. Do it again. Good job. Tomorrow we'll do this again."

And now, if you will excuse me, it is time for my morning Bible reading and prayer. After that, I am going to work out. I don't feel like doing either of them today but perhaps if I will just get started ...

Dan Scott

#20 - Saturday, June 26, 2004 4:42 PM

Trish is working hard to do simple things now; things like keeping her head up straight. She has to really focus on this because if we leave her alone for very long, her head leans over to the right until it almost touches her shoulder. Her neck then gets stiff. She seems frozen in place and it is difficult to straighten her up.

I stay with her most of the time now. The time that her doctors, nurses and therapists can be with her, though extremely valuable, is limited. So I help her carry through with what she learns during the various therapy sessions. Today, every few minutes, I have been telling her, "Trish you have to hold your head up. You are leaning to the right. You must retrain your brain." Or, "Trish, you have to take care of your left side. Your left hand is a part of your body too. Use it. You must retrain your brain."

Nearly everything I said to her today, I would add the words, "you must retrain your brain!"

Right before lunch, I pushed her in her wheelchair to the outside. We parked the wheelchair beside the small lawn and some flowers. While we were sitting there, I just started talking about this and that. Somewhere in the middle of a lot of nothing, I said, "Trish, you have to get well. You have to come home. Look, I have been washing my own shorts! I am getting desperate."

She was quiet for a long time. Then she slowly whispered, "Why don't you retrain your brain to wash your own shorts?!"

Hmmm. What if therapy works too well?

I stayed with her last night. The nurses gave me a cot and allowed me to sleep in Trish's room, right beside her bed. Several times in the night, her hand searched in the dark for me. When I was aware of it, I touched her hand. Each time I told her that I was still there. She would then go back to sleep.

I grieve watching my intelligent and independent wife struggle with the most basic issues of her personal care. I suffer watching her ponder so long before she can do the simplest things. I will be glad when she completes her therapy and returns to some semblance of her normal life. In a hundred ways, this ordeal has been a nightmare. But in one way, it has been a honeymoon. For when she looks into my eyes, she finds a way to express her love for me; the deepest love I have ever felt from a human being. Underneath all her confusion and difficulty, she finds a way to prove St. Paul's assertion; "love never fails."

I would not have wanted to live my life without knowing that this famous statement is more than a cliché.

We live in such cynical times. Many people really believe that love is just "a second hand emotion." Millions really believe that we express love to get people into our beds or to otherwise meet our needs. When gifted people make movies and write novels about love, we pay to see their movies and to read their books because we dare hope that such love really exists. We dare hope that we might even experience such love one day for ourselves. Nonetheless, many of us live with at least a shadow of the cynicism of our times, fearing that "love" is really just a myth and a longing impossible to actually fulfill.

Trish and I fought a long, hard battle learning how to experience love. Because of a number of factors, we struggled with our romantic connection from the very beginning of our marriage. On the second night of our honeymoon, I began a two week revival service for a little church in Eastern Virginia. From that moment onward and for many years afterward, I preached somewhere nearly every day. Time past. Both of us, for different reasons, found it difficult to connect to each other in any way other than as "ministry partners" and as parents.

The human part of our love was sad and empty. We had so spiritualized everything in our lives for so long that normal human love had become nearly non-existent for us. Several years ago though, we went to marriage therapy. Once we began, we went at it full steam -- week after week, year after year, trying to learn how to be human adults, capable of experiencing adult love for one another.

We had rarely vacationed.

We had rarely gone on dates.

We didn't speak of much to one another except about "the work of God."

Ours was a false spirituality. It was even idolatrous. And it nearly destroyed our marriage and our family.

The reason I say "false spirituality" is this: a spirituality that rejects common sense and material life has an appearance of godliness but it is really soulless and devilish.

Aquinas wrote that God made only three creatures -- spiritual creatures (angels), material creatures (animals), and incarnational creatures, that is to say creatures that are both material and spiritual (humans). He said that this state of incarnational life is our appointed realm. The enemy of our souls, he said, is continually trying to deceive us into either denying our spirituality (to become animals) or into denying our materiality (to become angels). Of the two deceptions, he claimed, trying to become angels, that is to say trying to be wholly spiritual, is the most dangerous assault upon our souls. For when we try to become angels, we are rebelling against our God-appointed realm, trying to rise above the station in which He created us and placed us. When we try to become wholly spiritual, we get into territory that is really over our heads, into places in which we can get easily deceived - even become mad!

Human love, human intimacy, and human sexuality are all blessed parts of our "God-appointed realm." Trying to become so spiritual that we finally "rise above" our need for deep connections with our loved ones is really not spirituality at all. It is a cruel Satanic deception. Trish and I spent untold hours of many weeks for many years exposing this deception in our lives. We came to realize that this same deception has a hold upon many of God's children. There is much needless devastation and untold pain in Christian marriages because of it. For some time we have been talking about how to address this.

Last night in the dark, when her hand touched mine, even surrounded by hospital noises and the surreal weirdness of our situation, I knew what love is. Human, romantic love is not a "second hand emotion." It is not a base thing to be surpassed by some super spiritual experience. The love I felt for my wife last night is, to the extent human beings are capable of experiencing it, the same quality that is the very essence of God. In that sacramental moment, when our souls touched through the material medium of our interlocked hands, we experienced as much of God as we have ever experienced in any church. For there was a third hand upon ours last night. The One who in holy matrimony made us man and wife, smiled as we touched and He said "it is good."

"Many waters cannot quench love," for "love is stronger than death." "He that loveth, knoweth God for God is love."

I know I speak for both Trish and I when I say to all of you, don't settle for a cold and lifeless marriage. Don't tell yourself that this is just the way things really are. Don't give up your dream for a meaningful and loving marriage. Fight for it. Dare risk stability in search of it. We are living testimonies that married love doesn't just happen, that it must be fought for.

Whatever our present circumstances, I rejoice in God. I thank Him for freeing Trish and I to love one another. Even brain trauma has not conquered what He has worked in our lives these past few years. I will not die without knowing what married love is.

If God was able to do all of this, helping us to "retrain our brains" so we could experience some degree of normalcy in our love and our marriage, then learning to walk again should not be all that difficult for Trish. And for me?

Well, I may even be able to learn to do my own shorts. Miracles do happen! They already have.

Dan Scott

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/7/1 11:58

Quote:
-----Miracles do happen! They already have.

Praise God yes they do! Thank you brother for sharing this encouraging praise report, lets keep praying that wholeness will be brought in the name of Jesus.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/7/1 13:00

This is just beyond expression.

Don't know how I missed this whole thing. Just read back through all the post's....

My heart goes out to this couple and the weight of these words from this pastor...

Not only will I be praying for them, but thanking the Lord for what I have just been taught here.

Re: pastor in pheonix - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/7/1 13:19

This whole thread is so precious! So astounding! May we all learn something here today. Even me, as I've come from my Dr's appt. and have learned that in about 5 days I will know if I have skin cancer. It higher than 50% chance. You can imagine all the things that go through my mind now. But this puts everything back into perspective.

The updates that were posted, especially about how they spent so much time trying to be/act spiritual that they missed out on "love" for a such a long time. Oh, if this isn't true! When you are faced with life and death situations, everything comes into a different perspective of what is really important. How does God really want us to be here on earth? Who matters most to us?

Thank the Lord for these posts at this time!

I pray that God will be glorified through it all- and He already is!

In His perfect love, Chanin

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/7/1 16:10

Indeed.

Thanks Ed for the link. Stopped by his site and did some perusing around...

I will have to send him an email got a feeling he might just find some interest here at SI.

An outstanding article from the pastor:

(<http://www.valleycathedral.org/graphics/Downloadables/ALamentForDyingWords.pdf>) A Lament For Dying Words

More updates are up as well on his wife Trish:

(<http://www.valleycathedral.org/Letters/PrayingForTrish.asp>) <http://www.valleycathedral.org/Letters/PrayingForTrish.asp>

Re: - posted by All2and4Him (), on: 2004/7/2 22:34

Wow, that is something powerful and incredible. I was touched. More importantly it is awesome to see God turning this into something good. I will pray for this pastor and especially for his wife. My heart goes out to them. May God bless and keep them.

John

PS

Ah Chanin, I didnt notice your post when I first wrote it, I was so caught up in the story about the pastor. I will be praying for you also. God bless and keep you.

Re: Update - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/7/8 18:47

#24

Thursday, July 01, 2004 9:27 PM

Trish was tired today. In fact, she spent much of it in bed. Her neurologist tells me that her team is delighted with Trish's progress. After all, last week she came into the unit unable to walk or swallow. Today, she can walk slowly with the help of a walker. She can eat many things and she can swallow, at least thick liquids.

Thanks to God for all of that.

Tonight, as I was getting ready to leave the hospital, Trish said to me, "I think I need to listen to a lot of music. I think music will help me recover my thoughts."

"How about us singing Amazing Grace?" I asked. "You know that real well."

"That sounds good," she agreed.

So I began to sing:

"Amazing grace how sweet the sound ..."

To my sorrow, I heard her quote all the words to the song but without any melody.

"Honey," I told her, "you are SAYING the words. Talking is not singing."

"I know," she said. "I hear the melody in my head. It just won't come out."

"Let's try again," I suggested. So I started to sing again. This time she tried to vary the pitch of her voice as best she could.

I noticed that she was finding a few of the notes. Then, for a few bars at least, she found the harmony. In her shaky voice, colored by all the trauma and confusion of this month, she sang with me:

"Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come

Tis grace that brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me on."

I lost it. I held her and began to sob.

Tears filled her eyes in response to my own emotion.

"I don't want to upset you," I said.

"I love you," she responded.

"I want nothing in this world more than for you and I to just sing together," I told her.

"We will. We will" she responded.

Weeping endures for the night. But Trish and I have already been through the night. It's morning now; it is time for joy.

The nights of our lives have the power, if we will only allow them, to wipe away the illusions and foolishness that grip our souls. Each morning thus brings a fresh opportunity to recover all that is truly valuable and important in our lives.

The performance tonight at Barrow's Neurological Institute, Rehab Unit # 18, will win no Dove awards. But it sure was music to my ears!

Dan Scott

#26

Saturday, July 03, 2004 11:24 PM

Trish has suffered a major brain trauma. For a subarachnoid hemorrhage is like an atomic bomb that explodes in your brain. It is a long time after the explosion before one knows exactly what has and what has not survived the blast.

After struggling for nearly three weeks; eating through a feeding tube, breathing through a respirator and experiencing the paralysis of the left side of her body - not to mention that one of those weeks was spent in a coma and the next week hardly awake - it is no wonder that Trish has walked a very rough road toward her recovery. When people visit her for a few minutes, they are understandably amazed at her awareness and at her ability to engage. However, her family knows that all is not well. There are serious gaps in her knowledge and ability. She sometimes expresses rather skewed perceptions of reality. All in all, her progress is indeed remarkable and consistent. We have every reason to believe that she is on her way to full recovery. That doesn't mean that we don't get alarmed and a bit scared though.

Re: More Updates - posted by Gideons (), on: 2004/7/11 16:29

I found this particular word so powerful as I suffered depression for many years (about Bob). May it encourage you as well as we continue to pray for Trish Scott. She was supposed to go to church with her husband today but I'm not sure whether she was able to go or not.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29

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The blunt truth of the matter is, for the moment, she is not yet herself in some important ways. Her perceptions of herself and of the world and the judgment she forms from those perceptions, are unreliable. They are often accurate but sometimes they are not.

This morning, I was later than usual getting to the hospital. I had spoken at a funeral and so I didn't arrive until lunch time. She was not in her room. So I went to the rehab dining room and found her there, staring at her plate.

"Are you hungry?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied.

"How long has your food been here?"

"About thirty or forty minutes," she guessed.

"Then why aren't you eating it?" I asked.

"I don't know," she said.

Actually, her food had been there for about five or ten minutes. The reason she was not eating was because her brain is not doing an adequate job of instructing her body how to feed itself. To satisfy her hunger she must find a way to direct her hand to take the fork and move the food from her plate to her mouth. So, even though she wants to eat and is physically capable of feeding herself, she doesn't always make the connection between the ability to put her hands into motion and the need to do so in order to satisfy her hunger. She seems to wait for her hunger to get satisfied magically. She can't seem to remember what actions are required to make it happen.

"Darling, you have to move your fork to your mouth," I said. So she began eating. I had to remind her a few more times but soon she had fed herself all she wanted to eat.

All was well until she suddenly said, "I want my apple pie! Someone has taken my pie."

I looked around. Indeed, the other patients had apple pie. She did not.

"Honey," I said, " You can't eat apple pie. Your swallowing is not yet at a sufficient level."

Exasperated, she said, "I want to go to the next level. I want to be in the apple pie level!" But soon she was laughing and we went on to her room.

A few minutes later, she asked me to bring her a bottle of water.

"Trish, you can't have water." I answered. "You can only have thickened liquids."

"All human beings have a right to drink water," she insisted.

"Yes they do. But in your case you might get strangled. Its too risky. I just can't give you water until the doctors say that it is safe."

The day seemed to go on like that with Trish exploring reality, pushing the limits, trying to understand why the world seems suddenly "out of whack." As I got steadily wore out, I kept thinking about Bob Dimon.

Bob was the man for whom the funeral was held today. He was a man in our church who experienced the most remarkable miracle two years ago. He had been a violinist with the Phoenix Symphony before sinking into a mental illness over twenty years ago. So, for years, he sat in the back of our church staring at the floor, in a near catatonic state. He walked slowly about the church with his walker, seemingly unaware of much of the world around him. However, one night a couple of years ago, an African pastor who was visiting our church, suddenly shouted out at him from the platform. "Brother , I command you to throw away your walker and run," Isaac Ogbeta said.

I nearly fainted. I saw lawsuits and newspaper articles on their way. I was ready to step up and put an end to the foolishness when, to my surprise, Bob threw away his walker. He began to run around the church in a steady gait, smiling from ear to ear. Within a few weeks, his psychiatrist took him off nearly all his medication. After twenty years of darkness, Bob was restored to his right mind. He began playing his violin and conversing freely with everyone. He became a constant joy and delight to us.

The sad part of this story is that soon after this miracle, Bob found out that he had cancer. In his hospital room one day I remarked that it seemed cruel that God would heal his mind only to allow him to suffer an incurable illness. Bob kindly rebuked me.

"Not at all," he said. I have been able to make things right with people I have wronged. I have enjoyed the sunrise again. I have been able to read my books. I play my violin. These two years have been a gift. I would not have wanted to die with a clouded head!"

Bob then pulled out the violin that he did not play for twenty years and played Mendelssohn's Elijah for me. Before I left his room, he put down the violin and said something that will stay with me forever. "Pastor, it is far better to live in reality no matter how painful than to live in fantasy, no matter how pleasant. For years I lived in a world that I created in my own head. That was the ultimate idolatry. Now I am living in the real world and the real world happens to contain cancer."

I have rarely heard such wisdom and grace.

When we insist on creating our own isolated perception, when we will not allow our perceptions to be challenged, we descend into mental illness. For mental health is the humility and the wherewithal to constantly check our perceptions against those of others. Every human being has the ability to create whatever world he or she wishes inside the privacy of his or her own head. But to the extent that we create an inner world that does not correspond to the world outside our heads, we lose our grip on sanity. Sanity, in other words, requires humility and accountability.

Trish loves me. She calmed down after I told her that in her present state, apple pie can seriously harm her. She even accepted my claim that the water she craves is not safe for her to drink. Though Trish is a very independent woman and is not usually prone to give up her own opinions so easily, she is able somehow to understand that her brain is not yet working as it should. So she is allowing me for the moment to keep her perceptions accountable. She is not likely to get in to serious difficulty as long as she does this, as long as she keeps submitting her perceptions to a "reality check."

Once again, Trish's struggle reveals an important truth. We all get mad as haters when we become unaccountable. If no one can challenge us, rebuke us, differ or disagree with us, we are well on our way to mental illness. I have lived long enough to see spiritually powerful people become just plain nuts because they come to believe that they were too spiritual to accept correction or challenge. I have worked in mental health with patients who had become so highly respected in their fields that they rose above all correction and accountability until no one could challenge their judgment. After a while of living this way, their sanity began to unravel. Unaccountable imagination and unchallenged cognition is like a river without banks; it soon becomes a swamp. This is true in the board room and the courthouse, in the ball field and on the battleground.

In his mercy, God will place us in situations that force us to reexamine our thoughts and actions. Sometimes, he will withhold from us things that we really believe are ours by right. Sometimes, no matter how much we plead, he will not advance us to the "apple pie level" because he knows we will choke on the sweetness. The question is, will we trust him? Will we accept God's invitation to live in reality even when it is painful rather than flee to fantasy because the world we can create for ourselves is so much more convenient and pleasant?

Trish will keep emerging from the shadows. Her mental life will steadily improve. I believe this because she has the humility and the grace to trust that I love her and that I will not willingly deceive her. She believes this so strongly that she is willing to turn away from a glass of water because she suspects that for the moment her own judgment and perception is not as trustworthy as mine. When she gets well, that level of trust in me (and that level of distrust of her own judgment) will be inappropriate. As she improves, she can (and should) question my judgment and mental clarity when it doesn't seem right to her (and believe me, she will have no problem doing that!). For the moment though, she values the search for sanity more than the sweetness of getting her own way.

I honor Bob Dimon tonight. He now has a clearer mind than any of us here below. I have no doubt that as you read this e-mail, he is meeting with Jesus and Bach. I also honor my courageous wife. She is still in the middle of her greatest struggle. But she will win. For she is armed with the same grace and humility that Bob discovered two years ago: the belief that it is worthwhile to work for one's sanity by turning away from self-serving illusion in order to accept community and appropriate care from others.

In the end, sanity is merely the ability and the willingness to live in a mental environment of mutual accountability. Outside that environment lurks madness.

Dan Scott

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