
ALL OF MY BOOK ATTEMPTS IN ONE SEARCHABLE DOCUMENT

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INTRODUCTIONS

NOVEMBER 2021

Introduction

Finally ready to begin writing again. I keep putting it off. But recently I've been helping others to publish their books and it's helped me gain the one thing, and that is realizing how long is a good book.

My earliest recollections are so many and varied. But where to begin, yes. Why begin? I'm 58 seems to be such a lame reason. But it's the chief one in my mind right now. I've been through so much, and my take on my life seems a valid thing to want to put down on paper. But my story isn't over, it continues.

Listening to Carl G. Jung's book, "Modern Man In Search of A Soul" as an audiobook once again, I am reminded of just what a book like this can hold for others.

But there is also a poem written by a young friend of mine. She named it, "Fires Too High". Here is an excerpt from it, or quote rather...

<<<

It's a burden to feel that you didn't have to disconnect from what was real

It's a heartache to see that I thought I could wonder past protected perimeters

because I thought that I would never not be free

Now here we are, as damaged as could be – Emma F.

>>>

As I said, I've been doing the work of an editor. When my friend gave me this poem, it was one among many. They didn't tell me how to respond, nor did they even ask for a response, just gave them to me. I can't help seeing spelling errors, especially if they interrupt my flow of thought. But I'm also aware that when reading poetry, that words can end up being spelled differently on purpose, but even accidentally the misspell can actually add to poetry itself. In this quote I present you with just such an instance.

But before we get to that, it is another book that I've read, by Parker Palmer, A Hidden Wholeness, where I first heard of an exercise regarding poetry. The idea is included in what he was communicating about Circles of Trust. He himself is a Quaker. Usually my experience with group discussions has been scripture. And that is in the context of a home group bible study. I've always been pretty fussy that people get their ideas correct... to make sure doctrine and teachings aren't messed with. But Parker Palmer introduced me to another notion, and that is to reveal to myself who I am. . . that my reflections are worthwhile because they tell me about me. So, it's not what the author was trying to tell me, but the thought evoked by that author that are primary.

Sure, I realize that scripture is very important to be interpreted correctly. But think about it. You are at a home group and the scripture is read. Perhaps there was a coffee time before, or even a light dinner. And then a prayer, and eventually you are invited to give your thoughts on the scripture being studied that night/afternoon/etc?

You begin to share, and you are cut off because the moderator tells you that you are misinterpreting the scripture, or is perhaps even gentler about it, but the message you get is, "...you're wrong, I'm right."

So, none of us gain the benefit of the window into your soul that was just slammed shut.

Perhaps a good way to practice is on less lofty writing. Like a poem, or prose, or short story.

But what I learned in that sphere I found myself eager to practice in a scripture study.

A good friend of mine is a listener, and I am a talker. When we first met it was he as the home care group leader, and I was with my wife. There were one or two other couples, as well as his wife there. What this is being mentioned for is that I was struck with almost immediately about him was that he was a remarkable listener. Equally interesting is that others had noted this same evidence and their response was to criticize this. Even more interesting is that while I was admiring his ability to listen, he was admiring something usually criticized in me, and that is my ability to speak. I talk to much, or talk about stuff... and people respond with TMI (too much information) or "you can't talk about that!!!"

What came to mind after we had this mutual epiphany, and confessed it to one another simultaneously, is that we had done what the scripture asks us to do. I am referring to the spot where Paul says for us to regard our brother as higher than ourselves. I revered him, he revered me. We looked up to each other. My friend is actually a little younger than me, but I only know that by looking at our birthdates. It never comes to mind for any other reason. I don't think either of us are particularly arrogant, nor particularly humble. But in this case we are both marked by that same kind of humility expressed by Paul.

complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:2-4 (English Standard Version)

I think that I learned so much about listening from my friend, Art, that this idea of Parker Palmer's (really the Quakers) fits right in. It's about listening, first of all to ourselves, but also helping others listen to their own souls. That's what he calls it, listening to your soul. That part of you that hears from, and interacts with God himself.

This poetry I'm quoting below is a mutual acquaintance of ours. So, without further introduction...

"To wonder" - to think about, to muse upon

Dictionary:

noun: a feeling of surprise mingled with admiration, caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar, or inexplicable.

Verb:

1. desire or be curious to know something.

"how many times have I written that, I wonder?"

1. feel doubt.

2. "I wonder about such a marriage"

Mine:

"To wander" - to go out of bounds... reassured by a presupposition... comforted by an assumption

Dictionary:

Verb:

walk or move in a leisurely, casual, or aimless way.

"he wandered aimlessly through the narrow streets"

Noun:

an act or instance of wandering.

"she'd go on wanders like that in her nightgown"

Jung said in this latest book that I showed you... "Modern Man In Search of a Soul" that creativity needs naivety...

A naïve person doesn't know what can or can't be done. Doesn't realize the should or should not's... they have a need, and they solve or resolve that need in a way that makes sense to them. Creativity isn't concerned with the proper way to do it, as much as getting it done.

It is interesting to me that I have been explaining about Parker Palmer's method, and here I am running into it again.

I've learned to abhor "should" and "ought" my eyes perk up, and my ears, whenever I hear mention of these two things.

Proper ways of doing things, manners, that's one thing... but when it comes to how to get things done in life, there is that part where we do what pleases the Lord. Getting the job done in our own way, isn't always a bad thing. I think this is what the difference between fulfilling the law, the letter of the law, while not the heart of the law. It's hard to explain maybe. But good to go back to at some point soon...

You are about to enter a world wholly separate from everyone... a safe place because you have your parent's blessing to go there...

There I hope you dare to expose the confused, naive, dual person that you are... for all of us are neither good nor bad, but both...

... my hope is that you will break the world's rules... and dare to go beyond that door btwn us all and God... bang on that door, camp outside of it, plead to be let in, better yet, bust it down, and run into his waiting arms... be fully known by him, long to know him utterly...

To always be drawn forever deeper into the mystery of Him who created you

November 2, 2021

1. Introduction

- a. Where to begin
 - b. First prayer
 - c. Family then and now
 - d. Why
 - e. My life 1st half
 - f. My life up to now
 - g. Divorce
- 2. Foreward
 - 3. Chapter 1

JANUARY 2021 PREFACE

Preface

Am I a writer? Or a speaker? The reason I ask is that I find myself profoundly effected by the person listening. There are those, it seems that don't have this affliction. I think the negative way of describing this kind of thing is the 'no filter' label. Politicians are often accused of this, as are players on the stage. In that last case it's called 'playing to the audience'. Nevertheless, I am not one of those unaffected by the listener, so I won't pretend to know the mind of those who seem unaffected. Perhaps one of the benefits of reading my book is that you, my reader, will come to know me, and my type of person.

I find myself not wanting to mention the names of my influencers. Especially the one's you may know or have heard of. That would tend to be prejudicial. Their baggage would become my baggage, and you would then tend to judge me in with them. But is there any protection against such lazy thinkers? I think of Marion Milner's book, "A Life of One's Own" and Daniel Kahneman's, "Thinking, Fast and Slow".

I also find myself aware of those who would say, "wow, he sure likes to talk about all the books he's read" as though it were something to brag about. They would like to read books written by the illiterate; I assume. But wait, they don't read books, do they? I mean, do you? They'd be the ones that would be people who are listening to me speak. Am I safe from them here, in a book? I'm laughing, yes. To clear up any misunderstanding I'd have to mention No. 3 (that's my 3rd born), and his gifts to me are numerous. The other day he gave me this gem, which is up for scrutiny at the moment, but so far, I like its implications:

"This is essentially why you believe nothing you read unless they have ample citations and are a credible source." Nicholas Benjamin Daniel Durham

I find it healing to me. I remember one day my lawyer criticized me for always quoting scripture, "don't you believe anything for itself?" she chided. I was a bit taken aback, and have been ever since. Somehow shamed into keeping the foundation of scripture out of my day-to-day conversations. But why?

Part of my faith is quoting scripture. This is a habit formed, that needed to be examined. As part of my growing up, we went to church, and our pastor for most of those years was Pastor H H Barber. His preaching contained many citations of scripture. From an early age I learned that truth, that everything I hear should first be subjected to the authority of scripture. Reading the Gospels, you can find reference to Jesus Christ himself, the Son of God, quoting the authority of scripture to the one who tempted him in the wilderness, "It is written..." I see it now as Jesus modelling his obedience of the Father. The mandate of the Holy Spirit is to make me like Christ, so this aspect of quoting scripture is a testimony of The Holy Spirit having done his work well!

On a lighter note, it reminds me of a quote from a book I read on the local's response to the first Europeans encountered,

1A Jesuit reported that the "savages" were disgusted by handkerchiefs: "They say, we place what is unclean in a fine white piece of linen, and put it away in our pockets as something very precious, while they throw it upon the ground."

My son, Nicholas, gave me a reason that transcends religion. What I mean is that it brings the reason out onto common ground. It is especially important to note that we are in this day and age like no other, afflicted with misinformation.

So now, back to the trouble with quoting from author's I've read. If you are a lazy thinker, there's no help for you. One of the great benefits my older brother's Andrew and John have done for me is gently coaxing me out of my fear of reading anything but the Bible. Even when reading literature that calls itself Christian, I will always seek to find out of what school they belong to. Whom they associate with. This is a protection, but it is also a way of saving myself some time. I've found that very quickly I will smell it anyways. So, I could be accused of this very same thing, maybe. But in my defense, I make the differentiation as this: I have become quite well acquainted with the "Word Faith" movement, and as soon as I smell it, I scrape my plate into the trash can. It is also spoken of as the Health and Wealth doctrine. The hurtful aspect of this heresy is that those who are 'unsuccessful' are haunted by the belief that they have 'unconfessed sin in their lives'. They believe in 'saved by grace' but they also believe in blessings being according to rewards. If you are such as one who is of this doctrine, read on and challenge your mind, and heart. To put it another way, if I am speaking to a person and somehow, they let slip that they belong to the 'Flat Earth' folks, their credibility slides very quickly, and so does what they're spooning me. You don't have to read between the lines about my attitude toward Word Faith doctrine. I hate it. It is absolutely contrary to the central message of Jesus Christ. My first father-in-law died a despondent, broken hearted man, riddled with cancer and dead broke, after a life time of trying to live the success of Word Faith doctrine. I shudder to think of how much money he and his wife sent to those preachers. They called it seed faith, twisting the meaning of scriptures to get people to send them money to sustain their own illusion of success, and thereby suck in more people. Its not very different from a Ponzi Scheme, you can look up Ponzi Scheme on your own, LOL

Having said all of that, I want to say that my primary, and supreme authority for all is the Bible itself. What I quote from other authors is in subjection to that authority. If you have a beef with something I claim or teach then it is with Scripture that you must contend with me. If the author is a non-Christian then you can go right ahead and assume that I do not agree with everything that they teach. But if I am quoting them, take that quote in the light of what I am writing about. I am merely giving credit to the origin of a thought that came to me.

My Success story is what I want to write about. And it is about the peace of where I now find myself in. Oddly enough I have an anxiety disorder that I battle with continually, as in daily, all day long. But my faith and emotions are not to be equated. What I know in my heart, and what I am constantly tempted about are two different things. What I am tempted to do, and what I do are two different things.

Eclectic is another word I'd like to explore in this book. The Bible is one complete, fully coherent book, that agrees with itself. Though at times paradoxical, it always agrees with itself. In fact, one must not, cannot take any one scripture and build a doctrine upon it. Examine the whole counsel of God. Subject every idea to the whole. Explaining the meaning of "taking it out of context" is also herein.

JULY 19, 2021

Depending on who YOU are, is how you'll see me. There's the fight to be won or lost, and it's already done. What I mean is that each of us sees others through the lens of their own experience and expectations. We look for ways of sorting out those we meet each day.

Abraham Maslow in

BOOK ATTEMPT IDEAS

As I read Diana's book, "Hope in The Mourning" looing for typo's I realize what a book by me could be... an encouragement for guys or girls facing a divorce... and for people who know someone going through one

TIMELINE

Overview

- Born on December 6, 1962 at Holy Cross Hospital in Calgary, Alberta
- Mother: Janet Elizabeth (Heron) Brand
 - June 29, 1934 – September 3, 2017
 - Passed away at 83 years 2 months 5 days
 - Laurence born when 28 years 5 months 7 days
- Father: Ken David Brand
 - August 15, 1928 – January 18, 2012
 - Passed away at 83 years 4 months 30 days
 - Laurence born 34 years 3 months 18 days
- Brother Glenn Richard Brand
 - December 24, 1956
 - Born when Dad was 28 years old, Mom was 22 years old
 - 5 years old when Laurence born, turned 6 yrs old 18 days later
- Brother: John David Alexander Brand
 - May 10, 1959
 - Born when Dad was 30 years old, Mom was 24 years old
 - 3 years old when Laurence born
- Brother: Andrew William Brand
 - October 13, 1960
 - Born when Dad was 31 years old, Mom was 25 years old
 - 2 years old when Laurence born
- Sister: Diana Elizabeth Brand
 - April 27, 1970
 - Born when Dad was 41 years old, Mom was 35 years old
 - Born after Laurence

Homes:

1. At birth lived at 4528 30th Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta
2. In 1968 moved to 464 Shelley Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba
3. In 1971 moved to 899 Vimy Road
4. In 1983 lived on campus in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
 - 1303 Jackson Ave, Saskatoon, SK S7H 2M9
5. In 1983 moved out to get married
6. In 1983 moved into 130 Beliveau Road, Chelsea Place
 - Guy at night walking towards us
 - eating Pizza on the boulevard where we picked out Jamie's name
 - Oriental rug
 - Full furniture apartment
 - Tossed memorabilia box

- Balcony, biscuits
7. moved to 2295 Pembina Highway, Markham Place Apartments
 8. 1452 Jefferson Avenue
 - Lori inappropriately, inordinately affectionate with building manager
 - Jamie running around apartment bouncing intonation “ah ah ah ah”
 - Bobo the clown
 - Wallpaper torn
 - Hand on the patio doors looking out longingly at children playing
 - Little bro/sis for Jamie
 - Jamie stiff armed by mom
 - Lori changes her mind about 2nd child, I trick her by saying condom, but didn’t have one on
 - Rum cake forgot to boil the glaze
 9. Moved back in with Mom and Dad Brand
 10. Moved out to River Road, Fort Gary
 11. Moved to Fox in West Vancouver, BC
 12. Moved to Fromme Road North Vancouver, BC
 13. Moved to East 11th North Vancouver, BC
 14. Moved to Hollywood Drive, Richmond, BC
 15. Moved to Springmont Drive, Richmond, BC
 16. Moved to Lundy Road, Richmond, BC
 17. Moved to Sumas Mountain, Abbotsford, BC
 18. Moved to McCallum Road, Abbotsford, BC
 19. Moved to Victory Blvd, Abbotsford, BC
 20. Separated from Lori and the kids moved in with Andrew and Lisa at 4th Avenue, Vancouver, BC
 21. Moved in Bruce Mastin, West 13th Vancouver, BC
 22. Moved in with Clayton Zale West 17th Vancouver, BC
 23. Moved into Andrew and Lisa’s place Arbutus and Cornwall
 24. Moved to 64th and Cambie Vancouver
 25. Moved to 1st Avenue and Forbes, North Vancouver, BC
 26. Moved to 434 E. 2nd Avenue North Vancouver
 - Married Cheryl 1999
 - Ashton born 2000
 27. Moved to 2673 Westview Drive
 28. Moved to 1378 Lynn Valley Road
 29. Moved to 5131 Hollywood Dr
 30. Moved to 9852 119a Street, North Delta, BC
 31. Moved to 5620 52nd Avenue Delta, BC – Ladner
 32. Moved to 4720 52a Street, Delta, BC Harbour Manor Coop

Round steak, Russian dressing marinade, ripple chips, herb and spice dip, white grape juice

Proposed, engagement ring rejected, made into promise ring

Rejected first Christmas presents

Chevy Vega station wagon to Vancouver

GlenBrooke

Lincoln

Heritage

Ness Jr high

Manitoba Christian School

MBCI

John Taylor Collegiate

CPC

Newspaper routes

- Valleyview
- Portage Avenue

Jack Andrew's Drugs

Museum Man and Nature

Garbanzos Pizza x 2

YMCA

Bonivital pool

Health Sciences Ctr

Winnipeg School District

Pinders Grovenor

PHOTOS OF LANDMARKS THROUGHOUT MY LIFE.

4528 30TH AVENUE SOUTHWEST



464 SHELLY STREET



899 VIMY ROAD



CENTRAL PENTECOSTAL COLLEGE



CHERISH ART WORKS



JANUARY 2021.

Why is it, I wonder out loud, that I cower, or rather, am tempted to cower under the sharp disposition of the world as I set out to tell my story? For my story is about God's faithfulness. And like the writer of Hebrews, there need be no effort wasted upon proving his existence on my part. That's never really been an interest or particular talent of mine. But the alternative to declaring God's faithfulness to a young man innocent and naïve such as I, is to pretend that I am the reason I find myself so full of Peace, Hope and Joy, and that lie could not be told by me.

My brother Andrew's words to me at a point in my life when I'd been used according to all my weaknesses come to my mind right now. "Don't change, Laurence, don't cease to love with all your heart, don't hold back, don't protect yourself!" That's always the temptation I suppose when you LOSE in a game, to change your strategy and thus WIN next time. I love to play board games of strategy, and most if not, all involve some aspect or element of luck. Chess being one of the only ones I know where luck is so little a part. Isn't who moves first is the only piece of luck in it? Cribbage is a game of taking the cards as they are dealt, and doing all that you can with them, knowing your opponent adds to the skill, but many times the cards dealt will not yield a win to anyone.

In my first marriage I played with all my cards upon the table. The object was not to WIN so much as to do it with all my might, heart and soul. Mrs. Wiebe was a friend of my mother's, who whispered to me just outside of the prayer room where I waited to go and wait in place for my bride to be ushered down the aisle by her father, "you're too young!" Thanks for the advice too late, I thought, and Keep it to yourself next time also. For I had labored over the question of YES or NO, asking God first of all to prove to me what he would have me do. He has always been faithful to me, whether I ask him or not, to let his will be known to me. In fact at the reception that followed later that evening, I was responding to the toast to the bride, and I referred to the scripture that was then the theme of my life. The book of 1 Peter. Suffering, I wondered out loud, how could suffering be the word I entered into a lifetime relationship with such a beautiful and wonderful girl like Lori Barbara Arlene Wiebe? Little did I know, how gracious God is in letting it be known right there at the beginning.

Isn't it our natural reaction to believe we've made some dreadful mistake when we come upon suffering in our lives? Isn't the message preached by this world that our lives can and should be free of suffering? The enemy of our souls lures us in with treats and hopes of ecstasy, but the lover of our soul gives us all the bad news first. "He who would lose his life for my sake, shall find it" Jesus said. (ref)

I found out much later that Lori's doubts had already begun some weeks before. We had been engaged for a year, where I was in Saskatoon, Sk and she was in Winnipeg, Mb. We saw each other on the breaks between school. The wedding arrangements were all of her concern, and I was merely to show up dressed the part. The momentum of those plans took over, and Lori's sense of free choice had been lost, and she was swept along helplessly like a river being dumped into the sea at land's end, all the flotsam and jetsam coming to a gradual standstill there in the bay's calm water. Herself among them.

Had God let me down? All these years later would I even, could I even regret placing my trust in him? No, quite simply, no.

Quite the contrary. I love my simplicity, my naivety that yet remains, and regret anything that would represent itself opposite. I happen to be in the middle of listening to David Copperfield as I set down these words, and that aspect of his life story comes out at me as I listen. The conniving, thieving, treacherous types that used him bitterly, and went on their way, are many in number, yet he thrived, yet he did not determine that he would become like them.

As my profession these many years now, puts me across the path of many people of all walks of life, and at all points of life, I recall to mind a man who boarded my bus and explained, without my ever asking him to depose any information at all to me, that, well, I'll use his words, “

“there are two types of people in this world, those who get fucked over, and those to fuck other people over, and I'm one those who fucks other people over!” and by the great conviction of his voice I could certainly say with all confidence that although he might be making a solemn resolution to change, he was indeed one of those who had many times been fucked over, and would continue in that pattern all of his days.

I remember in days of my absolute despair promising myself and God, that one day I would not behave towards those in need as I was then being treated. Never once hoping to one day be the one who treated others with such cold, callous usury as I'd been treated.

God's faithfulness, yes, but about me? What was my part, I yet wonder? Mine was to hear, and respond. As I listened to the word of God preached by many a pastor over the years, none are so high in my estimation as Pastor H. H. Barber, and always there was a reference to hearing God's voice, and I very early on wanted to hear God's voice. I pondered whether it be an audible one, or what? I wanted to know for myself. I hungered for that experience. A verse will frequently come to mind from time to time as I write the account of my life, many verses to be honest. But let me explain that as we go.

The verse for now is Hebrews 11:6. I set down the explanation of this verse, not to do anything other than to make sure my whole testimony is founded on the authority of scripture, God's inspired word, The Bible.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (NIV)

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (KJV)

- Faith
 - o Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.
 - o Matthew 6:33-34
- Please God
 - o Pleasing God as opposed to pleasing man. Seeking the Glory that comes from God rather than the glory that comes from Man. So shalt thou find favour in the sight of God and man.
- God exists

o Romans 1:21

- God rewards those who diligently seek him

o This part of the verse I never got to until much later in my life when those rewards become so evident in my life, and so undeserving

I yet recall my innocent reflection on Matthew 6:33-34, and how some jaded person or other said, tho not in so many words, how naïve I was to believe it. Yet, I did believe it. And believe it still. God moves and has moved in my life despite all my worldly self-knowledge. His grace has spared me so much, I'm sure. The absolute truth of it is right there before your eyes. And my story is set down before you, as a witness to the truth of God's word, that you in innocent faith might take hold of it, and turn your will over to his, believe in Jesus Christ as the savior of this world from sin and destruction. You who read this, who have a glimmer of hope that it might be so. You who might even say, "oh that it were true!" read on! For my account of my life is of two parts. His faithfulness to me, and my utter weakness. His wisdom, power and might, and my ability to go my own way, only to be caught up in a thicket, to be rescued once again by the Good Shepherd who came again and again to pull me out of what my wayward heart had led me into.

One of the biggest hardships of my life, however, was not a result of my weakness or waywardness, it was God's design. I Peter 1, indeed held the key.

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

These have come so that the genuineness of your faith may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. "These" are the events that precede the now of God's being glorified in my life, in my own eyes, proven to me. Rather than being filled with regret in this afternoon of my life, I am filled with Joy, and a sort of shuddering 'what if' ? What if God had not been so faithful to me, what would have ever become of me.

The book of Hebrews stands as a book that remained outside of my books to read for most of my life, as did the book of Revelation. Foolishness, to be sure, but a fact nonetheless and so I cast that into the basket for you to decide whether it was God's providence, or an unhappy fact of life that he compensated for. The debate over who wrote the epistle to Hebrews bothered me, not knowing who'd written it bothered me. The human hands I mean. How could I doubt the authority of those who included it in the canon of scripture, I can only say is evidence of my youthful naivety. But regardless of reason, or merit, I avoided reading those two books. Revelation for the reason of it being a book of prophecy, and fearing that I would be filled with gloomy fears, kept me away.

But another that happened for a greater part of my life is that I feared to read and study any other book than that bible. I was brought up under Pastor Barber's preaching, which was wholly upon God's word, and the authority of that same book. Anything ever spoken to me as a teaching was to be proven by where it could be so done in the light of the scripture. My reverence for such greats as A.W. Tozer and A. B. Simpson was first founded on their declaration of the authority of God's word over all else.

My anxiety as a young man was that if I read the books and teaching of any others that my mind would be stolen, and I'd be led away from God, kept me close to God's word. What I didn't know at the time was that God's spirit, The Holy Spirit, is a guard for my heart, for all our hearts I might be so bold as to stand upon.

Quite a few years ago now I ventured to read books outside that sphere. And my two older brothers, Andrew and John were with me on it, and indeed led me out into those waters. Yes, that's a good picture. A ship going out onto the ocean, with me in it, my brothers and I the crew that labored with the rigging and rudder to steer our way through to our destination. Andrew, John and I had a book club, that consisted of the three of us, though a fourth, Bruce Mastin, sojourned with us for a time.

I MUST MAKE THIS ASIDE AT THIS POINT. THAT MY ACCENT IS BEING AFFECTED BY READING DICKEN'S DAVID COPPERFIELD. I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT AT PRESENT, SO I'LL JUST HAVE TO PUT UP WITH IT, AND SO SHALL YOU.

Book after book was chosen, and each of them I never would have kept reading if not for the same sort of 'little brother' attitude that had given me the courage to not give up on that bike ride we once took. At times leaving me far behind, my two brothers and I went from A to B, a great distance, and I did not relent, but kept going until getting to the destination. Proud to have endured it's duration, even if I had not been the one to get there ahead of them.

And much to my innocent amazement, instead of my faith being compromised, it deepened. But I do know it is precisely because I'd come to know God's word so thoroughly well that I was kept by God's side through them all.

Ephesians 1:11-12 guaranteeing my inheritance

John 14:26 teach and remind me of all that he had taught me

I did spend one year in Bible College, and will never forget the words of my church History professor about the difference between acting and reacting. By knowing some of what various beliefs are about, I am not surprised by them, and can act instead of re-act to them. I can listen to the one who is speaking with me, and give them all due respect. I laugh at that hope, only because I so often find myself so eager to enter into discussion with that person that they appear to run away even before the onset.

APRIL 11, 2021

Why Me

This is the Bookman Old Style font. I've worked my whole life on my handwriting. Lettering, and numbers, but none of that is reflected here when I type on my computer screen. The justification of this paragraph is "Justified", the other choices were centred, left justified, and right justified.

Centred

Left justified

Right justified

Justified

I noticed just now that Justified and Left Justified look the same when there's only one word LOL.

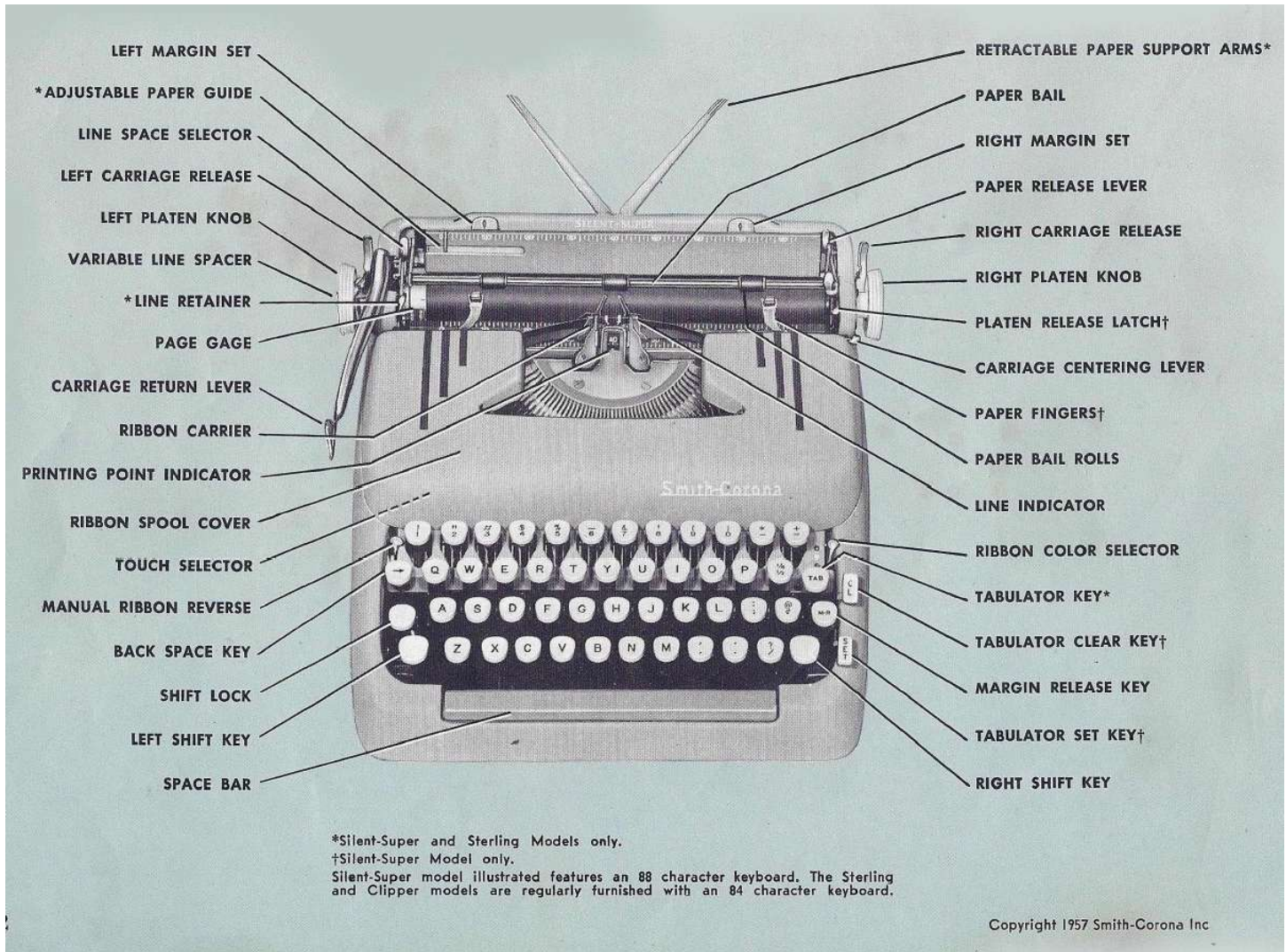
Justified setting takes all the words in each line of a paragraph and balances them out so that there is an even margin on the left and right. This means there will be little spaces added here and there in the line to accommodate this, instead of being at the end of the line where there is a carriage return. Now, there's a term! "carriage return" perhaps somebody has come up with a new term for it, but a carriage return is fascinating stuff! The old type writers, the original ones I suppose, eh?

I Googled for the definition of "A carriage return", and it gave me this: sometimes known as a cartridge return and often shortened to CR, <CR> or return, is a control character or mechanism used to reset a device's position to the beginning of a line of text.

EH? Had an actual carriage, a set of rollers on a bed of wheels that moved right to left as you typed. Each letter that you typed would move the carriage to the left, and thus the next letter typed would be to the right of the letter typed just previous to it. I can see it all in my mind. But as you get to the end of the paper, you would have to return the carriage to the beginning of the line. But I've left something out. The typewriter had all the letters, numbers and symbols laid out on the keyboard, pretty much the way we see the computer keyboard in today's time. But instead of this being an input device for a computer, they were mechanically, and directly connected to moving parts that had arms, on the end of each were the characters to be typed. If you made a mistake, you'd have to physically paint the mistake white with white out, and retype over the mistake by carefully positioning the carriage over it. Later developments had electronic type writers which added this function automatically, where you'd hit a switch to correct a character and a corrective ribbon would be used. I'm kind of on a tangent here, aren't I?

The rollers of the carriage advanced the paper up and down automatically as you typed, and you could manually reset the paper with roller knobs on the side of the carriage. The paper would go down the back of the carriage, bottom first, then as you rolled the knob, the paper would be pulled down and around the rollers, and up past the strike area of the type writer. I'm thinking of how hard it is to describe this in words alone to someone who's never seen it. A simple set of diagrams would get the idea across so much simpler! But all for what purpose. So that my lately born reader could visualize what a carriage return actually literally means, rather than what it means now.

I was going to put a diagram here, but I see that I'm at the end of the page, so we'll wait until we get there. I don't want part of the picture to be here, and the other part on the next page, so we'll wait, in the meantime...



While this picture might still be a bit confusing, it is a useful aid in describing what a carriage return is when trying to tell someone who'd never heard of such a thing.

This is what Anne Lamott says, among other things, that we should just start typing, and trust that the truth will come out onto the page. What's lurking around in my mind to write about will start coming eventually, and here it is beginning to happen for me. I can sense it coming, what is truly on my mind.

When a prophetic person like myself expresses himself... Oh, have I freaked you out there? Who me? Well, how about a poetic person? Ok, then, poetic person.

With the old type writers, I'd have to rip the paper out of the carriage and begin again, a wastebasket full of failures would be to my left of right, or all over the room for the less organized writers, in little crumpled up balls of paper.

But here this process is part of my expression. The title that came to me as I began is the one which I typed up there, go look if you forget, I haven't. Why Me. Without a question mark.

Going on with life is simply a matter of obedience for me, more and more. Hidden in the massive number of choices of me as a young person was the me that I was meant to be, the purposes I was meant to fulfill. And it boggled my mind. I didn't want to be wasting my time doing what I wasn't meant to be doing all of my life.

I want to break away from this explanation and quickly get to the point that is burning within me. The simplicity of the gospel message is what is so tricky. Its alluding me as I attempt to type it! But going back to my effort to try and describe a type writer, specifically the carriage return, I am able to make ready use of it all by analogy.

The show recently come to us all via the world wide web is called "The Chosen". And it helps us all in this day and age wrap our minds around what it was like to know Jesus when he walked the earth. It's like that diagram of the typewriter, which immediately helps the one trying to describe, and will only help the listener as he/she engages the topic and tries to understand. The reason for understanding will affect the amount of effort put in by the listener. For example, if the topic is "how to disarm the bomb wrapped around your body", then the listener will be paying very careful attention to what's being said, and will ask a lot of questions to be doubly sure they are getting it right, before any action. Obvs, because if a wrong action will result in the end of any explanation being required. That's rather mild, isn't it. Beautifully understated. Wrong action will result it the bomb going off, and the listener would then lack many things, the least of which would be the motivation to listen.

So this whole time I've been wrestling with the topic of listening, believing, and doing.

This topic has been laid upon me by God.

This is an accusation as much as it is a realization. I don't take ownership of it. I understand how God works, through reading his word, and relating it to my life. My message is message of what I have chosen to call listening obedience. I've been quoting it indirectly already, but I'll give the direct quote now.

Warning Against Falling Away

¹¹ We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. ¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

(New International Version)

There is much food for thought here—but only for the mature Christian

¹¹⁻¹⁴ There is a great deal that we should like to say about this high priesthood, but it is not easy to explain to you since you seem so slow to grasp spiritual truth. At a time when you should be teaching others, you need teachers yourselves to repeat to you the ABC of God's Revelation to men. You have become people who need a milk diet and cannot face solid food! For anyone who continues to live on "milk" is obviously immature—he simply has not grown up. "Solid food" is only for the adult, that is, for the man who has developed by experience his power to discriminate between what is good and bad for him.

(J.B. Phillips version)

The King James Version says,

“you have become dull of hearing”

“who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

There’s some other verses that come to mind here.

As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.” He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

Luke 11:27-28

Jesus’ answer to the woman is so telling of how he even viewed himself. And to truly get this just read through the gospels, especially John’s gospel, where he mentions his own obedience. He glorifies the Father. Obedience glorifies the one being obeyed, and humbles the one obeying. This partial truth that the woman uttered when she cried out, Jesus immediately rebuked. He saw in the seed of a tangent for all of them. To my mind, one can think of how Mary is being described of course, by a woman. Innocent appreciation of the calling of being a mother. But that potentially takes away from the rest of us, for all eternity, doesn’t it? Those of us that aren’t women of child bearing age being one immediate group left out, those of us that are men, those of us who by reason of where we were born on eternity’s time line, could never be the mother of Jesus. Jesus’ answer humbled his mother, and all the rest of us. He leveled the ground, and included himself. For Jesus’ life was about listening to his father, and obeying. The prayer in the garden tells us much about the kind of obedience Jesus practiced. Elsewhere in the book of Hebrews we read,

During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

Hebrews 5:7

This is interesting to me, because I thought of it so far apart from my harp verses. (don’t harp on it) hobby horse topic... constantly reappearing theme...

Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name’s sake.

Romans 1:5

Bonhoeffer

referring to the tree not being aware of it’s own fruit

In the former naïve, unpsychological, unmethodical, helping love is extended towards one’s brother

“but in actuality the result is to dethrone the Holy Spirit, to relegate him to remote unreality. In actuality, it is only the human that is operative here. In the spiritual realm the Spirit governs; in human community, psychological techniques and methods. In the former naïve, unpsychological, unmethodical, helping love is extended towards one’s brother; in the latter psychological analysis and construction; in the one the service of

one's brother is simple and humble; in the other service consists of a searching, calculating analysis of a stranger."

Bonhoeffer, Life Together

Fruit is always the miraculous, the created; it is never the result of willing, but always a growth. The fruit of the Spirit is a gift of God, and only He can produce it. They who bear it know as little about it as the tree knows of its fruit. They know only the power of Him on whom their life depends."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship

We are that living example, the diagram of a forgotten time of ages past. We are Christ on this earth. We hold the mystery of what it is to follow God. And our job is to encourage others to do the same, to step away from willful plans that destroy the work that the Holy Spirit would perform, by distracting us with a gospel of works.

My brother John, who is my father in many respects, spent his life striving with me over the essential truth of our lives lining up with God's word. Obedience and faith being synonymous.

Zechariah 3 always comes to mind here, for there is actually therein the couplet, if/then. If you do this, then this.

This same thing is contained in Hebrews 5:11-14. The writer is trying to get across the simple, yet complex.

It's a short book, this is how I obeyed God, right? Or perhaps, "this is how many times I got distracted from the simplicity of just obeying God."

Corinthians "foolishness of the cross"

I think of Angie and Art's faithful remaining,

μένω

μένω • (ménō)

I [stay](#), [wait](#)

(*in battle*) I stand fast

I stay where I am

I [lodge](#)

I [tarry](#); I [loiter](#), am [idle](#)

(*of things*) I am [lasting](#); I [remain](#), [stand](#)

(*of condition*) I [remain](#)

I [abide by](#)

(*impersonal, with infinitive*) it [remains](#)

(*of persons*) I [await](#), [expect](#)

I wait for (accusative) to (infinitive)

is the Greek word for it.

And along came Cheryl and Laurence, who remained in their own way, in another way. I migrated from Manitoba in search of my brother Glenn, and eventually cast out, discarded by Lori, because I would not bend to her will. God had me cast out by her, because I would not yield to him instead of her, and he turned her heart against me, and I was cast out.

Βαλλω

Bal-oh

to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls

to scatter, to throw, cast into

to give over to one's care uncertain about the result

of fluids

to pour, pour into of rivers

to pour out

to put into, insert

The book of Hebrews 12, describes the discipline of the Lord.

My tendency is to stay in the camp, and not go to Christ outside of the camp... to the least of these, to the lost sheep... leave the 99 and go to the lost one.

¹¹ The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. ¹² And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. ¹³ Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. ¹⁴ For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Hebrews 13:

Angie and Art remained, but they were not and are not satisfied, they longed for more, they longed for what was missing, like a deep inner moaning prayer... they sought fervently for Why God Called them... for the purpose of their lives.

And I was on my way to them, but God was making me "ready and prepared" spiritual battles were taking place... just like Daniel... I am no more no less than an obedient servant of God, the next piece in the procession of pieces. In the fullness of time.

Art identified to me that I would be in leadership, and I didn't receive his word. I want nothing to do with being in charge. Being "up there" leading... and yet I am. I gave it up, and that's how I got it. I came to despise it, and thereby I found myself in its offices.

From this side it looks so different, from that side so very different. Those who would seek to unthrone me, to debunk me, to unseat me, it's God they seek to dethrone, debunk, and unseat... for I am his obedient servant, just as Christ is.

Its not up to me.

Who will go?

Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9, he used the words 'we' and 'us' when interceding for his nation. This is true intercession.

I think of young children who were of a church family, who came to play with other children from that church family. Instead of seeing a field ripe for the harvest, they were filled with fear, and they left, taking their children with them. Leaving Art and his family behind, with their children in the squalor of the projects. Taking their wealth, they used their wealth to buffer themselves from the sin and threat of a world held by the throat and being choked to death... they used God's providence to buffer themselves, instead of laying it all down to seek and to save... like Jesus did...

Then years later, one of those little children, whose heart was forever attracted to this place, came with her helpmeet... heart and sole, and her three precious children, to dwell among us, and be Jesus in the flesh here...

While Angie and Art waited patiently. In their defence, Peter knocked at the door, and the little girl's message, Peter is at the door, was met with mocking... answered prayer, they prayed for a messiah, and they got Jesus instead... they looked to the past to define the future... instead of looking to God the definer of the future.

I was once upon a time of the class of people who lived in single family dwellings, sequestered from the world... day and night we associated only with God's people, inviting the world to come in, but refusing to go out into it for fear.

MACBETH

Role of the Witches in *Macbeth*

The three Weird Sisters play a major role in the play *Macbeth*. They cause both Macbeth's rise to power and the fall to his death. Through the influence of the Weird Sisters' prophecies, Macbeth transforms from a noble military general into a ruthless tyrant overcome with madness for power, eventually leading to the death of Macbeth.

The Weird Sisters indirectly control Macbeth and his actions in his play. They may not actually be forcing Macbeth to do certain actions, but their prophecies have a great impact on him. The Weird Sisters appear in Scene 1 of *Macbeth*, the first characters to appear in this play. The scene ends with the witches planning to meet with Macbeth and sharing with him his fate. This scene is important because it establishes the role of the witches as major characters in this play and their role to manipulate Macbeth into madness and performing gruesome crimes.

The first time that the Weird Sisters encounter Macbeth is on his journey home from battle against the Irish. Macbeth, along with his comrade Banquo, was a brave general in the war who led the Scots to victory. When Macbeth and Banquo meet the Weird Sisters, the three witches reveal to the generals their fates. They tell Macbeth that he would become the Thane of Cawdor and soon after, king of Scotland. They also prophesize that Banquo's descendants would reign as kings. Macbeth is at first skeptical of the witches' prophecies. However, after being informed by King Duncan that he would become the new Thane of Cawdor after the other had betrayed Scotland and would be sentenced to death, Macbeth begins to believe that what the witches said might be true. Influenced by the witches' prophesy, Macbeth forms an intense passion and ambition to become the new king of Scotland. This ambition would become so strong that he would go through extreme measures to achieve what he wanted.

Before meeting the witches, Macbeth is an honorable man who won favor from King Duncan for his courage in fighting in battle. However, after the witches introduce him to the idea of being king, Macbeth becomes ambitious and mad for power, and kills anyone who gets in his way. His first obstacle is the current king, Duncan. With his ambition and a little influence from his wife, Macbeth kills Duncan and frames the murder on Duncan's son Malcolm, who fled Scotland in fear of his own life. After becoming king, Macbeth feels threatened by Banquo. Banquo was present with Macbeth when they met with the witches and Banquo becomes suspicious that Macbeth was the murderer of Duncan. Macbeth also remembers the witches' prophesy that Banquo's descendants would rule as kings of Scotland. To cease Banquo's suspicion and ensure that his descendants never become king, Macbeth's hires three murderers to kill Banquo and his son, Fleance. The murderers succeed in killing Banquo, but fail to kill Fleance. This murder arranged by Macbeth proves his madness for power that resulted from the witches' prophecies. Macbeth went as far as killing a former friend and comrade to ensure that he remains king.

After murdering Banquo, Macbeth meets the witches again to see what lies in his future. The witches show him three apparitions. The first apparition is of an armored head, which tells Macbeth to beware Macduff. The second apparition, who appears as a bloody baby, advises Macbeth to be bold and brave, for no man born of woman would harm him. The last apparition appears as a crowned child with a tree in its hand. The apparition tells him that Macbeth would not be defeated until Birnam Wood meets at Dunsinane Hill. During this meeting, the witches provide Macbeth with false security. Macbeth, believing that what the witches showed him would be true, now becomes over confident and cocky that he would remain as king. Given that all men are born of women and that Birnam Wood, a forest, is not able to move to Dunsinane Hill, Macbeth feels practically invincible.

Although Macbeth feels secure, he still heeds the first apparition's first warning to beware of Macduff and kills the wife and son of Macduff. Macduff retaliates by raising an army with the help of King Edward in an attempt to overthrow the bloody tyrant obsessed with his power. Macbeth at first feels confident about the war, given the reason that he thought he was practically invincible. However, after seeing the English forces approach with branches of the Birnam Wood in an attempt to stay hidden, Macbeth fears that the third

apparition's prophecy came true. Still, knowing that no man born of woman can harm him, Macbeth remains calm. Once Macbeth and Macduff finally meet, Macduff informs Macbeth that he was born prematurely, being ripped out of his mother's womb and hence, not being born of woman. Macbeth, realizing that the last prophecy came true and he was doomed to die, was still too mad with power to surrender it away to Macduff, and was slain.

The witches were the difference makers in *Macbeth*. They gained trust from Macbeth, who visited them frequently, and affected how he behaved in this play. Some argue that it was Macbeth's fate all along to become king and die to Macduff, and that the witches just played the role of informing Macbeth of his fate. However, all of Macbeth's actions resulted from the evil prophecies of the witches. If the witches were never in this play, then Macbeth would never have been introduced to the idea of becoming king. He wouldn't have become obsessed with power and would not have killed King Duncan. If it was his fate to become king, then it would come to him naturally rather than being forced upon him through murdering. The witches in this play influenced Macbeth into making bad decisions leading him into becoming a tragic hero.

APRIL 2021 AGAIN

April 11, 2021

Why Me

I was thinking of how hard it is to describe a type writer in words alone to someone who's never seen it. Perhaps a simple diagram would get the idea across much simpler? Let's say that I was trying to describe to some lately born reader what the term "carriage return" literally means, rather than what it means now. When you hit the ENTER key on a computer keyboard, you'll also notice that it is called the return key. It returns the cursor to the left-hand side of the page when you are on a word processing page.

I'm not going to digress, by actually explaining ANYTHING about a type writer. I'm exploring how hard it is to explain something to someone who has never used a type writer, and never will. You would have to go to an antique shoppe or museum to even see one. But here is a diagram of one,

The picture is still confusing, and having an actual type writer with you, one that matches the diagram would help even more. But again, the ultimate thing needed is motivation. Why bother to explain it, why bother to learn it? Learning, they say is 99% motivation.

This topic of type writers and terminology surrounding writing is relevant, even though it might allude you, my reader. Let me explain. My writing is a drive within me similar to eating, sleeping, and other not so glorious things. I have not simply looked down a list of things I could do to occupy my time and after having seen 'writing' I thought,

"hey, I should check this out!"

It's been a fascination of mine, an interest, and yes, it is a drive, a compulsion. Partnering with this has been another drive, and that is to communicate. Years ago, now, I did what's called a spiritual gift assessment. One of them was called the gift of creative communication. Looking back over the years I realize what that means. I have a message given to me, and I find a way to communicate it. And if you define communicate not just in terms of what I'm doing, but with having successfully done so, which is defined by my audience listening and hearing the message, then you have an idea of it not being quite so simple.

One of the best writing coaches I've ever experienced is Anne Lamott's book, "Bird by Bird". Today I made use of one of her tips.

I awoke this morning with the need to write.

Let me put this into terms some of you may better relate to. Let's say you awake, crawl out of bed, and sift through various sets of clothing laying around the room, underwear, socks, T-shirts and pants. You look at each one, and sniff and inspect them for the cleanest one for the day.

I sense emotion from some of my readers, you rightly accuse me of plagiarism, perhaps! So, I'll give credit where credit is due, here is a line from "Sunday Morning Sidewalk, by Johnny Cash,

Well I woke up Sunday morning with no way to hold my head that didn't hurt

And the beer I had for breakfast wasn't bad so I had one more for desert

Then I fumbled through my closet for my clothes and found my cleanest dirty shirt

As you trudge toward the stairs, you walk into the bathroom, and stumble over some strewn random objects from the week before, and manage to hit the light switch. I'll spare you a description of the toilet bowl, and surrounding surface areas, just in case you have just eaten. But there is room for an aside here.

I was once visiting a bachelor friend of mine, and wanted to do some of my laundry. I didn't have quite enough to make a full load, so I thought I'd do some of his laundry, and asked him in passing when the last time was that he washed the linen mat in front of his toilet. He'd never yet washed it came the reply,

"How long have you had it?" I asked nervously,

"It was a house warming gift from my parents." He replied casually, unworried, but getting rather irritated by being distracted from the video game he was playing.

"And when did you move in?" I bravely continued,

"About 4 years now." He said, "why do you ask..."

Dropping the mat into his trash can I said, "I'll buy you another one" and rushed to the sink to wash my hands. If case you don't know... I'll spare you. If you do know, I've made my point.

So, there is our hero, YOU by the way, and into the kitchen, you roam, past the pile of dishes in the sink, as you casually glance at the clutter all over the kitchen counters, you find and fill your coffee pot. You are beginning your day. Your couch lies ready, the TV remote is somewhere, most likely down between the cushions. Your world is disordered. The malaise is numbed deep set depression that you cannot crawl out of. I say numb because you are not even aware of the lifeless state of affairs in your life.

I was in this state one day, when I prayed. My life had fallen apart some time before. My wife and I were headed for divorce court, and the part that motivated me was the four children of our marriage, and the deep, unescapable love I had for them, and still do. I didn't want to lose them.

After my prayer I heard the message, "clean up your room" said the voice in my heart.

Now all those things are habit with me. It's somewhat more than 20 years later. I'm divorced, remarried, and have adult children from that first marriage. I also have an adult child from my present wife, he is 21 years old, and lives with us still.

My job is secure as most any job can be, and I am on my week off. We are in the midst of a worldwide crisis. If you don't know about it, then this writing has survived space and time indeed. How could we ever forget the Covid19 pandemic of 2019?!

I awoke this morning with a need to write that similar to in emotion that you, my decent reader, felt when I described myself in a fallen state, wearing dirty clothes that smelled not as bad as most of my clothes, and weren't quite as visibly dirty either. I have something that needs to be done. A message that needs to be communicated, by me.

We're back to Anne Lamott now, and her writing tip. Whenever I read her book, or to be more succinct, whenever I listen to her audiobook, I am unconsciously cured of my lack of motivation to get past the drive to write, and actually do it. The tip that works so wonderfully is the one that I am hoping will soon come up in conversation here.

1. Just start writing

When I started to write what you are reading now, I started by being irritated by the necessary machinery of setting my thoughts down. I have used pen and paper, and I have used computers. Word processing programs, and blog websites and software. Formatting the program to allow for the smooth transition from brain to page is a distraction, but unavoidable. Pens need more ink, paper runs out, and you have to go buy some more, or have some more readily at hand.

I had the motivation, and an irritation, which is a distraction in itself, and so I married the two. I began to write about left and right justified text, as well as justified text... and just as Anne Lamott noted, around page 3 of the silly drivel there started to flow, thoughts that are worth communicating. What's lurking around in my mind to write about will start coming eventually, and here it is beginning to happen for me. I can sense it coming, what is truly on my mind.

One thing that you'll have noticed already is that I am me. I know a lot about me, and I'm use to me. I am in a classification of people where I am not easily understood. Think of it this way. If you are interested in continuing to read what I'm writing. Welcome! And if you are irritated, no heart feelings, you are excused.

With the old type writer, I'd have to rip the paper out of the carriage and begin again, a wastebasket full of failures would be to my left of right, or all over the room for the less organized writers, in little crumpled up balls of paper. But here on this page of virtual type, I have erased, and retyped, and decided what to keep, and here it is.

Oddly enough, the title that came to me as I began is the one which I typed up there, go look if you forget, I haven't. Why Me. Without a question mark. That intrigues me, because I had not yet known the WHAT to write, just had the compulsion, which by now I hope I've adequately described it in the lines above.

Another emotion that grips me these days is best described as a not caring if I die. I don't WANT to die, but I'm not all that sad about its inevitability, either. Going on with life is simply a matter of obedience for me, more and more. Hidden in the massive number of choices of me as a young person was the me that I was meant to be, the purposes I was meant to fulfill. And it boggled my mind. I didn't want to be wasting my time doing what I wasn't meant to be doing all of my life.

Recently there is video series called, "The Chosen". It depicts the life of Christ as told in the gospels, in the historical context. One of the important factors in understanding the bible is dealing with what's called historical distance. But it is all too easy to forget the historical distance as you read the bible. A video is continual reminder that one is listening to a history of events that happened long ago, in a very different context from our own.

In the book, “How To Read The Bible For All Its Worth” Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, tell us that we must first understand what the original hearers of the message heard, and what it meant for them, before we can begin to apply it to ourselves in our current context.

And there in front of us we have one of the most important things in my life. The book called the Bible. I’ve read, and re-read it for most of my life. Indeed, for the first 30 years or so of my life it’s pretty much all I read. I had a sort of fear and anxiety associated with reading anything else. I had a drive to understand and to know what the bible said. This would be where I can insert facts about the bible... how many copies of the original manuscripts there still are when compared to other historical documents, the original languages it was written in, the various translations and paraphrases, the central message, etc etc etc.

And we’re now faced again with that same problem. Why should you care anything about an ancient book any more than you should care about how a typewriter works? Because, quite simply, the bible is a letter from your real Daddy, written literally thousands of years ago, over period of x thousand years. It’s the answer to the question, “Why bother?” and what there is to bother about.

My message is what I want to call: Listening Obedience. Here’s a verse of the bible to get us started with this topic, Hebrews 5:11-14

- The New International version:

- o We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

- J. B. Phillips version:

- o There is a great deal that we should like to say about this high priesthood, but it is not easy to explain to you since you seem so slow to grasp spiritual truth. At a time when you should be teaching others, you need teachers yourselves to repeat to you the ABC of God’s Revelation to men. You have become people who need a milk diet and cannot face solid food! For anyone who continues to live on “milk” is obviously immature—he simply has not grown up. “Solid food” is only for the adult, that is, for the man who has developed by experience his power to discriminate between what is good and bad for him.

- King James Version:

- o “you have become dull of hearing”

I have a friend. His name is Arthur Ferreira. I am thankful for him for many reasons, not the least of which is that one of his gifts is the gift of listening. Perhaps I should or could insert a history of who we came to meet. But for now I’ll say that after having known one another for quite some time we each had a moment where we expressed the same thought to one another. A mutual admiration for one another. Aren’t we usually drawn to those that are like ourselves? Well, perhaps so, but in our case, it was what I lacked that I admired in him, and what he lacked is what he admired in me. I’ve been readily, and duly criticized for ability to speak, as well as

receiving praise for it. "You talk too much." Needs no explanation. Talking when I should be listening. Saying much, when a little would have sufficed. Losing my audience because I've put them to sleep. But also, "Laurence!!! You can't talk about that!!!" For Art it was the opposite, for his gift was the gift of listening. The way that he talked about my ability to speak was an encouragement. It was a spiritual fulfillment of Paul's admonition to revere our brother more highly than ourselves. For the first time in my life, I really saw a need in myself to truly listen. And I aspired from that day I first admired it in my friend, to be like that.

One of the things that happens to me is that a verse of scripture will come to my mind as I write, and I trust this process of the Holy Spirit's work in me. I stop, look it up, and listen to what he's saying. Maybe more accurately it's a case of hearing the Holy Spirit say something, and I stop to listen by asking, "why have you brought this scripture to my mind here?" I differentiate this from mere thoughts coming to my mind. Foundation for this way of seeing it is John 14:26, it's part of the ministry and calling of the Holy Spirit,

- Jesus is the speaker, and the disciples are the original hearers of this message. The entire bible is known as the Word of God, and Jesus himself is the word made flesh, he literally is THE WORD of God. Every word of the bible that one has read can be said to be what Jesus himself has said to you.
- Those who have come to believe in Jesus Christ as their savior receive the Holy Spirit to dwell within them. At the time of his first saying this to the disciples the Holy Spirit had not yet been sent, because Jesus himself filled that role while he walked among men and women on the earth
- John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (NIV)

I feel a tangent coming on, LOL

Here is story that comes to mind, it's one which I'd love to do one day, but never have done so. I am at a pulpit, in a church. I have asked that everyone come bring their copy of the scriptures to the front, and lay them here at the alter for a moment. There are lots of translations, and paraphrases of the bible. As above described, the original scripture was written by some 40 different authors, over a period of 3000 years, but all were inspired to write by God himself. It's his book, his love letter to his children. I'll add the food for thought that God has no grandchildren. The language it was written in is Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The barrier of time and space I've touched on, and now I mention the language difference. We all read the bible, of necessity in translation, all of us except those who have taken time to learn these ancient languages. All languages evolve, so even those who might speak these languages in modern day, don't know the ancient versions. Each translation and paraphrase were produced with the desire to make the bible available to everyone. Find out about one such of these by searching your local library for Gutenberg and a man named Martin Luther. But factions and divisions have developed here, so the copies of the scriptures that are brought forward are admittedly each with their preference one over the other. Once this is done, I would then point out that there is one version of the scriptures which is the worst and most dangerous. It's the one we think we know. The one we think we remember, and call to mind. It's the collection of partial verses deposited there in our brains. That's the one that must be laid to rest, set aside, and obliterated. The only way to do it, is to keep a copy of the scriptures with you. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart recommend that you read the same version regularly, and use other versions for in depth study and discussion. If a scripture comes to mind, stop, look it up, and read it.

Read the verses before and after it, that's called context. Understand what it meant to the original listeners, and etc.

So, now we come to a verse that has come to mind, Luke 11:27-28

- As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." (NIV)

Jesus was out and about, look up Luke chapter 11 and see for yourself, and he heard what this random woman in the crowd cried out. Jesus' answer to the woman is what it's all about. The message is so simple, you might miss it. So, I'll try to say it plainly.

It's all about Pleasing God.

To please God, you need to hear him, and obey him.

The Bible is how we begin to hear him, believing what it says is the continuation of that, and putting it into practice is what we Christians should know is the definition of FAITH.

Hearing + Listening + Obedience = FAITH

Jesus' mother, Mary, heard God's word, from an actual angel. She had the opportunity to refuse it. She wasn't raped by God as some poor creatures have tried portray it. It was faith in action.

- Luke 1:26-38

- In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Jesus included all of us in the opportunity to be just like himself, and just like his mother. To hear God's word, and obey it.

Recorded in John's gospel, is where Jesus mentions his own obedience. He glorifies the Father. Obedience glorifies the one being obeyed, and humbles the one obeying. He said everything I have said and done is what the Father has told me to say and to do. He leveled the ground for all of us, and included himself. The prayer in the garden tells us much about the kind of obedience Jesus practiced. Again, earlier in Hebrews chapter 5, verse 7 we read,

- During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

Another verse, Romans 1:5:

- Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. (NIV)

Bonhoeffer

- referring to the tree not being aware of its own fruit
- In the former naïve, unpsychological, unmethodical, helping love is extended towards one's brother

"but in actuality the result is to dethrone the Holy Spirit, to relegate him to remote unreality. In actuality, it is only the human that is operative here. In the spiritual realm the Spirit governs; in human community, psychological techniques and methods. In the former naïve, unpsychological, unmethodical, helping love is extended towards one's brother; in the latter psychological analysis and construction; in the one the service of one's brother is simple and humble; in the other service consists of a searching, calculating analysis of a stranger."

Bonhoeffer, Life Together

Fruit is always the miraculous, the created; it is never the result of willing, but always a growth. The fruit of the Spirit is a gift of God, and only He can produce it. They who bear it know as little about it as the tree knows of its fruit. They know only the power of Him on whom their life depends."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship

We are that living example, the diagram of a forgotten time of ages past. We are Christ on this earth. We hold the mystery of what it is to follow God. And our job is to encourage others to do the same, to step away from willful plans that destroy the work that the Holy Spirit would perform, by distracting us with a gospel of works.

My brother John, who is my father in many respects, spent his life striving with me over the essential truth of our lives lining up with God's word. Obedience and faith being synonymous.

Zechariah 3 always comes to mind here, for there is actually therein the couplet, if/then. If you do this, then this.

This same thing is contained in Hebrews 5:11-14. The writer is trying to get across the simple, yet complex.

It's a short book, this is how I obeyed God, right? Or perhaps, "this is how many times I got distracted from the simplicity of just obeying God."

Corinthians "foolishness of the cross"

I think of Angie and Art's faithful remaining,

????

μένω • (ménō)

1. I stay, wait
1. (in battle) I stand fast
2. I stay where I am
3. I lodge
4. I tarry; I loiter, am idle
5. (of things) I am lasting; I remain, stand
6. (of condition) I remain
7. I abide by
8. (impersonal, with infinitive) it remains
2. (of persons) I await, expect
1. I wait for (accusative) to (infinitive)

is the Greek word for it.

And along came Cheryl and Laurence, who remained in their own way, in another way. I migrated from Manitoba in search of my brother Glenn, and eventually cast out, discarded by Lori, because I would not bend to her will. God had me cast out by her, because I would not yield to him instead of her, and he turned her heart against me, and I was cast out.

?????

Bal-oh

to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls

- A. to scatter, to throw, cast into
- B. to give over to one's care uncertain about the result
- C. of fluids
- i. to pour, pour into of rivers
- ii. to pour out
- I. to put into, insert

The book of Hebrews 12, describes the discipline of the Lord.

My tendency is to stay in the camp, and not go to Christ outside of the camp... to the least of these, to the lost sheep... leave the 99 and go to the lost one.

11 The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. 13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. 14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Hebrews 13:

Angie and Art remained, but they were not and are not satisfied, they longed for more, they longed for what was missing, like a deep inner moaning prayer... they sought fervently for Why God Called them... for the purpose of their lives.

And I was on my way to them, but God was making me “ready and prepared” spiritual battles were taking place... just like Daniel... I am no more no less than an obedient servant of God, the next piece in the procession of pieces. In the fullness of time.

Art identified to me that I would be in leadership, and I didn't receive his word. I want nothing to do with being in charge. Being “up there” leading... and yet I am. I gave it up, and that's how I got it. I came to despise it, and thereby I found myself in its offices.

From this side it looks so different, from that side so very different. Those who would seek to unthrone me, to debunk me, to unseat me, it's God they seek to dethrone, debunk, and unseat... for I am his obedient servant, just as Christ is.

Its not up to me.

Who will go?

Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9, he used the words 'we' and 'us' when interceding for his nation. This is true intercession.

I think of young children who were of a church family, who came to play with other children from that church family. Instead of seeing a field ripe for the harvest, they were filled with fear, and they left, taking their children with them. Leaving Art and his family behind, with their children in the squalor of the projects. Taking their wealth, they used their wealth to buffer themselves from the sin and threat of a world held by the throat and being choked to death... they used God's providence to buffer themselves, instead of laying it all down to seek and to save... like Jesus did...

Then years later, one of those little children, whose heart was forever attracted to this place, came with her helpmeet... heart and sole, and her three precious children, to dwell among us, and be Jesus in the flesh here...

While Angie and Art waited patiently. In their defence, Peter knocked at the door, and the little girl's message, Peter is at the door, was met with mocking... answered prayer, they prayed for a messiah, and they got Jesus instead... they looked to the past to define the future... instead of looking to God the definer of the future.

Maslow... I am convinced that much of what we now call psychology is the study of the tricks we use to avoid the anxiety of absolute novelty by making believe the future will be like the past.

I was once upon a time of the class of people who lived in single-family dwellings, sequestered from the world... day and night we associated only with God's people, inviting the world to come in, but refusing to go out into it for fear.

The Book of Daniel... Daniel even had the dream/vision interpreted for him, and it greatly troubled him, he was still confused, and upset to the point of not being able to eat?

Daniel's reaction to not understanding was to pray. When the answer came, we learn along with Daniel that the spiritual realm and physical realm have things in common. There is time, and delay, and battle. Daniel's prayer provoked a response, that had to come to him in a paradigm described in terms of time and space.

In those days' journeys were not instantaneous. Travel was a foot, or on horseback.

God took the time to make his excuses to Daniel for the delay, and to reassure him. The narrative mattered to Daniel, and mattered to God, and matters to us.

Why me. Why did you do it this way, Lord. Tell us.

We need to know, to understand. But we also want to continue in what you have so clearly begun in and through us.

Who knows how much a part of the rebellion Daniel was, even if it be the passive rebellion? Can we make a case of his being from an ungodly family deserving of God's wrath? Or can we make a better case of a family that honored God?

I think of Hophni and Phinehas. That God used Eli to bring up, Samuel, though he was the same parent that brought up these two worthless individuals. So, also, the PAOC has been dethroned to a certain extent, but the remnant that God has retained within this particular arm of the church, God is using, though in captivity.

1 Samuel 2:

Eli's Worthless Sons

12 Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD. 13 The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, 14 and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw." 16 And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force." 17 Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.

18 Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. 19 And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly

sacrifice. 20 Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the LORD give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the LORD." So then they would return to their home.

21 Indeed the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.

Eli Rebukes His Sons

22 Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 23 And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. 24 No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. 25 If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.

26 Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man. The LORD Rejects Eli's Household 27 And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? 28 Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. 29 Why then do you scorn[b] my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?' 30 Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 31 Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. 32 Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. 33 The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his[c] eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants[d] of your house shall die by the sword of men.[e] 34 And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. 35 And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before me forever. 36 And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, "Please put me in one of the priests' places, that I may eat a morsel of bread.'""

1 Samuel 4:

10 So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell. 11 And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

The Death of Eli

12 A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head. 13 When he arrived, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching, for his heart

trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out. 14 When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, "What is this uproar?" Then the man hurried and came and told Eli. 15 Now Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes were set so that he could not see. 16 And the man said to Eli, "I am he who has come from the battle; I fled from the battle today." And he said, "How did it go, my son?" 17 He who brought the news answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great defeat among the people. Your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured." 18 As soon as he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

15. I close with the stimulus that has most powerfully affected me in the existentialist literature, namely, the problem of future time in psychology. Not that this, like all the other problems or pushes I have mentioned up to this point, was totally unfamiliar to me nor, I imagine, to any serious student of the theory of personality. The writings of Charlotte Buhler, Gordon Allport, and Kurt Goldstein should also have sensitized us to the necessity of grappling with and systematizing the dynamic role of the future in the presently existing personality, e.g., growth and becoming and possibility necessarily point toward the future; so do the concepts of potentiality and hoping, and of wishing and imagining; reduction to the concrete is a loss of future; threat and apprehension point to the future (no future = no neurosis); self-actualization is meaningless without reference to a currently active future; life can be a gestalt in time, etc., etc. And yet the basic and central importance of this problem for the existentialists has something to teach us, e.g., Erwin Strauss' paper in the May volume (110). I think it fair to say that no theory of psychology will ever be complete which does not centrally incorporate the concept that man has his future within him, dynamically active at this present moment. In this sense the future can be treated as a-historical in Kurt Lewin's sense. Also we must realize that only the future is in principle unknown and unknowable, which means that all habits, defenses and coping mechanisms are doubtful and ambiguous since they are based on past experience. Only the flexibly creative person can really manage future, only the one who can face novelty with confidence and without fear. I am convinced that much of what we now call psychology is the study of the tricks we use to avoid the anxiety of absolute novelty by making believe the future will be like the past.

"Towards a Psychology of Being" Abraham Maslow

NEWSPAPERS IN THE SNOW STORM

2020 June 25

I've often pictured it in my mind, but over the years it's become more like one of Picassos paintings.

We grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba and this is the scene of many of my childhood memories. It'll be new to some of my readers to hear the term winterpeg, manisnowba, but it won't surprise anyone who has lived there.

There we were, my older brother John and I at the top of our street, snow blowing all around us, visibility: zero. I'm sure there were sounds at the original occurrence, but now it plays like a silent movie in my mind.

We shared a paper route, And with the tenacity and Valour of brave soldiers we delivered the papers regardless of any weather conditions.

The sound of blowing snow is a lonely howling sound that intensifies the crushing subzero temperatures. It sounds heartless, cruel, and relentless.

But We would of course be dressed for it. moccasins from knee to toe, laced up over two pairs of socks, our jeans tucked in with long johns over our underwear, a couple of shirts, an undercoat and overcoat, with zippers and storm flaps to prevent the wind from blowing through, a pair of wool mittens under the leather ones, a scarf over our face, woollen toque, and finally a hood of some sort. I should include that we had hot coals from the fire wrapped in a handkerchief in our pockets, but it then you'd think I was exaggerating.

That part of the memory is all from the collective memories of winters there, we didn't fear it, because we outsmarted it instead. Gloves, for instance, I was genuinely confused about whoever invented them. Having each individual finger cut off from the others was sure frost bite and I could not believe nor conceive of a condition where I'd ever want to use them.

Now, I don't want you to judge my parents harshly, for they too, were just as accustomed to these treacherous conditions. Now I would never think of even going out in such conditions in a vehicle, Never mind on foot miles away from home, and never mind the fact that we were probably around 10 and 14 years old at the time. To use a pay telephone to call my parents to rescue would involve taking off my mits, only to be hung up besides.

Like a skull found in an unearthed grave, I've had to reconstruct the scene for you. But all I can remember is my brother disappearing into the blowing snow to deliver the papers, and me walking home, a lifetime of guilt lies between them and now, guilt for having let him down, and pride in having such a courageous big brother. I might

wonder along with you, “what’s the big deal?!”, Stay home until the storm passes. But this was a normal winter evening and if one refused such conditions the paper would rarely if ever be delivered.

This is as good a place of any to being a book about my life. John’s played a big part of my life. But there’s a big blank canvass in front of you, with this single scene there, and it’s sketched in. We shouted to one another, but only to be heard over the wind. Each with our point of view thoroughly stuck, like our boots in the drifting snow.

There’s another memory of me laying in the shade with the paper route half done. The coolness of the shade having readily seduced me into dropping the canvass sacks onto the grass. Winnipeg winters were cold, and the summer’s were hot. The mean average temperature in summer is +40 F. I looked up what a mean average temperature is. You take all the temperatures over a hundred years, add them up, then divide by the days, and you get the average temperature. The mean average temp in winter was on the other side of the scale, - 40 F. Pierre Elliot Trudeau was prime minister while I was a young boy in school, and he switched us here in Canada from standard to metric, so now my entire life I think in both, but usually revert to the first one learned. You know how to Google, go ahead and convert it, while I continue with my story here. Those sacks were heavy with thick newspapers. We would sit in the lobby of the old folks home and put the day’s fliers into each paper, we called this “stuffing” them.

“I gotta stuff the papers” I’d say to my brothers.

Then we’d put the 3 inch wide, 3 foot long canvass band that served as a handle over our shoulders crossed over from left to right or right to left, I can’t remember. But I do remember when we’d put the band over the top of our head, and carry it. A 3 inch rutt formed in my soft skull tissue that I could feel for years after quitting papers.

There is no better sleep to be had than a sleep in the shade when you know you have half your papers yet to complete.

We lived in a two storey house in a middle class neighbourhood. By we, I mean my Mother, Father, three brothers and sister and I. My sister is the youngest, and was spoiled right from the very beginning. Each of us was a separate accident of nature, I believe I was a failed intrauterine device, and also a bladder infection that was worth mentioning numerous times over my lifetime. But the first lot of accidents were boys, and when the long hoped for girl arrived, well, that was cause for joy. How spoiled you may well ask. Well, for instance, my sister had four brothers, but I only had three, how unfair is that?!?

I don't know what sibling rivalry is, but I do know that until she came along, I was the littlest and after she was born, I was the what?!? There must have been some animosity between us though. I remember one of my favourite games when she was around 7 years old, and I 14, was to pick her up and throw her over my shoulder, carrying her from the basement to her room on the top floor, and depositing her in the closet of her bedroom, then going back down stairs, when she reappeared, I did it again. We were both getting our exercise, but she hated it and I enjoyed it. She also has a story about each of her Christian stuffed animals being thrown around her room by me. There's no proof of this, only her-say and she's obviously a bitter person. If you ever meet her, I'll warn you now, she has a story about how I spat in her mouth. I actually remember her laying on the floor of the car in the back seat, mouth wide open, looking up at me, what person could resist such a target?!? And what better to . . . but there's no proof of that either. She's bitter.

STRANGER IN THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Moment of Silence

There's the trip itself that I made:

1. Early that morning
2. Just now after awakening from dream again
3. On my way home from work
4. I don't remember how I got there
- 4> I don't remember how I got there.

The thought crosses my mind that perhaps this is merely a dream, one from which I cannot escape.

Nevertheless, there we are this man & I. He sits quietly in one of the chairs 2nd from the corner. He's reading, he has glasses on, his pants are old corduroy type, haven't seen those too often lately. A comfy soft cotton plaid shirt, tossed brown hair, of medium length for a man, but would be considered short hair for a woman. He looks about 37 years old, weathered working hands, strong nose and chin, and the kind of physique of a runner or cyclist lean, with loose skin, and an adam's apple so pronounced I wondered if I even had one myself. He makes no move to acknowledge me, though somehow, I don't feel rejected nor unwelcome. He is just there, as I am in that room.

The walls are hospital yellow, semigloss, no windows, except one that the receptionist sits on the other side of, but she's not there. The chairs are the armless type, with vinyl upholstery of a sort of greyish beige colour. Comfortable enough. The floor is a tight weave indoor outdoor one, charcoal grey, recently vacuumed. The air is fresh with just the right humidity. I look up to see the vent in one of the upper corners of the room, a piece of yarn tied to the grating blows whisperingly indication that there's air, fresh and clean, blowing into the room. I'm calm and suddenly feel silly standing in the middle of the room staring around.

There's a book on the receptionist's window desk on this side of the glass and a pen tied to a little stand. I see that I am to sign in and have a seat. There are many other names on over a dozen pages in a fairly new book, dates and times with all but one crossed out. His name I presumed. I filled out my information and turned to have a seat.

Just at that very moment the receptionist entered from an adjacent room, a cat following her looking up at the dish in her hand, the cat gave out a barely audible meow that was ½ thank you ½ what took you so long. The nurse was in her 40's, with a white dress uniform on buttoned to the neck, and an old fashioned nurses cap on her head, her blond hair was tied up, and neatly held above her ears and neck. She had no earrings, if she was wearing make-up I couldn't tell, and her disposition was calm and attending to the cat, she stroked it's back saying sweet things barely audible. She rose to reveal she was about five foot four inches tall, and 140 pounds. Her form was slight, and female character traits were all of the delicate kind. There was nothing provocative

about her, but she did have a calming kind of presence. She looked at me and smiled and placed her finger on her lips tipping her head toward the room, and the man waiting there.

My eyebrows raised slightly, feeling once again awkward and silly. I turned and found a chair opposite the corduroy man, and sat down. The air from cushion squeezed out as it received my weight

I was wearing a T-shirt with a single breast pocket and over that my favourite old jean shirt, jeans, underwear for a change, oversized lumberjack socks and a woven cloth belt that tightened up through two metal rings. My shoes were loose fitting runners which I slipped off and placed to the one side, cautiously looking toward the other occupant, hoping my feet didn't emit an offensive odour.

I flinched as he, just then, turned a page in his book without looking up and reached over to his coffee cup for a sip and placed it down again, leaned back, crossed his leg to make a sort of desk, removed a kerchief from his pants pocket, and wiped the corners of his mouth before returning it to its place – I'd gotten away with the shoe removal it seemed – I looked down at his, and he that 's when I noticed that he'd not been wearing his either. Leather slip-ons over grey cotton socks. He wiggled his toes and massaged the ones of the crossed over leg, and lifted his fingers his nose and I just barely averted my gaze as he shot a nervous glance in my direction in a sort of realization that wasn't alone. He sighed a kind of chuckling, self-deprecating laugh and adjusted his glasses, as though to indicate he'd raised his hand for that purpose.

Beside me was a plant, that had moss over the soil, and a healthy leafy plant the name of which I wasn't aware of, but typical to doctor's offices. The little side table had the usual offerings of magazines, and a watercooler stood over by the door that led out.

SURE IS QUIET IN HERE!

I shouted at the top of my lungs leaning toward the stranger.

A SWAT TEAM burst into the room as the lights went out and streams of light flowed from their rifles that were pointed at me.

GET DOWN ON THE FLOOR NOW!!!

Six of them surrounded me nervously...

...of course I did not shout and I did but wonder at how my comfy room companion would handle such a disturbance.

"I'd probable hit the carpet myself I suppose" he quietly replied as though I'd spoken outloud...

But then catching himself he looked up at me, raising the book from his lap to show the dust cover,

"Guns of Chesapeake Scree"

"...sorry, about the sudden out burst" he said with a grin, "but I do get quite wrapped up in these mysteries"

I smiled back, and nodded, wondering if I should divulge the coincidence of what he'd said...

I pulled out my own book from my messenger tote bag and held it for him to see,

"Guns of Navarone"

A smile fully breached his face as he obviously recognized the title. "Alister MacLean's best some say, where on earth did you find a copy of it?" he blustered.

"My wife found it at Value Village." I replied, then offering, "it's long been one of my favourite movies."

"Carey Grant is so good as the lead part, I love it where he says to Marty Feldman, "TAKE IT!"

"You mean Gregory Peck and Anthony Quinn, surely..." he interrupted looking at me closely from over his glasses.

"My gosh" I exclaimed, catching my breath with a giggle, "good show indeed"

"I guess you've seen the movie too!" I laughed, he grimaced a bit to reveal his confusion and that he somewhat disapproved of my familiarity, inserting a book mark into his current page he closed the hard cover novel and laid it on the chair beside him...

"You'd have had me if you'd only gotten one of those names wrong" he chuckled.

"My name is Morris Feldgrave" he said stretching the hand that recently rubbed his toes toward me in a greeting gesture, I grabbed a hold of it, and received a firm hand shake. It felt like a skeleton of stone beneath a leather glove.

I made a mental note not to touch my eyes, ears, nose or mouth before I could give my hand a dose of hand sanitizer, and smiled back at him in reply.

"Bob Kettle here, pleased to meet you. I said rather officially, somewhat distracted by the fact that the name he'd just offered wasn't the one in the register on the receptionist's ledge.

Tipping my head toward Nurse Gretchin, "been waiting here long?"

He lifted himself slightly on his chair craning his neck to get a glimpse of her at the desk, "I have indeed" he said in a whisper...

I casually pulled out my appointment and made note of the time on the clock that stood above the water cooler, then my own watch raising my eye brows... all the while trying not to give away that I'd read the of the doctor had made the appointment with earlier that week, "Dr. M. Feldgrove, PHD, PPRM" it said

"Where did you get the coffee?" I said in a "by the way" voice, to further distract him. At which he lept up, and approached the window,

"Nurse Gretchin, could I get a cup of coffee for my fellow inmate here, he'll take it with..."

...turning toward me, mouth agape and eyes widening...

"oh, I'll have it black" I sputtered in surprise.

"It's Alice, actually" she quipped and then as she stood to head for the other room glancing in my direction, "I'll be right with you there, Laurence, and don't mind Randy here, he thinks he's amusing."

I suddenly felt nervous and sweaty about being in the presence of a man so clearly my equal in verbal sparring and gests.

Randy Marchinko was the name in the register that had not been crossed out. He was squinting down through his glasses at my name scrawled there Laurence Brand, "You have unique spelling of your name there, BOB!" he said playfully. Paul is his son's name...

RANDOM NOTES

MY RETIREMENT INITIATED

Sent 11:37 am on November 9, 2021 with Cheryl at my side, after a short prayer of dedication, and shortly before that a phone call from Alicia Wong at Translink who told me she would be with me every step of the way in the process.

I began this road a while back, and we can go back as far as June 12, 2021 when Dee Adekugbe emailed me asking if I'd like to edit books for her.

by today's date I have edit'd 3 books and one website for her.

Significant is that my recurring dream of not being able to get to work has changed a little. Two things are evident, 1) I am no longer alone and 2) I am no longer in a stressed out, desperate state... in my dream I am with another person, male, who is going there with me, where ever 'there' is LOL and off to the side of our field of vision we look over and muse at what factory there might be all about. It's constructed of second hand repurposed things like corrugated metal siding, different coloured panels, blue, rust, galvanized steel. Yet it doesn't look ghetto, it's very organized and fresh looking... like a wise CEO is in charge who is using all of his resources to get his work done.

I've signed up for 2022 holidays to flow from my final 2 weeks of 2021 holidays so that I'll be off from December 17, 2021 to the end of February 2022.

In the meantime Ashton's work at Save-On-Foods Tsawwassen is having it's ups and downs. Currently he had to book off with a cold, and it turned into having to be tested for Covid19, and then cleared by management once he is symptom free. We await news, not knowing exactly what the hold up is.

Cheryl's health, our truck's health, the Board of Directors at the Coop here, future Renovation plans... all weighing in the back ground of our mind...

Cherish and Jamie remain at a distance, having cut me out of their lives.

Sarah, Clinton and the grandkids are on the Island and out of reach physically but still with me in their hearts.

NICHOLAS AND PEGAH

Nicholas and Pegah are part of our lives, and we apart of theirs. We met with them last night for N's birthday. Certain little hints or tell tales make me believe that Pegah might be pregnant. For example, when I was texting N about his upcoming Birthday:

Dad: On November 8th, not too many years ago, something wonderful happened!!!

Nicholas: As wonderful as what happened on February 8th?

Dad: Your Birthday is on November 8!!!! give up, what happened on February 8th? October 7th still needs proper recognition also... so that's 2 possibly 3 reasons

(I then looked up significant events on February 8 and noticed Mary Queen of Scots was executed on this day and Sent N the link)

Dad: Were you and Mary close? I'm a vulnerable olde person November 8, 1990!!! You made me look it up!!! I felt like I was going nutz Hello...Hello...Hello...Talk to you later James Dean's birthday!!!

Nicholas: 11 months - 9 months = 2 months = February 8 1990

Dad: Oh no! It was artificial insinuation. You've always been way more wonderful btw...

So after that exchange, a while later I started to muse about why he would, for the first time ever, refer to his mother and I engaging in pleasure 9 months before he arrived... and then I realized. They are married a year, Pegah is working at a permanent place, and would be eligible for maternity leave. Last night at his BD party Nicholas and Pegah drank only water. They seem to have a renewed vigor in investing their lives in us as a family.

MARCH 2021

I'm being tempted this morning. To offer advice. But I readily admit that I have no advice to give. I am not where I'm at because of my own ability to pick myself up and walk out of the woods. I like that expression. Have you ever been lost in the woods? All the trees look the same. I'll just close my eyes and remember here for a minute, to fully explain what I mean. I have been walking somewhat aimlessly, no! That's hardly the truth, I've been on the run! I ran into the woods, unprepared: driven out. I am hungry and weak. I'm injured from tripping over roots, and unseen black berry brambles. I stop, and look around. Trees tower over head obscuring my view, and the forest is so thick I cannot see through it either. All around my feet is no path, there are ferns, bushes, and vines all around me. I stop in my tracks. I am lost.

The best advice is to stay put, and hope that somebody comes to look for you. Will anyone miss you? Well, I'm going to leave this picture, but just to say, that God came looking for me, he missed me,

Matthew 15: Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

8 "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' 10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

I find myself taking time out of my day to write, and meditate on the goodness of God. I am also praying for particular brothers and sisters in Christ.

I don't have an objective for the world around me, but HE does. What I write is what I hope is what he would have me write. It is the word of my testimony, and on that alone I will submit to this writing things down, as he gives me utterance.

Revelation 12:1 They triumphed over him

by the blood of the Lamb

and by the word of their testimony;

they did not love their lives so much

as to shrink from death. (NIV)

I am offering my experience of God, and his word, walking me out of those woods I found myself in.

Jumping out of poetic imagery isn't easy for me, but I'll try. Let's laugh together that I could ever do so. Let's freeze frame, there's me standing in the woods, cut, bleeding, and done with running. Isolate me, make the whole back ground drop away, and replace it with a green screen. Now cut/paste me onto the corner of St. Georges and E 3rd Street, North Vancouver, BC, in 1997. I was just about divorced from my first wife, and living with my fiancé, Cheryl Anne Hinz. The verse that came to my mind was in John 15.

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (NIV)

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (KJV)

The fruit of my life was chaos and hurt. I had four children, none of them living with me. A bitter divorce, full of revenge back and forth on both sides. Nothing to hold up to the world and boast what it is to be a child of God. I told God by the confession of my mouth right then and there that I don't know what it is to abide in him. And that my life was not bearing fruit. I asked him to teach me what that meant. I continued to stumble along from that point, but it was stumbling towards him.

So, lets pause here. Is their fruit in your life? Are you bearing much fruit? What is easily passed over when looking at the translated scriptures is a very crucial aspect. Each of us needs to abide in Christ, that's plain. But the word YOU in the Greek is plural.

"hymeis" (hoo-mice): YOU... irregular plural of "su" (soo): you

This is further made clear in that he calls us "branches" The plural is clear there. As you read on in John 15, you'll see that his command is to love one another.

So, we're in a pause within a pause. Are you abiding in Christ? Are you part of a plural, or are you a lone wolf, running your own life, accountable to nobody else but your god? I deliberately made god lower case, by the way.

Once I saw this distinction between plural YOU, and singular YOU... it changed how I saw myself, and how I read scripture. I can contort myself into looking like an obedient child of God, I can fake it on my own, but when it comes to the body of Christ, I have no control over these others. The only way is for me to submit myself to Christ. It's definitely a one-on-one relationship with God through my savior Jesus Christ, but I become a part of Christ. I'm a little ahead of myself here. But I wanted to make this clear. It's important for me to point out that I was alone on the corner of St. George's and E. 3rd Street, called by him to abide in him, and he in me. What we confess with our mouth, when it is an expression of what we are convinced of in our hearts, as a result of God's word taking a hold of us, is FAITH, and FAITH is powerful. It transcends & bypasses our intellect. I am being deliberately emphatic about something you might well miss, so I want you to see it. There is a faction of our society, and it's leaked into the church in various forms. Others have recognized the power of what we say out loud. But that's only a partial truth. And I don't want to tangent into that topic here, except to say that if you are five foot eight inches tall, and bald, you will still be five foot eight inches tall and bald, even if you say out loud, "I am ten feet tall with lovely golden, cascading locks of thick hair tumbling off my scalp".

29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. (NIV)

If you are not abiding in Christ, and you realize that. We have a powerful scripture to negotiate, traverse, utter. Negotiate as in you've got a dollar in your pocket, spend it. Traverse as in there's a road to walk down, that's opened up in front of you; Utter as in you need to speak with your mouth what has been realized in your heart.

1 John 1: 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (NIV)

Confess with your mouth, fully, with no excuses, and ask him to lead you out. This same state of mind, this same heart is seen in Psalm 139,

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (KJV)

Fast Forward to today March 14, 2021...

I have recently reached out to someone, my niece, Christa, and her husband, Quentin.

I did so in faith, in answer to God's call on my heart to do so. I never know for sure if its my flesh, or the Spirit that calls me to do a thing, but I trust that he will cleanse me from it, if it's just my flesh, or purify it if its inevitably a little of both. I've known Christa for her whole life, but she has lived thousands of miles away from me for most of her life, but I knew her from before she'd ever met Quentin, and as I reminisced about the past, and since it was only Christmas a minute ago, I sent her and Quentin a gift of \$100.00. I found out how timely that gift was, they were in great financial need.

Insert flashback of her father who battled with 4 cancers. How she lived from age 5 to 15 on the emotional rollercoaster of watching her awesome, loving father go from health, to the brink of death, to health... until the 4th time when he finally passed away... That 4th time was in November of 2011. And I'd been flown out there, by Christa's mother, my sister, Diana. Dave, her father, looked the part of a man ravaged by cancer. A picture I don't really want to paint for you, but look away if you don't think you can handle it. His cheeks were drawn, and his flesh was limp, because his muscle mass was depleted. He wore the hospital gown, and sat up in bed. His eyes were bulging out of their sockets, bruising can be seen. His legs when he stood up showed that he was retaining water, they were all puffed up, and he moved slowly. The once massive, handsome man, was now not at all... that's enough.

He looked at me as I entered his hospital room, and very much in the Spirit said, "You'll make no difference to this situation" meaning there'd be no miracle because of my arrival. Diana also, I knew that I'd not been called her for her. But later that day, when I went back to the place where they were staying, God gave me a curious word. I thought it was, "behold your daughter" but, it was actually, "behold, your daughter, to give away" I had no idea what it meant, really. Only questions... now is 2021, ten years later. And its as I walk on in Faith that I am coming to understand that word.

About a couple or three weeks later, I got a text from Christa asking me to lend them \$20.00 for four days, so that they could buy food. I sent it, and gave them instructions on how to pay me back in the time span they

had given me. There's a long story between that twenty-dollar loan, and now. There's an even longer back story, than the one I gave above, perhaps we'll get to it, who knows.

As we prayed for them with my home group, I had an idea, again, who's idea? Well, if it's God, I march on... if not I shrug, let go of it. If it isn't him, then he'll let me know soon enough. Meanwhile, I walk on toward his call. I phoned Christa on the following evening. I asked if I could help them with their budgeting. They agreed. I asked them if it was ok to talk about God, and use his word. They readily agreed. I explained that God calls us to comfort with the comfort we have been comforted with. That the word comfort is translated literally as "to come along side of" There's lots to this, but the humility of it is what I want to convey just now. I'm not stepping into their shoes. Nor am I pushing Quentin, the head of their household, out of the driver's seat, and saying, "here, I'll drive." As I did so, God impressed on me that I need to speak with Quentin, to include him in the conversation. Cheryl, my wife was also to be included in the task at hand. She and I are a team, and our home group is also included, because we are part of the Body of Christ, and they are our brother's and sisters in Christ. Cheryl, myself, Christa and Quentin were in a group phone call. Cheryl and I together on speaker phone here, and they on speaker phone there. Thousands of miles separate us. Quentin fully gave that the testimony that they are wholly submitted to Christ during the phone call, and I witnessed tears in my wife's eyes, and my own. It's one way we know how the Holy Spirit is at work. We had the witness of the Spirit of God.

I'm going to fast forward here, to a text I recently got from Christa.

I need to know where to put my foot in the first step.

I had spoken to them each about the headship of the man over the woman. Ephesians 5: and 1 Peter 3: are two examples of what I mean. But I know that when I have a word for someone, I don't even know what it will mean to them. I also know that the dynamic nature of God giving a spiritual gift through me is such that I also benefit, I am also "built up", another word for that is "edified" whether it be exhortation (describing something that needs to change) or encouragement, it's all edifying. To build up is a word image of how one mends or builds a building. Again, this is a point where I could tangent, but I'll leave a quote as a space for you, my reader, whomever you are, to ask me about if you so wish to go there.

Romans 1:11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— 12 that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith

She says to me, "but sometimes Quentin gets grumpy with me, do I have to listen to him then?". Because this notion of what it is to submit to others isn't strange to me, I knew what she meant, and that's what I set out to answer. I was waiting for my blood test, sitting in my truck outside the local test lab, sending her a series of text while the two of them were out running errands... pretend you've just sat down to have a coffee, and begin to overhear a conversation already in progress...

There's also an aspect where are you ideas come from you which are from God to Quinton can recognize and he can listen to God speaking to the two of you through you because you and he did not have the same mental and physical make up your talents and skills weaknesses and strengths are different from his end so it's up to him to differentiate these things and to except them and also for you because you were a couple this is a very complex issue and I do not expect you guys to understand it readily or instantly...

Translation:

you, as the wife are not a mute by stander, taking orders from the ruling monarch. There are times when an idea comes to you, from God, for the both of you to hear. Both you and Quinton need to learn to listen to what God is saying. Each of you have different weaknesses and strengths. As the two of you learn to listen, you will also learn what it is to agree, with godly agreement. Which is different from collusion. Collusion is best described as an agreement between that group of teens who murdered a homeless man, and said to one another, "Ok, this is what happened, we were walking through these woods, and suddenly came across this dead guy..." Agreement in the Spirit is where each searches their heart and listens to what's going on there, as well as hearing from the other. Until you both agree about what is being spoken, you are not "hearing". Many times, I've been convinced I know what we should do, but my wife is 100% against what I want to do. And I've said, "Ok, God, I've laid it out for her, it's up to you to convince her." For example, I wanted to homeschool Ashton from the very first, but Cheryl didn't agree until he was about to go into grade 8. Graduating from Grade 7 to 8 in BC is going from Elementary School to Junior High School. In Manitoba where I grew up, it was grade 1-6, 7-9, and 10-12. He needed to change schools anyways, and that's when she decided, she was ready for it. I heard that word of faith from her, and turned to God and said, "Ok, God, how are we going to get this done!?" Looking back at it from here, you must know that the "we" there was obviously us in terms of personal sacrifice, but it was Cheryl, who has always been a stay-at-home mom, and who would be the one to carry out the teaching, lesson planning, etc. She was adding more to her daily responsibilities, more than to mine. Again, that's another story, for another time, but it illustrates where I as the husband waited for her to agree.

I am going to go through each of these texts, quoting exactly what me and Siri sent to Christa, then attempt to further explain or make clear what was and is on my heart. Christa has asked me to clarify it for her. Here's the next text:

I hope I have not been too confusing nor frustrating for you. I don't like, to the point of actually saying that I don't believe in "advice" For the one seeking advice, is bypassing their own ideas of what God desires them to do... and goes to their fellow man, or to an older wiser one... "what should I do?"

If all goes well, what then? Does the advised one then follow around the advisor? To hear what's next? If it doesn't work out, the advice and advisor are at fault, the advised one is fault free, but nonetheless paying the price for the bad advice We have something over the rest of the world... one or two things at least.

I need to talk about the subject of "advice". I don't believe in it. What I am trying to explain, is not one person giving orders, and the other obeying the orders. That's not how God works. It's about what I'll call listening obedience. Hebrews 5:11-14

But let's talk about advice for a minute. Isn't the one seeking advice wishing to bypass their own ideas, having lost faith in themselves, and instead of turning to God, they turn to their fellow man? Even if it's an older, wiser one, it's still dethroning God, and putting man in his place.

This is the confusing part.

Because at some level it looks like the same thing.

But leading the lost one to God, and helping them to hear what God is saying... looks and feels different. There is the final say of the person listening, and there is a reverence for God, and for the other person, who is the workmanship, the handiwork of God. By honoring you, I am honoring God. I'm an God's voice, sent by him,

to help you untangle things, because you've called out to him. He has sent me to reconnect the wiring. Not to be the wiring.

The next text I sent, had three headings, that I then tried to explain,

1. God's word
2. His Holy Spirit
3. The Body of Christ

- our brothers and sisters in Christ

Ephesians 5:21 "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Read the whole book, Life Together, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Confusing? When I hear from my brother or sister in Christ, I must test what they are saying as though it is God speaking through them, to me. The test is scripture. God's word is the final authority, the only authority. If someone tells you something ask them where it says that in the bible.

"What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ." 1 Corinthians 2:12-16

The spiritual man makes judgements about all things, but he is not subject to any man's judgment.

It's God's Spirit in me that gives me discernment, but I am also a human being, Paul says later in this same book of 1 Corinthians that he does not even judge himself. He's differentiating between his human, flesh, and the Spirit of God within himself.

"I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore, judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God." 1 Corinthians 4:3-5

That word "judge" is part of the problem... in English it is possible to use the same word for many different ideas, and we have to decide what it means through the context,

- Judge can mean to discern (to decide between)
- Judge can mean to condemn
- ☐ As in "to pass judgment"
- ☐ Maybe it's like, "to give up on" and "walk away from"

We sometimes need to decide we have nothing in common with a person, and we cut that person loose. And make our way in the world without him. Free from being burdened by his burdens. But here another verse comes to mind,

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load. Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

Galatians 6:1-10

The ESV says it a little differently:

“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

“You who are spiritual” Does this mean, that the Holy Spirit can actually help me to discern the actions of my fellow man? Not all human beings, and I would say at this point, only when God has called me to speak in a particular instance to that person. Part of the way God does things is that he speaks through many so that our dependence is on him, not on human beings.

But there is also this, it’s in the context of “brothers and sisters”. Those outside of Christ need to first come to Christ. God can speak through them to us, but they won’t know they are speaking God’s word to us. It’s like Balaam’s donkey, rebuking him, see Numbers 22:21-39

Now it’s important for me to point out that I am texting, but I am giving a word, and God clarifies his word with his already written and established WORD the Bible. As I write, or speak a scripture will come to mind, and its Gods way of clarifying the message he’s giving me. If I don’t speak the word, I am only going to receive the first couple of words, and its dead in the water, so to speak. Only as I empty my cup does he pour in more wine.

Here I see there is a reference to reaping and sowing... maybe we don’t know the seed we dropped in the ground, but when a corn stalk grows up from the ground, we see what it is.

“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.” Galatians 6:2-4 ESV

Doesn't THIS MEAN that ultimately YOU and QUENTIN have to make up your own minds about things? The two of you have to seek agreement, like I've described above there. It's not about arguing, it's about, saying, "no, that's not what I hear in my heart, I hear this..." There's this word picture of four blind men, all standing around a giant elephant, each of them is describing what he feels. Think of how they each would argue, the one at the elephant's trunk would say, "it's a snake like creature" the one by the elephant's leg would say, "what the ?!? It's like a tree!!!" and the one at the tail... etc etc Until they all realize they are at different parts of the same creature, and come to a clear image in their heads...

Now about me? Has God proven me, to you? Or have I been proven a fool? Even with me, you must not agree just cuz Uncle Laurence is saying it. Prayer always has to be, "God, what is it that you are saying through Laurence?" Because YOU will be the one to pay the price for the decision you make. You have to own it. This is what WE decided to do. And, the weight of responsibility is ultimately on Quentin as the husband. Christa must be faithful to Quentin by saying, "no, that's not what I'm hearing..." or "...this doesn't seem to make sense, stealing is wrong. Sure we're hungry, but breaking into this 711 for food isn't God's plan for us"

Another idea came to mind as I emptied the glass... God poured in the next glass of wine,

One thing I see that the spirit is getting at as I hash this out with him, is we need to examine our assumptions and beliefs. Where did the ideas and reasons for how we live our lives come from?

What are their sources? If you see a plant sprang up in your garden follow the roots till you see where it comes from. Another test of our assumptions is to speak them honestly out loud in a group of trusted fellow believers whose only desire to hear God's desire for their lives and ours. And to allow them to ask you questions about it.

"In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."

Ephesians 2:22 ESV

The word YOU is plural. We are being joined together, and the goal is to become a dwelling place for God. God's desire is to find his lost sheep and bring them to himself. Where do I fit into that plan, where do you fit in? That is why we have no business getting advice from the world, for theirs is darkness and confusion.

"For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves," Romans 1:21-24 ESV

My word to you is then, perhaps this:

- Examine the reasons you do what you do
- Explore the crop that's grown up out of the ground, and thereby know the seeds
- Turn to God and repent

- But when a life is such a big scrambled mess, this is where being in fellowship comes in handy

You can speak out loud to a group of trusted fellow believers and have them challenge the assumptions and beliefs behind your actions... but ultimately YOU discern the truth from what they uncover with you

- I don't do everything the same as my fellow church members, not even my fellow home group members
- We are not the same
- Like in 1 Corinthians 4: the motives and such will be judged when we stand before God
- But, I do give my brothers and sisters the right to challenge all I say and do, and I take it to heart and test it

"but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil."

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 ESV

I take it for granted that the word of my brother or sister is coming from God, and I test it... I pray and Ask God to teach me, I examine his word, I examine the sources of what I believe and from that I make my decisions. I do not submit to every Christian I meet up with.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete. Look at what is before your eyes. If anyone is confident that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we. For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed. I do not want to appear to be frightening you with my letters." 2 Corinthians 10:3-9 ESV

This is where I went in for my blood test, and then home to finally eat my breakfast, and have a coffee, sometime later I got this response from Christa;

Christa:

It's not frustrating but sometimes the bible scriptures confuse me, the wording of them confuses me. I was told when I was a kid in the Christian school that I had good discernment. I have to go to work in a few mins here. Since we don't really have a group around us would i guess I kind of always talk to my friend Chantelle or Tanisha about stuff. They're both Christian too both in very different types. If that makes sense. Discussing stuff with them it's nice but to discuss stuff as a couple we don't really have anyone besides you and auntie Cheryl.

Scriptures need to be meditated on, taught, and thought through, and we learn how to do this in home groups, bible studies, Sunday School classes...

We meet as a home group on Wednesday nights, I'd like to invite you and Quentin to join us on one of those nights. You can use your phones, and we can use our Zoom meeting on our computers. These are people I trust, and I'd have them introduce themselves as God leads them. You are not alone, I am not alone.

JUNE 2021

Glenn Richard Brand's story and mine are intertwined. He's my oldest brother. Same Mum, same Dad. Same brothers and sister.

Poetically, I can see a young boy following his brother through the woods, and when life finally struck him down, I was called upon to bind up his wounds and help put him into a place to heal.

In another poetic paradigm our lives are some what different. My tragedy and his differing only in their timing, perhaps.

I'm guilty already of being veiled, what's that word people use? hmmm. I'm sure at least one of you will let me know. I await!

One thing for sure is that there are two kinds of God here in this story I am embarking on telling. There is the God we think we know, and the God who truly is, who is not subject our definition of him. There's the usurper, the Ape and the donkey puppet wearing a Lion's skin, and then there's Aslan, The Lion! There's the lie, and then there is The sovereign God, creator of the universe and everything in it.

Very early on in my life I wanted to know which was which. I asked the one in charge to reveal himself to me in a way that I could understand. I acknowledged that he was greater than I, and that he needed to make up for my weakness. I was 17 years old, standing at the corner of Vimy Road and Ness Avenue, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where I'd thus far grown up. It was a coming-of-age prayer. Entering into a contract with the one who can only be known if he so wished it to be so. I didn't know much about anything at that point in my life. Only that I wanted clarity.

There I go being vague again, hmm? Well, hopefully I can depart from the brief, and get into details as this book goes on. All these are foot notes for me to get back to.

So lets find a beginning for this story, and go from there. See you in chapter One.

Chapter One

The Kingdom within a Kingdom

" But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,
and all these things will be added to you."

Matthew 6:33

I've always given Carl G. Jung the credit for the following definition of intuition, but I don't know where I've seen it. So, for now, until someone can correct me, here it goes,

Intuition is the complex integration of large amounts of information.

I'm 58 years old as I sit here to write about my life. One life long struggle is the one to understand this odd talent, ability, or curse, call it what you will. Knowing things without having used one of the 5 senses:

1. Eyes, to see
2. Ears, to hear
3. Nose, to smell
4. Mouth, to taste,
5. Body, to touch

But this book isn't going to be about my intuition. I have no final idea of what intuition is, nor this thing which I call intuition. Where I end, and God begins, I don't know. I know that many times in my life I realized that I've just done something that is not completely understandable.

How about I take that definition up there, and use it to describe that young fellow standing at the corner of Vimy Road and Ness Avenue. Should I pause and tell you the significance of that corner? Or more about that young lad?

I was about 17 years old. My memory is fading, so I'm supposing that's the age I was. I do know that at the age of 10 I had all but lost one of my hero's, my big brother, Glenn. I was the youngest of four brothers. Oh, and I shouldn't forget we had a little sister, Diana. My jealousy will show up often here in this book I suspect. For example, she's always been spoiled! Why should get to have 4 brothers, and I only got to have 3?!? Tell me that?!? Diana is 7 years younger than me. This is where intuition plays a part, unless there's a better name for it in this instance. I was the little brother, the youngest, and all was well, and then another baby was born, the much hoped for little girl! I was supplanted. Replaced! The world I knew had been altered. Is it intuition which gave me that feeling of loss? Sibling rivalry comes to mind. The definition of that being the wish to have the exclusive love of one's parents. Well, I didn't mind sharing my parents love with the three who'd been born before me. I was glad they didn't seem to resent my being born.

Before you panic too much here, as I explore these emotions, I love my sister, Diana so very much. We joke about the angst between us. Our fallen nature, our human nature as opposed to heavenly one, is always there, waiting to take control. It's the Holy Spirit's work in us to make us like Christ Jesus. He exchanged who he was, for whom he had become.

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,[a] 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,[b] 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,[c] being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11 ESV

It's so hard for me to just be plain!!!

Oh, God, help me to just tell my story!

Let's go back to that corner again. Vimy Road and Ness Avenue. The significance of Vimy Road is that it is there I'd grown up. We'd moved there when I was in grade 2. The significance of Ness Avenue is that this was the nearest bus route to our house. I was on my way somewhere. The poetry of that moment is vivid to me here as I write this. It's hard for me to just talk straight up about it.

I'd obviously been pondering something, thinking things over. Looking back now I know I lived in a messed up household. That's why we need to know what had happened to Glenn. It had messed me up, but something about me was as much at play then as it is now. I accept the situation I'm in. But that doesn't mean that I'm not effected by it. Or is that affected?

What is this some kind of psychiatrist's couch?!?

Look, my brother was thrown out by my father when he was 15 and I was 10. I loved my big brother Glenn, dearly and still do. He loved me like a father should love. My own father was cold and distant. Inaccessible. I was included in all the life of our family. But I was there as a passenger, riding in the back of our station wagon, playing lego, alone, with my family taking up the six available seats. Three in the front, three in the middle, and me in the back. If I was jealous, I wasn't aware of it.

What is this some kind of psychiatrist's couch?!?

I didn't know my brother's story fully at the time. I just remembering weeping that night. The night where Glenn and he had one final argument. He was told to get out, and Glenn complied. I was lying in bed in the room next to his, alone in the dark. Two immovable wills that had collided many many times, now reached the crisis. My father was done. Glenn was done.

"Get out" was the decree

Glenn left, and never returned. He ended up in Vancouver, BC some 2400 miles from our home there in Winnipeg. A piece of my life went missing. And an empty spot in my heart was left vacant.

I'm guessing that was at least part of my pause at that cedar hedge that towered over me. It could have been during the day for all I know, but it was night for me, darkness. I was alone. I couldn't ask these questions in my heart of any one but God himself. That much my heart of hearts knew. I didn't doubt his existence, I only wanted to know if he was the God of the Bible I'd been raised with. I asked him to teach me in a way that I could understand, to make up for my frailty. At that time I saw the world divided into two types, those compensated for others and those who needed to be compensated for. I was the of the first group.

What is this some kind of psychiatrist's couch?!?

So that prayer being prayed, I was on my way to where ever it was.

Now here's where I must add, if talking about God, and the bible is a turn off for you, then you'd just better fuck off now, I don't have time for you. And if you're a Christian, and I've just lost you as a reader because I used the word FUCK, get used to it, or you too should just better fuck off now with the rest of them. Sure is quiet in here.

Now here's where I must add, if talking about God, and the bible is making you roll your eyes, I don't mind if you lay down this book, I have no quarrel with you. And if you're a Christian, and have come here to judge me, I have no quarrel with you either. I'm here to tell my story. The Apostle Paul said it best,

3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

1 Corinthians 4:3-5

What possibly came about that day was that God himself was the one who initiated that prayer or mine. The Gospel of John begins in this way, and a key verse for me is here:

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:12-13 KJV

I've chosen this translation of this verse because it most closely conveys what I've found to be true in my experience of God. Lets take a look at the other versions for a moment:

12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. NIV

Let's try this. You have \$100,000.00 in the bank. That money means you have the means to buy yourself a very nice motor vehicle. But that's only if you're allowed to buy a car, and/or have a license, and/or are allowed to have car insurance. Accepting that Jesus is the one whom the Apostle John describes gives you the right to become, the power to become a child of God. Your will stands in the way. Obedience is an action. Belief in the truth is only half done, acting on that belief is the completion.

Unless the LORD builds the house,
the builders labor in vain.

Unless the LORD watches over the city,
the guards stand watch in vain.

Psalms 127:1

See here in the Psalm that there are laborers, and yet the builder is The Lord. The key to this mystery I'm trying to convey is that your will stands in between you and the life God has for you. Explore Psalm 139. My book idea, "Why Be Obedient" is to explore that thought and idea. But my testimony is about how I got here. Here's another key verse in my life:

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 11:6 KJV

or

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. NIV

That's what I stumbled upon pausing there on that corner. I believed he existed. I believed he would reward my diligently seeking him. And my testimony is that he has not let me down. I just remain mystified about how I got here. I have no formula for how to make your life turn out well, except to Hope that God by his Holy Spirit ignites in you the belief that he exists, and the desire to know him, to be known by him.

But what about this kingdom within a kingdom? There's this natural realm that surrounds us, and there's the Supernatural realm which transcends the natural realm.

FIRST PETER 1:6-9 MY LIFE FELL APART

Introduction

Here I Am

My life fell apart.

At the wedding reception for my first marriage... I will never forget giving the response to the "Toast To The Bride"

My life fell apart.

At the wedding reception for my first marriage... I will never forget giving the response to the "Toast To The Bride"

I told them how God had always given me theme scriptures throughout my life. I was all of 21!

"And," I continued, "at this moment it is the book of 1 Peter...."

I wondered out loud with them about how this beautiful bride, this wonderful lady I was marrying that day could possibly be about suffering. I didn't have it written down a head of time... but God did. My life I mean. Oh, and the Speech, yeah, that came to me as I went along. But then again, so has my life.

Little did I know... but God knew.

His voice would come to me at just the right moments in time... to guide me, reassure me, and comfort me.

Like that day in Salmon Arm. In the Rain. In the park. Under the play structure, with all four of my children. I had them from 7 am to 7 pm each Saturday. She'd taken them 4 hour's drive away from me, Life had I mean, my soon to be Ex-wife played her part, and God was playing his part... but nevertheless... somehow between visits they'd grown to hate me, especially the oldest two, so the beginning of each visit was cold and distant, were their hearts broken? Confused? Indoctrinated by their mother!?!? Now now.

And then that Saturday... we'd been out and about... I didn't want to take them home. But it had started to rain, hard.

So, we went under the bridges and ladders, and slides of the playground structure, and I took out my little micro recorder - the one my lawyer told me to buy - and we took turns telling a random story... cuz they were mine again. They knew they loved me, and that I loved them. All the pain and confusion of the days before fled in the path of the outpouring rain of God's love, the cloud burst release of our love. And in that moment as we were giggling at our own silly story, God whispered to me... this is how it will be. At the end of a very long day, they will be yours again. Little did I know how long a day it would be! Little did I know how much I would need that promise, that assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hey, that's Faith!

Not too long after that a sort of suicide's desire came courting. The message was to just give up. But His Spirit whispered in the depths of me, "be all you can be, become all you can become, when they need you, be ready"

At some point in time I'll have to tell the story of how the Greek word, ετοιμάζω (he-toy-mad-zoe) would come to me... I'd taken one year of Koine Greek - one of the original languages that the bible was written in -

but my college hopes had forever been interrupted by marriage, and children... but I digress a bit, but then again you gotta know why a word from an ancient language would pop into my mind!

Well, I thought it meant “I Marvel” because it would always come to mind in moments of awe. But some ten years later, as I shared this with repeated experience with my Bible Scholar Brother John, he said, “No, Laurence, that means, I Prepare.” Tears welled up inside of me... Yes, indeed God prepares! A flash back of all those years gushed out before me with each of those tears.

Yes, God takes the sinful, broken, naive young man Laurence... and leads him throughout his life, through valleys and heights, and on the other side... God’s promises shine as he wonders how he ever got through to here I am now.

Fast forward a bit, I’m remarried by now, and this son from my second marriage is 14 years old, and we finally get the answer to the question everyone’d been asking, is included. Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Well, I’ll wait here while you react. What would you do? What if that’s me, my child?

I was excited! But a little confused. I’d worked years ago as a child psychiatric worker at Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, where I grew up. And my specialty was Autism. Long story, I wasn’t anything more than “boots on the ground” front line intervention co-strategist... but still, it was the only THING I knew ... I asked God, like, “you had me back then learning how to care for a child I’d have way up after then... and then he said, “yes, I prepared Ashton’s father ahead of time...”

It’s kind of like when a long fuse gets lit, and you see the sparks whipping along the ground... headed for the stockpile of explosives...

“You did it on purpose!” You created Ashton, Autistic, on purpose!”

And... I might add, he did my life on purpose as well.

Hidden in those verses was and is my life’s purpose, the life he did in purpose, both mine and yours...

“...for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” 1 Peter 1:6-9

THE FIRING SQUAD

July 2021

Chapter One

The Firing Squad

There is an antagonist, the villain in my story, and a protagonist, the Hero.

God is the Hero, and Satan is the villain.

Each and all of us from time to time does work for one of these two. There is no other. The life that lives to please God, will inherit everlasting life.

Apart from faith it is impossible to believe God... Hebrews 11:6

And this is the work of God, to believe in the one whom he has sent, John 6

There are minions and fellow citizens. There are knowing and unknowing participants on both sides. Naïve... well, I'm enjoying myself in my vagaries here aren't I?

I notice that C. S. Lewis in his "Chronicles of Narnia" uses the literary device of a person being enchanted by a witch's cordial. This has real life parallels. I'm right in the middle of listening to this series at the moment, so I'm sure my 'voice' will sound like his for the moment, that happens to me.

C. S. Lewis, "Mere Christianity" comes to mind also. If it's occurring to you that you don't know what you believe, then by all means do the research, it's about time you did, however old you may be! If you are not consciously aware of who you are and why, isn't it at least possible that you are the dupe of some influence that has you under it's spell? There's Narnia talk for you!

I cannot escape manipulation. I cannot escape influences on my thinking. But I can have an effect on what or whom is influencing me.

Hebrews 11:6

Ephesians 1:11-12

11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:11-14 NIV

It's God. The influence on my life is God. I know it! I invited him in once I realized his call, his voice beckoning to me in my heart.

It's the other one, I want you to know, because there are only two. Good and Evil. God and Satan. I use the capital letter in each of these names. I have no power over Satan,

Jude, the lord rebuke you

Jesus Christ has the power over sin and death. Satan is HIS anguished foe.

I am more than a conquerer, in Christ Jesus

My thoughts are always susceptible, and are the entry point into my life,

I Corinthians 9... thoughts captive

You'll notice that the bible comes up lots in my writing here. It's no accident. We are admonished – which is stronger than merely being told – to test everything.

1 Thessalonians 5

And although I'm no bible scholar – let's get that out of the way – it's my sword. It's the sword the Spirit wields!

Ephesians 6:

I invite all bible college students to fill their boots! Take up one of my foundational beliefs and set out to prove it wrong, and come deliver me! And by your work we'll both be brought closer to God, for HIS Glory!

I used to worry about all those people and what they think. I once upon a time had an ideology that was to be who they wanted me to be, then at some unknown point in the future I could bring out the real me. Picture it with me,

I'm this member of roving rebels, part of the gang. And one day, I open up my chest, and bring out this little boy that is the me I truly am, and because they love me, they all embrace the real me, and we lay that false, whatchacallit to rest in behind a cactus, and live happily ever after. But trust me, it never happens like that. Shouts of IMPOSTER!!! You big FAKE! Like the guy that puts on a fat suit, and gets in all chummy with the fat kids at school... when he finally reveals that he's a fit and trim, attractive young man with no popularity problems, the fat kids all feel used and objectified. But trust me, I really am fat LOL, no worries there.

One way or another, figuratively or literally, there are those who suddenly walk away from me during a conversation. With or without some segue like, looking at their watch and saying, "oh my! Is that the time!!" they scoot off, scheming how never to be stuck in a conversation with me again. Just what kind of weirdo am I anyways? Well, my anxiety is showing to be sure. If you don't like me, I'm pretty sure I won't like you either.

That reminds me of the time I was leading the bible study group of my high school Christian club. We were in a classroom at lunch time, and I prayed a prayer, and in that prayer, I said something to the effect of not being ashamed of being a follower of Jesus Christ, and told God that the same was true of all of these that are with me. After I said amen, one or two got up, opened the door to the hallway and left. That same group, however, something else happened. I got caught up in the prayer I was praying. I was leading the group in prayer. All of us had our heads bowed, and eyes closed, and my words were the words each were agreeing to in their hearts. As I prayed my emotions carried me up into shouting, tears and running nose. It was powerful! I remember saying Amen, and opening my eyes, to see the horrified faces of my young friends, ranging in age from 14 – 17, who came from non-Pentecostal type church's. United, Mennonite Christian Conference, Baptist, Lutheran, and feeling that same feeling one might get after any emotional outburst. I always shuddered when it came back to my mind for years later. But one day, which I hope will come up in this book at some point again,

Ken Peters reminded me of that prayer. He'd come to visit my brother, Andrew, whom I was staying with. I was in the midst of the first hours of my divorce from my first wife. I was at the lowest point of my life. Feeling defeated, empty and ruined. I had a wife and four children that I was estranged from in Abbotsford, and there I was in Vancouver, sharing a two-room apartment with my brother Andrew and his wife. I would cry myself to sleep at night, on my 1" thick foam mattress, in the middle of 10x10 room. The window of the room looked out onto the industrial size garbage bin of a Pizza Hut. I emerged from my room, to see him standing there, Ken I mean. He was leaning on the kitchen counter, just inside the door from the alley way. He said, "you're the reason I'm a pastor! After you prayed that prayer that day – remember now, I had not had time to say anything to him, he lived in Winnipeg, and had flown in to visit family. He coincidentally had gone to bible school with my older brother Andrew, and come to visit him, not me. I knew which prayer right away, and his declaration was a juxtaposition of my memory of it. He prayed to God after that, asking God to put a fire in his soul like the one in mine.

I'm an authentic, fully thought-out person. I have a reason for everything there is about me to discover, or see plainly. I invite the challenge of any and all. Maybe I have some uninvestigated aspect of my life?

1 Peter... always be ready to give a reason for the hope that you have

For the rest of you mere mortals – Narnia speak again LOL – carefully consider God's word with me. Jesus was like this, and so I've left this part of me that's grown over the years as a planting of the Lord. My anxiety is relieved by telling myself the truth. In the pages of the gospel of John, for one example,

Jesus in The Gospel of John chapter 6,

John 6...

Jesus stated who He was plainly to these that claimed to be his followers, always. And in John 6 he made it more and more plain. John 2 contains a curious scripture to ponder here,

John 2: Jesus did not entrust himself to them

And by the way, God's word, what is that? I know you think you know what I mean, and I think I know what I mean, but we have to come down to a definition of terms here at the beginning.

I had a word come to me one day, as a sort of vision, but really it was a scenario that came to mind... I get up in front of a church congregation, and there is a large table at the altar. I invite everyone there to bring up their various bibles. Some proudly bring up their KJV's and NIV's, and others more proudly still bring their ESV's and etc... until finally all the various kinds of translations are there but one type... the most dangerous type of all... I tell them that there in their hearts is the most dangerous translation. The one they think they remember correctly. The one that is isolated from its context. The one that was wrongly taught, and needs a re-think, the one we learned as children, and now need to look again when we have a new perspective of the years and what we have been through... the only way to rid ourselves of those is to always have our bibles with us, to read the word daily, and to always always always look up that scripture that just came to mind, especially when we are tempted to bash it over some other suffering Christian's head. There's a certain kind of 'ism that certain kinds of Christians engage in, and that's holding to one translation and shunning others. They do this even though bible scholars, whole teams of folks who have poured their lives into the work of bringing the original

scriptures of Hebrew Aramaic and Greek into the modern-day language of their contemporaries. In “How To Read The Bible For All It’s Worth” by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, they point out that it is good to read the same translation of scripture in our day-to-day bible reading, but when we study, we should refer to a few of them, because each and every one of them have examples of better and not-so-good translations of difficult passages. When we see a difference, we can note that it is one to ponder carefully, and perhaps to refer to a good bible commentary, as we prayerfully consider what God’s word is saying to us in that moment.

Again, this is not a doctoral thesis. I’m not out to start a new sect in the church, nor my own religion. My bibliography will emerge as I write. Am I using that term correctly? What I mean is: the books that have significantly influenced me. I’ve listened to them, or read them numerous times. OH! Here comes another one LOL, C. S. Lewis again, “An Experiment in Criticism”, where he mentions reading a book more than once. Usually, a research paper has at the end of it a bibliography. I really don’t want someone to come along and correct me here. Leave me stupid. But I am the result of my research. I’m the document. Here I am now. It is who I am, and have become. Like the food I eat it is digested. The good and the bad. One offsets the other.

And God, by the ministry of his Holy Spirit, keeps me straight. Because it’s his Word that I’ve read the most, and know the best, although this is a continual process that will never end.

His word is living and active.

One of my life’s foundational scripture is John 14:26

John 14:26

And here is where I first mention, “How To Read The Bible For All It’s Worth, Gordon Fee, Douglas Stuart.”

If you want to research the validity of the Bible there are online resources for this. The Alpha Program,

“Alpha began at a church called Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) in London in 1977, it was taken by Nicky Gumbel in 1990 and repositioned as a course for those outside the church. The number of people attending Alpha at HTB grew quickly into the hundreds and attracted the attention of other churches across denominations seeking to find an effective tool for evangelism.”

<https://alphacanada.org/about/>

What about that term, Evangelism?

Evangelism comes from the Greek words euaggelion — a good message, or gospel — and euaggelizo — to announce, declare, bring, or preach this good news. Notice the word “angel” tucked inside the word — an angel is a messenger. Those who practice evangelism are indeed delivering a message: One of extraordinarily good news, life-giving and transformative, with eternal ramifications.

<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-terms/what-is-evangelism.html>

Well, we still haven’t come to what this book is... maybe its found in,

And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Revelation 12:11 ESV

This book then, is the word of my testimony.

There are some assistant Hero's and assistant Villains. My ex-wife, Lori has played both parts from time to time. And as I tell my story, please refrain from driving to her house, and putting up against the wall of her house, and lining up the firing squad, "READY! AIM! FIRE!"

I have another word picture for you,

I have my enemy brought to me, gagged and bound. And there's the cross laying on the ground. I know exactly what to do. An unseen hand is there with all that I need to do the deed. I stretch her out and lay her hands out along the cross member, and lay her body along the upright. I hold her wrist in place, and place a nail exactly where needs be, and raise the iron hammer high, taking aim... but wait, I want to see the pain in her face as I drive in the nails, as I swing, I turn and look... its not she looking back at me, but he... my lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, taking her punishment, taking the weight of her sin upon himself... I drop the hammer, and embrace my Lord, and my hatred and contempt for her drops with the hammer. They say the ground at the foot of the cross is level ground. We're all sinners, we all deserve death.

Laurence Brand, July 10, 2021

Romans 6:23 Romans 3:23

There's no gun fight folks! If that's what you've come for, go back to your homes. This is about Victory over the enemy of our souls. I'm no Hero, it's all Him who saved me, and continues to save me from the wretched man I am.

Two Gunslingers

Two gunslingers walked out in the street and one said

"I don't wanna fight no more."

And the other gunslinger thought about it and said,

"Yeh, what are we fighting for?"

[Chorus:]

I'm takin' control of my life, I'm takin' control of my life

I'm takin' control of my life right now, oh yeah

Well the crowd that assembled for the gun fight

Were let down, everyone hissed and booed

And a stranger told his Mrs., "That's the last one of those gunfights

You're ever gonna drag me to."

Well the two gunslingers went ridin' out of town and

Were never heard from no more

And there ain't been a gunfight for a long time

Maybe never, but nobody knows for sure

<https://www.tompetty.com/audio/two-gunslingers-682711>

Another song about blaming others,
When The Man Comes Around
“And I heard, as it were, the noise of thunder
One of the four beasts saying,
‘Come and see.’ and I saw, and behold a white horse”

There’s a man goin’ ’round takin’ names
And he decides who to free and who to blame
Everybody won’t be treated all the same
There’ll be a golden ladder reachin’ down
When the man comes around

The hairs on your arm will stand up
At the terror in each sip and in each sup
Will you partake of that last offered cup
Or disappear into the potter’s ground?
When the man comes around

Hear the trumpets hear the pipers
One hundred million angels singin’
Multitudes are marchin’ to the big kettledrum
Voices callin’, voices cryin’
Some are born and some are dyin’
It’s alpha and omega’s kingdom come
And the whirlwind is in the thorn tree
The virgins are all trimming their wicks
The whirlwind is in the thorn tree
It’s hard for thee to kick against the pricks

Till armageddon no shalam, no shalom
Then the father hen will call his chickens home
The wise man will bow down before the throne
And at his feet they'll cast their golden crowns
When the man comes around

Whoever is unjust let him be unjust still
Whoever is righteous let him be righteous still
Whoever is filthy let him be filthy still
Listen to the words long written down
When the man comes around

Hear the trumpets hear the pipers
One hundred million angels singin'
Multitudes are marchin' to the big kettledrum
Voices callin', voices cryin'
Some are born and some are dyin'
It's alpha and omega's kingdom come
And the whirlwind is in the thorn tree
The virgins are all trimming their wicks
The whirlwind is in the thorn trees
It's hard for thee to kick against the prick
In measured hundredweight and penny pound
When the man comes around

"And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts
And I looked, and behold a pale horse
And his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed with him"

<https://www.johnnycash.com/track/the-man-comes-around-3/>

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Preface

Chapter 1 That Speech at the Wedding

Let me set the stage for you, pardon the pun, for I am actually standing on a stage in the basement of our home church in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It's a large church, and a large gathering of friends and family.

The Bride, my first wife, Lori Wiebe, sat there on the stage behind a banquet, spread with table cloth, the bridesmaids on the left, the Groom, that's me, Laurence Brand, and the groomsmen on the right, all in a row. Wine glasses full of grape juice for the toast to the Bride. This was a Pentecostal Church in a traditional space and time, no alcohol thank you very much.

Before me arranged around round banquet tables were the friends and family of the Bride and Groom. We were barely in our 20's, and my friends were an unruly group of Christian rowdy's, holding up signs now and then with "3 dimensional PlayBoy" written on them. Were they really that crass?!? Whispering and giggling could be heard from that table of boys, most if not all had not even been on a real date yet, and the idea that one of us would soon was now licensed to do what had always been forbidden was at the forefront of their minds. Even now it makes me shudder. Quite different from myself in that regard. There were all of her Aunts, Uncles and Cousins from both sides of her family. How can I describe these. They were the very epitome of 'shoulds' and 'oughts'. None of them had spent their lives in self discovery, all of them had spent their lives in finding out not only how they themselves should be or ought to be, but how everyone else should or ought to

be. As they glanced around the room their eyes and ears would pick up evidence to be processed, and the verdicts imprinted in their minds. How people sat, dressed, ate, conversed, all were under the microscope of close scrutiny, and most assuredly, the only outcome was disgust, it was just a matter of figuring out just how disgusting. Along with this was a justification of how they were each the perfect examples of propriety and taste. Pride in who they were by comparison to everyone else there, and yet each and every one of them nobody in particular, really. Not famous, not notable, not wealthy, not poor. Very average. They went to church every Sunday, and took naps in the afternoon. Their children under strict orders that there be no TV, or any other form of leisure as they honored the Lord's Day by being bored to death. Most everyone there were dressed up according to their fashion, faith and custom. My parents were in a decidedly eclectic apparel. My mother had bought a second-hand dress of Pink Flowers of various shades, with a kind of crepe that hung over it, as though it were a lamp that someone had refused to take the wrapping off of. My father had on well-worn suit, with his tie in a Windsor knot, but the last part instead of being fitted under was flipped over the top.

My world was so very different from her world, and I hardly knew it at the time. I didn't know how events such as a wedding could be completely about so many things but not much about the bride and groom. This wedding was about the parents of the Bride. This was their one and only girl, but also their first born. I knew nothing of the things that so easily flood my mind now. But as I look back on it now some 39 years later it is not haunting for me.

My brothers and sister would have been there. I was the first to be married. My brother Glenn had come to my wedding, he'd flown in from Vancouver, BC. John, Andrew, and Diana were all there. Andrew was my best man, and had driven to the church without me, and that was why my father had to take time out of his own getting ready to drive me to the church some 30 minutes away.

There were the two pastors who had officiated the wedding. Pastor H H Barber of course, and Pastor Hoover. Pastor Barber was our pastor growing up, Pastor Hoover was the pastor of her mother and father. We were both such babies that the idea of having a wedding of our own was completely unthought of. This wedding was about the parents. Her parents showing off to their entire family of how a wedding should and ought to be.

The decorations and layout of each and every table carefully thought out by her parents, submitted to by Lori, and then I was told. There were strict orders for how my parents were to dress and behave, since it was well known that they were not haunted by any 'shoulds and oughts'.

Now, me. The guy about to give a speech in response to the Toast to The Bride. I'm 21 years old, and had just completed one year of a 4-year degree at a Bible College in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Zip back in time to when I was in grade 10, that's an extra year ago than you might think, since I'd stayed an extra year to make up some missing credits for my full graduation requirement. In grade 10 I'd asked God to teach me in a way that I could understand. Quite literally, but also poetic, I was standing at the north west corner of Ness Avenue and Vimy Road, on my way, no doubt, eastward to our church in Down Town Winnipeg, 43 minutes away by bus. Vimy runs North South, Ness runs East West. Nestled there against a well-groomed, high cedar hedge, I'd paused. It was a 5-minute walk from my house, and whenever I went out, my mind would be full of thoughts. That night I'd been thinking about who I was, and what I truly believed in. It was a coming-of-age moment. My

prayer is long ago forgotten but nonetheless permanently fixed in the heart of God. I believe all prayer is initiated by God, and the uttering is our submission to him, to his will for our lives. This one certainly was.

“God, I accept that you exist. I accept that you are greater than me, and therefore YOU must make up for my weakness and deficiencies. I need to know if the Bible I’ve been brought up with is YOUR word, and if the faith I’ve been brought up with is THE FAITH. Teach me in a way that I can understand, Amen”

I’m an old man now, and many things have been so forgotten by me. I know this quite well, since I’ve finally gotten to the task of shredding the no longer need contents of two four drawer filing cabinets in my home. Letters, bank statements, income tax assessments, leases, credit agreements, and the like. At times I come across things that remind of absolutely forgotten things. But this moment needs no printed paper to be recalled to memory. God’s faithfulness to answer my prayer is what recalls it to my memory everyday since.

An aside... I ended up going to bible college, as I’ve said, and took the first year of biblical Greek. We memorized vocabulary lists, I guess as most language courses do. Throughout my life a particular Greek word would come to my mind instead of or as well as the English word. Whenever I found myself in a particularly awe-inspiring moment, I would remember I MARVEL, ἐτοιμάζω, (e-toi-mad-zo) the Greek word would be the word that came to my mind first. It raised the otherwise everyday event to something more than everyday experience. Many years later, while discussing this with my older brother, John, who had mastered the biblical languages, he interrupted my story to lovingly correct me,

“no, Laurence, that means “I prepare” θαυμάζω (thow-mad-zo) means “I marvel”

This was and is an example of God speaking to me, in a way that I could understand, though the complete understanding was to come along much later.

I do not know how long after that prayer – sorry for the interruption of that picture of me standing on the corner there. I’d finished my prayer, and crossed to the east bound side of the street, and boarded the Ness Avenue Bus for Polo Park, where I’d transfer to a bus on Portage Avenue at St. James Street to Hargrave Street, and then another 5-minute walk north to our church on the corner of Hargrave and Cumberland. I was probably going for my piano lessons with our Minister of Music, Reuban Johnson.

I do not know exactly where in this time line my next prayer fits in, except that it came later. I’d decided that I would read my bible. And for whatever reason, I decided I needed to read it on my own. Equally mysterious to me is why I would choose the book of Romans for my first book of study. I read the first chapter, and absolutely did not understand a single word of it. I laid it down and made a challenge more than a prayer of it. I told God I would not leave this spot until he taught me what it was saying, “teach me in a way that I can understand” was the clear underlying prayer of that respectful ultimatum. I’d already read parts of the gospel of John, though, so I’m a bit muddled here. Because it was a prayer made relying on the promise made in John 14:26. That the Holy Spirit would teach me and remind me of all things Jesus had ever told me.

John 14:26

Right or wrong, I accepted this word of Jesus to his disciples about the promised Holy Spirit, to be something promised to me. That he would be my teacher.

In regards to Romans chapter One it was and is a foundational scripture for my entire life. A scripture I go back to time and again when speaking the Good News to encourage or teach others. God fulfilled his promise, and answered my prayer.

This reverence for the scripture came from my parents, oddly enough. We'd grown up Baptists, I was born in Calgary, Alberta, in 1962 and we moved as a family to Winnipeg in 1968. When we got to Winnipeg the Baptist church was the most natural choice, since it was our heritage, or so I thought. But a problem was encountered. We came home from Sunday School with coloured pictures of a Walt Disney character, Micky Mouse. Nothing particularly wicked about Mickey Mouse, it's just that church is about one's relationship with God, and the Bible is the source of that. So, they came to attend another church. And I would find out many years later it tuned out to be a returning to even deeper family roots. We began to attend Calvary Temple, a PAOC church as I've already described. Pastor H H Barber's passion lay in Christian Education. When I came to take part in lending my talents to Red Rock Youth Camp, some 12 years later, I learned about this passion. The whole year of Sunday School was a sowing of the word of God into the hearts of the children, leading up to the 6 summer camps, Junior Intermediate, and Senior Girls followed by Junior, Intermediate and Senior Boys, which were the Harvest times! The Bible was the seed. Each and every sermon preached was chapter and verse of scripture. We were encouraged to prove by our own devotional bible reading and study all that he and any other preacher preached. My setting down to do so that day I opened the book of Romans is most certainly a literal obedience to that exhortation of our pastor's in his sermons. The scripture that comes to mind here is

1 By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am “timid” when face to face with you, but “bold” toward you when away! 2 I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. 3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. I Corinthians 10:1-5

Though I wonder if it was simply a case of knowing that you eat food at meal times, swim when you're at the lake, and bundle up warm when going out in the winter. But even then, it was a basic axiom for my parents that the Bible was the foundation of what we went to church for. And if the Bible isn't being taught, then call it by another name.

I am undecided still on this point. For along side of this reverence for the scripture came a fear of reading anything else. I read a few books, like God's Smuggler, The Cross and the Switch Blade, Never Cry Wolf... early on. The most significant one being Daring to Draw Near, by John White. But when I compare it to the boldness with which I now read, and have read for the past 15-20 years its in sharp contrast.

I'll stop my digression here, and try to swing this galloping horse back to that stage in the basement of Calvary Temple Winnipeg on August 15, 1983. As part of my devotional bible reading, I came to habit of having a scripture as a sort of theme over my life. I'd read a chapter like Romans 1, and stay with it, praying about it, and re-reading it over and over again. All of my daily life experiences would play into the meditation of that scripture. I wonder if this is what the Psalmist, David meant when he declared that in his law, he did meditate day and night.

Psalm 119

By the time I'd come to that stage the scripture that was theme to all my thoughts was the book of 1 Peter. Specifically, in regards to the meaning and significance of suffering in one's life.

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

I've forgotten the exact words; I had no written speech. I stood up to express how I marveled, ἐτοιμάζω at the fact that God was teaching me about suffering, and here I am married to this beautiful girl, now my wife, Lori Brand. How could this be about suffering? All I can say, without giving too much away I guess, is little did I know.

But surely, therein lies the clue, what I marveled at, God was telling me, "I am preparing you". I am sure that I am not the only young person that believed that now I am married, and launching into my life, that I am ready and prepared, and entering into life, my adventure.

And here we must pause and realize that this is my story, my perspective of my life. So, to prepare you, my reader, for what is to be told in these pages is the true suffering of my soul, and it is evidence of God's faithfulness to me. Lori has her own story to tell, let her tell it, if she will. Regardless of how you might wonder what she went through, you won't hear much about it here. How could you? You are now embarking on a journey looking out through the eyes of Laurence Brand. Shepherded by the Good Shepherd, whom I'd given my life to at the age of 12 on the shores of Red Rock Youth Camp in 1974.

We were assembled there behind the ball diamond, on some rocks, our Cabin Counsellor, Glenn Wilkenson stood on that rock there on the right, and we on a group of rocks to the left there. I remember staring at his feet, shod in Puma Runners, and he stood on the edges of them, shifting from flat feet, to the edges as he spoke the simple message of the Gospel. A clear choice was to be made. A decision between heaven or hell. It seemed an obvious choice to me, an no brainer as they say, I chose Heaven, and in the traditional Pentecostal Alter Call way, with every head bowed, and every eye closed, all 8 of us (this brings a smile to my face) we were each to raise our hand, if we would, to say, "I accept the gift of God's salvation through Jesus Christ, and declare him as Lord of my life." Its significant to me that I have not one clue who the other boys were, I know they were there because I know I wasn't alone with Glenn there, but it was my counsellor, who had stood to declare the Good News to me there, God and I. I obeyed the provision to close my eyes and bow my head, and answer the question. It was between God and myself alone. One day I will stand before God, alone, no crowd to plea my case with me. I will stand alone, but for one, my advocate and Saviour Jesus Christ will there declaring, He is mine, he belongs to me, he is one of my own ones.

You'll be hearing some disturbing things about Lori, for it was in the fight of our lives that we each fought one side against the others. But watch out! You who would judge and condemn another. Consider where you stand before God. My scripture of admonition is this:

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Matthew 7:1-5

And your prayer should ever be like that of David in Psalm 139, who, after marveling about God's goodness and faithfulness to him, found feelings of hatred and resentment to others there also.

19 If only you, God, would slay the wicked!

Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!

20 They speak of you with evil intent;

your adversaries misuse your name.

21 Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord,

and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?

22 I have nothing but hatred for them;

I count them my enemies.

23 Search me, God, and know my heart;

test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24 See if there is any offensive way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:19-24 NIV

Take to heart what you learn here, and ask God to help you see, and decide here and now if you will follow him in obedience, or leave the pages of this book behind, not different than when you began. For this is the word of my testimony of the Faithfulness of God.

So, let's wake up now, from our meandering, there is a speech, accented by tears, of a naïve young man, and although he was marveling, God was preparing, God was declaring, "I prepare". I looked at all those around me, my beautiful wife, and my bright future, in awe that any of this could be a preamble to suffering, and not Joy. And yet there in 1 Peter, are there not these words,

"6 In all this you greatly rejoice... and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls"

For it is a Joy to be in God's hands whether to suffer or not. The object is not to suffer, but to listen and obey, to hear and follow my master's voice. This truth is there in plain sight in, though you might miss it.

“They triumphed over him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony;
they did not love their lives so much
as to shrink from death.” Revelation 12:11

“they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”

Part of my journey is this, to walk in the truth, telling the truth. Whenever I tell a lie, or am tempted to tell a lie, I must ask myself a question, do I believe in what I am about to do? If so am I willing to take a stand, to suffer for what I believe in? If I am not willing to suffer for it, do I believe in it? If I don't believe in it, why am doing it? God heals me from sin.

1 John 1:9

That's his work, my work is to confess it as sin, plain and simple, declaring that His word is true, that I have been tested and come up short of that truth.

This confession in my protestant tradition is just like that morning on the shore of Red Rock Lake, my eyes, and the eyes of all those around me are closed, and my confessor is God alone, as I pray each day for my daily bread. When I take the anxious thoughts of my heart and mind, that sway this way and that way, and put them into words that I speak out loud, I give them life, and permanence, until I renounce them with yet another verbal declaration. That's what David did in the example I've already quoted. And he did something more. He acknowledged the possibility that he himself could be blind to his wickedness. It's like going to the Doctor, and submitting yourself for examination.

“God, I have been led by you to this moment in time. Lori has been my worthy adversary throughout so much of my life, and I hers. I ask that you forgive me for all the times I've been unfaithful to her as her husband to lead her in strength and truth. For all those times that I submitted to her, rather than leading her to submission to you along with me. Where I outright wronged her, and was unfaithful to her. God, I confess these many sins to you, and pray that you would even now heal me, and heal her. Lead her to yourself. And I pray also for the one who is reading this, and praying along with me. To give judgement and condemnation to you alone. To realize and to know that the ground is level at the foot of the cross. We are all sinners in need of your salvation, Amen

That's a true prayer I don't mind sharing, that I prayed this very minute.

Part of the suffering of my life came to me through Lori's parents. I've always held Lillian accountable for most of it. And Henry, Lori's father, only as complicit in that he did not stop her from what she did. In a Birthday blessing he prophesied over me that I was given the gift of being able to Love those that did not love me. He meant Lillian I am sure of it, for he saw in me the choice to love them, in the face of their hatred. My returning Good for Evil.

It's complicated for me to try to disassociate and unscramble images that are in my mind for you. For example, the one that rises to my mind here. It's as though I saw it in a movie, and yet it is something I lived through, vividly in my mind.

Lillian is brought to me, in chains, and I am told that I have been granted the right to crucify her, she is brought to the cross as it lays there in the dust, and she is stretched out on it. My heart fills with righteous indignation and hatred for her, and all she ever did to hurt me, and rage, feverish rage becomes me. I'm given the nails, and the hammer, and I see her outstretched arms, and I lay the nail on her wrist, and pinch it so as to hold it tight and straight to receive the hammer blow! I raise the hammer high, and just before I smash down onto that nail's head, I turn to look into her eyes, in order to witness her anguish and Pain, as she receives the just reward for her sins against me, and to my utter horror, she isn't the one staring back at me, but it's himself, Jesus, and his eyes are filled with tears of submission, and he bids me, "go ahead, drive in the nails, for I am here in her place... I bore her sins, and I'll bare them once again..." but my own eyes flood with tears, and my strength leaves me, I drop the nail, I flip away the hammer from my hand, and I embrace Jesus, confession my own brokenness, my own need to have my sins paid for in just this exact same way, and as I embrace him, I open my eyes, and pull back to see Lillian there once again, and I forgive her, and help her up from that place of death, to life.

I've never had that vision for anyone else, I'll have you know. She seems to be the one I hold the most accountable for all that ever happened to me.

If you have trouble with my attitude towards

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will..." Ephesians 1:11

God is absolutely in control! I fully acknowledge His authority above all and in all that happens in this world, whether I understand it or not.

Romans 1:21

Part of this story is that I had begun to follow God, on my own that day at the corner of Ness and Vimy, but I let go of it, maybe. For when I took up once again with Lori Wiebe, I made the step one evening that allowed her to be my conscience, rather than my own. I went against my conscience, and began to go blind. That's a figurative term for losing one's ability to know right from wrong. Another way the Bible describes it is becoming dull of hearing, or deaf. Unable to listen doesn't quite do it, but no longer trying to hear, no longer trying to understand. What I did or didn't do became a matter of what we decided was right or wrong. If she wanted to do it, I did it, without question. She became my conscience. Must I go into detail?

Let's try and see how it goes. The first example that haunts me that night I'd driven her home to her residence at St. Boniface Hospital, where she was a nursing student. Why was she living in dorm rather than at home, I wonder? I never wondered at the time. But freedom to do as she pleased for the most part was what it was about. She talked about the other girls in her dorm, and one in particular who had entered into a sexual relationship with her boyfriend. When this friend would come home from a date, they would all gather around her to get the story of that night's adventure. And the progress toward sexual intimacy. I remember how Lori told me that Susan would have her head covered with a pillow, and answer the questions honestly without

having to look at any of them as she did so. You know, as I tell this story now, I only just now realize why I was told of this after-date ritual. For at the end of our date, there we were in the Nursing lounge. This was my second time around with Lori, the first time we were much younger. This time we were both 19. The first time I'd had a dream that we had gotten married, and it had scared me. I'd broken up with her telling her I was too young to be thinking of such things. I'd come up with that genius idea all on my 16-year-old lonesome. And it hurt her. She felt it as a rejection of HER but I saw it as a submission to HIM. From that relationship I went out with about 30 different girls. The full extent of my sexual experiences was no deeper than light petting, and all above the waist. But the excitement and turn on was just as intense. I was a cold, callous so and so, too. I remember one time breaking up with the girl I was going out with, over the phone, while snuggling with the new girlfriend on my couch. There were two types of girlfriends for me. The first was the one to be preferred, I think. The involuntary, whole hearted falling madly in love kind. The second was the girl who was whole heartedly madly in love with me, and I gave her what she wanted, ME. In the first instance I was a fool, never requited. In the second I was a cold-hearted boy, learning how to be cool, so that one day I'd know what to do when I was whole heartedly madly in love. At least two things happened as a result of this. One is I broke a lot of hearts; another is that I learned nothing useful. What I mean is if I ever ventured to go out with a girl that I was whole heartedly madly in love with, I became once again the fool that I'd always been, and vulnerable to the hurt and scorn all over again. Lastly, when I was done to what had been done by me so many times, all of the hurt and pain I'd caused those girls finally hit me. My response was to end my own life. I was walking home from her place, the girl who had just broken up with me to pursue my best friend, and I wanted to die. But I stopped in the dark parking lot of Unicity Shopping Mall, and looked up at the sky. I no longer wanted to be on this planet, but acknowledged that my living or dying was up to Him, my God. And I agreed to stay. I agreed that I would live my life for him, like one whose home was not this earth, that my mission was wholly his.

You know, quite honestly the time line is muddled. Girls had definitely become my idol. And one year I was granted the opportunity to be the waterfront director for all 6 camps at Red Rock Lake, Calvary Temple's camp. The whole summer God put the question to me time and again, "what if I asked you to be single?" my answer was that if he did ask me, he would give me the ability to do so. By the end of the summer, I found myself at a district youth retreat. There were boys and girls there, all my own age. And there were daily services, morning and night. God really moved in my life, and it was harvest of all my own personal devotional time, as well as sermons preached, and lessons taught in Sunday school. I remember each night being up at the alter with others who had come forward in response to that night's message. One vision I had was of a round, white room, with just me in there. And to the left of the image was a door, and darkness was out there. The light from the room didn't penetrate to the outside of that door, there was not trail of light leaking from the room into the darkness. It was a sharp division. Darkness on one side, light on the other. The message was clear, stay in here, and I'll be all you ever need, go out there, and you'll be lost and blind. With every vision or prophecy, I hope you see this coming; one needs to balance it with the expressed, written word of God. God always agrees with himself. That scripture I quote elsewhere applies here, about

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ

But also, more specifically,

1 Thessalonians 5:21-23

And so, God gave me the scripture,

Matthew 6:33-34

This was not a new scripture to me, but it definitely is the scripture to balance out this vision.

Another vision was of me, asking God to show me my life in him. I found myself in a tower, and a hand pulled back the curtain that hung over a window, and I saw a path that led up from just beneath me there, disappearing into the horizon. As my eyes travelled along that road my heart began to get more and more full of Joy, so much so that I could not stand it, and I stopped praying and literally stood up, unable to bare it. If I had any scripture for that one, it's 1 Peter chapter 1.

But then, on one of the last nights, God finally asked me flat out, and my answer was, "Yes, God, I'm all yours, and yours alone, I'll be single!" Now read carefully here. I had a scripture come to mind immediately after this little prayer session. But the words of that scripture didn't come to my mind, just the reference. Daniel 3:16-18. I'd left my bible back in my cabin, so I had to run back to get it, and look up the scripture.

Daniel 3:16-18

Even if he doesn't I will not bow...

But that's exactly what I did do that night at the nurses dorm. I'd promised God, and Lori that I would no longer let the physical chemistry rule my relationship. And the only way to do that was to have a relationship of complete abstinence. I remember she was playing with the zipper of my hoody, while she talked me into giving her a first kiss. That first kiss led to more and more, and even as we were eventually engaged, I had my first full sexual experience with her, in my father's car, out in the countryside of Manitoba prairie. The steps were gradual, and their impact on me was absolutely fatal. I never understood it until now, at this point in my life, I look back and see so clearly what it was. I thought God had left me, that I'd been seared and blinded. Unable to get back. But what had happened is this: Lori became my sense of right and wrong. Agreement was nothing more or less than collusion. Agreeing that this or that was ok. As long as the two of us agreed, then it was right for us.

Proverbs 14:12

It was in reading a book written by Abraham Maslow that I learned about it, and I've only just read that book in the last three or four years of my life. And I've read it over and over again. My conscience was

The opposite of the subjective experience of delight (trusting himself), so far as the child is concerned, is the opinion of other people (love, respect, approval, admiration, reward from others, trusting others rather than himself). Since others are so important and vital for the helpless baby and child, fear of losing them (as providers of safety, food, love, respect, etc.) is a primal, terrifying danger. Therefore, the child, faced with a difficult choice between his own delight experiences and the experience of approval from others, must generally choose approval from others, and then handle his delight by repression or letting it die, or not noticing it or controlling it by will-power. In general, along with this will develop a disapproval of the delight experience, or shame and embarrassment and secretiveness about it, with finally, the inability even to experience it. Abraham Maslow, "Towards a Psychology of Being"

This was how I had viewed that choice that first night. I began to choose what would sustain our relationship rather than what God desired. Rather than living according to my own conscience, I completely gave that over to Lori. The tragic end of this way is most surely what happened to me. Because you cannot have one without the other. I became an unstable man, blind, and lost. Led along into a waking nightmare. One that I would every now and then cry out to God to be delivered from, and one day he did answer that prayer, and the answer came through Lori herself, wanting and getting a divorce. I was left lost, empty, and disillusioned.

The mess was fixable by heeding what is right there in scripture. "Leave and Cleave" means that the two that are married LEAVE the nests they came from, and become their own nest. "He's not your son, he's my husband" and "She's not your daughter, she's my wife" all authority, and submission is limited to the sanctity of that relationship. That did not happen with Lori and I. We retained Henry and Lillian Wiebe as authority, through the office of eldership. Which was not correct. The next is in the area of God being primary in each person, and the relationship secondary. God's order is for the wife to submit to her husband

"Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. 4 Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." 1 Peter 1:1-7

This is the clearest and most profound scripture in this regard. One of the most profound statements ever made to me by my wife is that she would honor me as a husband, when I start acting like one. In other words, if I'm not a godly husband, I suppose. But this scripture directly contradicts this. No other place is this better exemplified than how David would not harm God's anointed over Israel, Saul, even though he, David himself, was anointed by Samuel to replace Saul as King. King sought to murder him, with the object to retain his position as King. David waited for God to do that work, for God to put him on the throne of Israel.

I didn't understand what submission looked like, nor its effect on me until I was married to my wife, Cheryl. She is not a silent, obedient slave like creature by any means. She challenges everything I would do, and by so doing causes me to go back to God, and ask for his assistance in making his will known to her, and to me. I know that in the imperfection we all live under, it's by and through grace. God's instruction to me as husband is seen there in verse 7, to dwell with my wife according to understanding. Understanding her, our relationship, and God's desire for our lives.

One of the most annoying things to my wife is when I am calm while she rages. One of the richest experiences of Grace, experiencing God's grace through the love my wife loves me with, is when she comes to me, in the calm that comes after a passionate disagreement, and apologizes unreservedly for her conduct. I

accept it with just as much grace. She isn't perfect, I am not perfect, we strive with one another, and for one another.

I trust my wife listens to the Holy Spirit. I've seen it in action time and again, and I've seen his patience with her, as she works her way toward his will for her life. There are times when she does not want to submit to me, but she cannot and will not fight against what she knows to be right. I declare, at times, what I know God desires for us to do, and wait for her to submit to him. The idea comes through me, but it is not my idea.

I hope this next statement doesn't confuse things too much. But its said so wonderfully in The Message translation of the Bible, by Eugene Peterson.

"7 The same goes for you husbands: Be good husbands to your wives. Honor them, delight in them. As women they lack some of your advantages. But in the new life of God's grace, you're equals. Treat your wives, then, as equals so your prayers don't run aground." 1 Peter 3:7, The Message

Here we see a declaration that we are equals. A partnership of two means that one has to have the deciding vote. In my wrestling with this particular thing, especially in today's culture, I came up with this:

We live according to one another's strengths, not according to one another's weaknesses.

Each of us has the sin that so easily entangles us,

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us..." Hebrews 12:1 NIV

That is the area of our weakness. We complement each other, what the one lacks the other does not, and vice versa. I always keep in mind the right-angle triangle when trying to understand this,

A right-angle triangle is 90o, and two triangles are complimentary when they add up to 90o.

In a simple example, let's take our financial practices. I am really good at making up a PLAN for our finances, and Cheryl is really good at carrying out that plan. She isn't big on planning, I'm not big on actually doing what I planned. That seems odd, but its nonetheless true. I'll spend all kinds of times looking at our expenses. Just like my father taught me, maximize expenses, minimize income. These are unknowable for certain due to the fact that they are part of the future. But we can make our best guess based on past events. And to add to ease with which we need to make adjustments we do things like have a savings plan along with our expenditures, as a buffer for that unknown. But also built in is if I usually get paid more than \$1000.00 every two weeks, then I make \$1000.00 my expected income, and if I get \$1,123.00 the \$123.00 is more easy to deal with than a pay cheque of \$877.00. And if my phone bill, which varies due to pay on demand movies, for example, is usually \$210.00 per month, then I make that entry \$225.00. But what's very odd, even to me, is that once I see that all our bills COULD HAVE BEEN paid, and that God is looking after us, after all, I have no problem buying stuff not in the budget, and letting bills go unpaid. But Cheryl, while she doesn't worry about planning, will always make sure bills get paid before anything else, even if it means we live on Kraft Dinner until we get paid. So, our marriage is a marriage of our strengths. I plan, and she stands over me with a rolling pin making sure I pay the bills, and gives me the evil eye when I come home with a new watch or fountain pen, when I

already have 4 watches and 6 fountain pens, and I take the new purchase back to the store for a refund... anyways, I've overstated my case. We were doing a recital of History, so let's get back to that first marriage.

I know that Lori wanted to let out of, and rescued from the tyranny of her parents. That's why she lived in dorm, even though the commute to and from home was a short one, and that she had to pay extra to live in dorm. One of the things she said when we divorced is that I was not strong enough to lead her. And that was so true. But strength comes from correct knowledge. I thought, I believed wrongly, that her parents had the right to authority over us as elders. And that was just dead wrong, plain and simple.

The most heart-breaking memory I can never shake the pain of is when she and I went out and bought an oriental carpet. We proudly showed her parents the next time they came over for coffee. They pointed out that we owed them money, from the wedding. We'd received money from our wedding guests, and spent all of it on furnishing our apartment, and borrowed money from her parents when what we wanted out cost what we had to spend. Then, instead of paying it back, we thought of even more things to buy. The borrower is slave to the lender.

INSPIRED BY CHERYL OUTTEN

It is for these unspoken reasons that we should not look at the grieving and tell them that they should be further along than they are, or that they should not ***grieve as if they have no hope***. I had hope knowing I would see him again, but I was grieving. I guess you could say I was grieving with hope in mind, because what you need to know is that I missed his company here! I know where he is, but I miss him here. I have realized that it is ok to ~~do grieve~~ **grieve** **do grief** deeply if you don't stay there. You must heal because there are others who need you. My children, church, my extended family, and others who are yet to cross my path, need me and they will need you. So regardless of what you are going through, keep going! You are needed! Your story will help others heal.

This is an example of what many Christians do when they quote scriptures AT US... there's a slight misquote

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve **as others do** who have no hope your words: I guess you could say I was grieving with hope you expound on the correct quote, but the misquote might need to be pointed out as a misquote

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I had a word come to me one day, as a sort of vision, but really it was a scenario that came to mind... I get up in front of a church congregation, and there is a large table at the altar. I invite everyone there to bring up their various bibles. Some proudly bring up their KJV's and NIV's, and others more proudly still bring their ESV's and etc... until finally all the various kinds of translations are there but one type... the most dangerous type of all... I tell them that there in their hearts is the most dangerous translation. The one they think they remember correctly. The one that is isolated from its context. The one that was wrongly taught, and needs a re-think, the one we learned as children, and now need to look again when we have a new perspective of the years and what we have been through... the only way to rid ourselves of those is to always have our bibles with us, to read the word daily, and to always always always look up that scripture that just came to mind, **especially when we are tempted to bash it over some other suffering Christian's head.** There's a certain kind of 'ism that certain kinds of Christians engage in, and that's holding to one translation and shunning others. They do this even though bible scholars, whole teams of folks who have poured their lives into the work of bringing the original scriptures of Hebrew Aramaic and Greek into the modern-day language of their contemporaries. In "How To Read The Bible For All It's Worth" by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, they point out that it is good to read the same

translation of scripture in our day-to-day bible reading, but when we study, we should refer to a few of them, because each and everyone of them have examples of better and not-so-good translations of difficult passages. When we see a difference, we can note that it is one to ponder carefully, and perhaps to refer to a good bible commentary, as we prayerfully consider what God's word is saying to us in that moment.

BONHOEFFER QUOTES

The story is told that he once took part in a session of one of Barth's seminars in Bonn and quietly inserted into the discussion a quotation from Luther: "The curse of a godless man can sound more pleasant in God's ears than the Hallelujah of the pious." "Who threw that in?" asked the delighted Barth, and so he became acquainted with Bonhoeffer. This was the young student, with an insight into Luther's forthright realism, who was later to expound so clearly that other paradoxical and often misunderstood statement of Luther's: "Sin boldly but believe and rejoice in Christ more boldly still."

MASLOW QUOTES

POTENTIALITY

The study of such healthy people can teach us much about our own mistakes, our shortcomings, the proper directions in which to grow. Every age but ours has had its model, its ideal. All of these have been given up by our culture; the saint, the hero, the gentleman, the knight, the mystic. About all we have left is the well-adjusted man without problems, a very pale and doubtful substitute. Perhaps we shall soon be able to use as our guide and model the fully growing and self-fulfilling human being, the one in whom all his potentialities are coming to full development, the one whose inner nature expresses itself freely, rather than being warped, suppressed, or denied.

The serious thing for each person to recognize vividly and poignantly, each for himself, is that every falling away from species-virtue, every crime against one's own nature, every evil act, every one without exception records itself in our unconscious and makes us despise ourselves. Karen Horney had a good word to describe this unconscious perceiving and remembering; she said it "registers." If we do something we are ashamed of, it "registers" to our discredit, and if we do something honest or fine or good, it "registers" to our credit.

The net results ultimately are either one or the other—either we respect and accept ourselves or we despise ourselves and feel contemptible, worthless, and unlovable. Theologians used to use the word "accidie" to describe the sin of failing to do with one's life all that one knows one could do.

"Towards a Psychology of Being" Abraham Maslow

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to describe the sin of failing to do with one's life all that one knows one could do. Page 15 – Towards a Psychology of Being, Maslow

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Constitutional differences in individuals generate preferences among ways of relating to self, and to culture and to the world, i.e., generate values. These researches support and are supported by the universal experience of clinicians with individual differences. This is also true of the ethnological data that make sense of cultural diversity by postulating that each culture selects for exploitation, suppression, approval or disapproval, a small segment of the range of human constitutional possibilities. This is all in line with the biological data and theories and self-actualization theories which show that an organ system presses to express itself, in a word, to function. The muscular person likes to use his muscles, indeed, has to use them in order to self-actualize, and to achieve the subjective feeling of harmonious, uninhibited, satisfying functioning which is so important an aspect of psychological health. People with intelligence must use their intelligence, people with eyes must use their eyes, people with the capacity to love have the impulse to love and the need to love in order to feel healthy. Capacities clamor to be used, and cease their clamor only when they are used sufficiently. That is to say, capacities are needs, and therefore are intrinsic values as well. To the extent that capacities differ, so will values also differ. Page 116 Towards A Psychology of Being, Maslow

I'm reading - concurrently - another book "The Element" by Sir Ken Robinson

and my favourite book to quote, "Towards a Psychology of Being" Maslow (recommendation by Andre)

Now this one you gave me...

Along the lines of the dog who will not be emerge from the cage.

The idea of "fulfillment" is a new age term that makes me throw up in my mouth a little bit... but Robinson mentions it and I allowed him and his book to continue to exist...

Our calling, who we are in Christ, why God invented ME - the person that I AM - is part of his plan... see Ephesians 1:11

"In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,"
Ephesians 1:11 NIV

Don't miss that end part:

<<< him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will >>>

FEAR OF HUBRIS

5. The Need to Know and the Fear of Knowing

FEAR OF KNOWLEDGE: EVASION OF KNOWLEDGE: PAINS AND DANGERS OF KNOWING From our point of view, Freud's greatest discovery is that the great cause of much psychological illness is the fear of knowledge of oneself—of one's emotions, impulses, memories, capacities, potentialities, of one's destiny. We have discovered that fear of knowledge of oneself is very often isomorphic with, and parallel with, fear of the outside world. That is, inner problems and outer problems tend to be deeply similar and to be related to each other. Therefore we speak simply of fear of knowledge in general, without discriminating too sharply fear-of-the-inner from fear-of-the-outer. In general this kind of fear is defensive, in the sense that it is a protection of our self-esteem, of our love and respect for ourselves. We tend to be afraid of any knowledge that could cause us to despise ourselves or to make us feel inferior, weak, worthless, evil, shameful. We protect ourselves and our ideal image of ourselves by repression and similar defenses, which are essentially techniques by which we avoid becoming conscious of unpleasant or dangerous truths. And in psychotherapy the maneuvers by which we continue avoiding this consciousness of painful truth, the ways in which we fight the efforts of the therapist to help us see the truth, we call "resistance." All the techniques of the therapist are in one way or another truth-revealing, or are ways of strengthening the patient so he can bear the truth. ("To be completely honest with oneself is the very best effort a human being can make." S. Freud.) But there is another kind of truth we tend to evade. Not only do we hang on to our psychopathology, but also we tend to evade personal growth because this, too, can bring another kind of fear, of awe, of feelings of weakness and inadequacy (31). And so we find another kind of resistance, a denying of our best side, of our talents, of our finest impulses, of our highest potentialities, of our creativeness. In brief, this is the struggle against our own greatness, the fear of hubris. Here we are reminded that our own Adam and Eve myth, with its dangerous Tree of Knowledge that mustn't be touched, is paralleled in many other cultures which also feel that ultimate knowledge is something reserved for the gods. Most religions have had a thread of anti-intellectualism (along with other threads, of course), some trace of preference for faith or belief or piety rather than for knowledge, or the feeling that some forms of knowledge were too dangerous to meddle with and had best be forbidden or reserved to a few special people. In most cultures those revolutionaries who defied the gods by seeking out their secrets were punished heavily, like Adam and Eve, Prometheus and Oedipus, and have been remembered as warnings to all others not to try to be godlike. And, if I may say it in a very condensed way, it is precisely the god-like in ourselves that we are ambivalent about, fascinated by and fearful of, motivated to and defensive against. This is one aspect of the basic human predicament, that we are simultaneously worms and gods. Every one of our great creators, our god-like people, has testified to the element of courage that is needed in the lonely moment of creation, affirming something new (contradictory to the old). This is a kind of daring, a going out in front all alone, a defiance, a challenge. The moment of fright is quite understandable but must nevertheless be overcome if creation is to be possible. Thus to discover in oneself a great talent can certainly bring exhilaration but it also brings a fear of the dangers and responsibilities and duties of being a leader and of being all alone. Responsibility can be seen as a heavy burden and evaded as long as possible. Think of the mixture of feelings of awe, humility, even of fright that have been reported to us, let us say, by people who have been elected President.

>>>> So I guess my discussion of "fear of hubris" begins way back at that youth camp I went to, Manhattan Beach camp, where I received the my life's calling.

Such details as the whole summer leading up to that week, God asked me “What if I asked you to be single?” My answer had been, “if you asked me to do so, you’d also supply me with the ability to do it”.

Another thing that comes to mind is how I would get so nervous whenever missionaries would come to our church, I would skip out because I feared that I would be called to foreign missions. One thing I know now looking back is that my calling is not only to home missions but to those who already think they’re saved.

During the district conference youth week at Manhattan Beach camp, God actually did finally ask, “you will you be single?”

My answer was “yes I will be single!” to which he replied Daniel 3:16-18

Even if he doesn’t do Not Bow down...

But there were also those visions

The one where I was in the empty, round, white room with nothing in it but my consciousness. To the left was a door that was black as night, no light from the room penetrated that night. You’d expect to see the light flooding out and illuminating the vicinity, but it wasn’t like that. It was a doorway without a door and I knew that I was to stay in this room and not go out into the darkness to look for what I needed, that it would be brought to me. The clarifying scripture for this vision was Matthew 6:33-34

The other vision was of me up in that tower and God showed me what my life would be like. There was the usual arched window and I went up to it, the curtain was pulled aside and I looked along the pathway that went from immediately below me and disappeared into the horizon. As I looked along the path from the bottom to the top I was filled with greater and greater joy to the point where it overwhelmed me and I stood up in order to stop the vision like for I g myself to wake up from a nightmare even though it was actually a joyful one.

That actually happened many times in my life. I would come close to being in full stride, and I would doubt, submit to fear, and shut it all down! That is a poetic way to describe it. Another way would be to say I’d get really close to God, feel like I was going crazy, fear others, and I’d atop reading my bible and praying... to come back down to earth.

Maslow describes similar experiences of the people that he interviewed who had experienced a self actualization, or a peak experience.

And of course there’s that prophecy that Alec Hart made About me, and the part where Lillian and Henry were not suppose to tell me but they ended up telling Lori Who then told me...

The trouble with knowing that one day you will be great is a battle, whether of pride or of humility.

In the battle of pride one feels yes yes I am worthy to be King I can do it! Emphasis on the self of course.

But equally debilitating is the knowledge that I can't do anything!

Because at the tender age of 16 or 17 what does one know about being led by the Almighty God.

And yet the Bible is filled with all of the promises that are so plainly expressed.

It's been a lack of trust in God. I knew it was God leading me, but then doubted it.

The result being that it's taken me a lifetime to realize what God was bidding me to do. I still have no concrete idea of what God wants from me but I have learned one thing at least that he never shows me more than a couple of steps at a time and there is a gentle understanding of what it is to walk in obedience

The fallacy or fantasy is that it didn't have to take a lifetime, but of course it did take a lifetime. God's ways are perfect. It's never too late. Alec Hart said the things that God was going to teach me weren't necessarily going to be from me going to Bible college.

I neither want to be invisible, Nor do I wish to be great, I just wish to be obedient, I wish to please the Lord. I know that apart from faith it is impossible to please God, just like Hebrews 11:6 says.

The whole point is to be pleasing God.

So what now Lord? For me I'm thinking maybe it's time to write it all down. If this is your will I pray that you will give me the things that I need to carry it out.

In the meantime I can walk around in these new shoes that I'm wearing and break them in. yes, these shoes I've been wearing for 57 years and counting.

Laurence

BIBLE QUOTES

JOHN 15

The Vine and the Branches

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

John 15:1-17 NIV

MATTHEW 25:31-46

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

31 “WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES IN HIS GLORY, AND ALL THE ANGELS WITH HIM, HE WILL SIT ON HIS GLORIOUS THRONE. 32 ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE GATHERED BEFORE HIM, AND HE WILL SEPARATE THE PEOPLE ONE FROM ANOTHER AS A SHEPHERD SEPARATES THE SHEEP FROM THE GOATS. 33 HE WILL PUT THE SHEEP ON HIS RIGHT AND THE GOATS ON HIS LEFT.

34 “THEN THE KING WILL SAY TO THOSE ON HIS RIGHT, ‘COME, YOU WHO ARE BLESSED BY MY FATHER; TAKE YOUR INHERITANCE, THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU SINCE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD. 35 FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME SOMETHING TO EAT, I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME SOMETHING TO DRINK, I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU INVITED ME IN, 36 I NEEDED CLOTHES AND YOU CLOTHED ME, I WAS SICK AND YOU LOOKED AFTER ME, I WAS IN PRISON AND YOU CAME TO VISIT ME.’

37 “THEN THE RIGHTEOUS WILL ANSWER HIM, ‘LORD, WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY AND FEED YOU, OR THIRSTY AND GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO DRINK? 38 WHEN DID WE SEE YOU A STRANGER AND INVITE YOU

IN, OR NEEDING CLOTHES AND CLOTHE YOU? 39 WHEN DID WE SEE YOU SICK OR IN PRISON AND GO TO VISIT YOU?’

40 “THE KING WILL REPLY, ‘TRULY I TELL YOU, WHATEVER YOU DID FOR ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF MINE, YOU DID FOR ME.’

41 “THEN HE WILL SAY TO THOSE ON HIS LEFT, ‘DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO ARE CURSED, INTO THE ETERNAL FIRE PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS. 42 FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME NOTHING TO EAT, I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME NOTHING TO DRINK, 43 I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU DID NOT INVITE ME IN, I NEEDED CLOTHES AND YOU DID NOT CLOTHE ME, I WAS SICK AND IN PRISON AND YOU DID NOT LOOK AFTER ME.’

44 “THEY ALSO WILL ANSWER, ‘LORD, WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY OR THIRSTY OR A STRANGER OR NEEDING CLOTHES OR SICK OR IN PRISON, AND DID NOT HELP YOU?’

45 “HE WILL REPLY, ‘TRULY I TELL YOU, WHATEVER YOU DID NOT DO FOR ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE, YOU DID NOT DO FOR ME.’

46 “THEN THEY WILL GO AWAY TO ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, BUT THE RIGHTEOUS TO ETERNAL LIFE.”

MATTHEW 25:31-46 NIV

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6 NIV

EPHESIANS 2:8-10 NIV

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

HEBREWS 5:11-14 NIV

11 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk,

being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

JOHN 1:35-42 NIV

John's Disciples Follow Jesus

35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

39 "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

John 1:35-42 NIV

PSALM 139

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

1 You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.

2 You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

3 You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

4 Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.

5 You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

7 Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,

10 even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.

11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"

12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

13 For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

17 How precious to me are your thoughts,[a] God!
How vast is the sum of them!

18 Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—

when I awake, I am still with you.

19 If only you, God, would slay the wicked!

Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!

20 They speak of you with evil intent;

your adversaries misuse your name.

21 Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD,

and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?

22 I have nothing but hatred for them;

I count them my enemies.

23 Search me, God, and know my heart;

test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24 See if there is any offensive way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalms 139 New International Version (NIV)

BOOK QUOTES

ABOUNDING GRACE — AN ANTHOLOGY OF WISDOM, M SCOTT PECK

The following is taken from 'abounding grace' an anthology of wisdom edited with commentary by M. Scott Peck.

“...the first of the quote in the chapter 'dilige' is in Latin. It was spoken by St. Augustine at a time when Latin was the closest thing we had to a universal language; English did not yet exist. Because Latin tends to be the most elegantly condensed of languages, this quote is not easily translatable. But I have placed it first because when I do translate it, I believe you will find it to be simultaneously the most incontrovertible and the most liberating moral prescription ever made.

dilge, det quod vis fac

...it reads, although somewhat condensed, the last four of the five words are simple. They simply mean:

'and what you want do.'

'dilige' is not do simple. It is declined in the exhortative tense, meaning

BE DILIGENT!

And what St. Augustine meant by this was what I've already mentioned: take the time, energy, thoughtfulness, and care that the endeavor deserves. it so happens, however, the 'dilige' has two other alternative translations from the complex language of Latin.

One is the exhortation to,

LOVE!

The other is the exhortation to,

LOVE GOD!

I believe that St. Augustine meant all three in one. If I am correct about this, then his exhortation offers us the greatest of all paths to moral freedom.

Translating his exhortation in its fullest, I think he was saying, 'if you are being loving, if you are loving God, and if you are being diligent about it all, then you can do whatever you want. What you do under those circumstances will inevitably be moral and pleasing in the sight of God.' Submission to those three pre-conditions may seem a strict or severe commitment – even to some Calvinists – but to me they seem a small price for the liberation of knowing that I am on the right track.”

2009 PEACE CONFERENCE

2009 Peace conference Video - Educating the Heart

<https://youtu.be/suojNzKZ8ew>

1. My older brother, John, sent me this video 2-3 years ago... there are various portions of the video that I want to point out, that all fit into the first panel in the video. The full Video is 1:29:05 but all of my references are from zero to 0:51:30

- o The panel consists of

- ☐ The Dalai Lama

- ☐ Murray Gell-Mann, physicist

- ☐ Sir Ken Robinson, educator

- ☐ Blue Man Group

- ☐ Daniel Siegel, psychiatrist

- ☐ Eckhart Tolle, author, The power of Now

- o Their talk gave me lots to think about in terms of creative and the unconscious as well as conscious mind

- o Here's a write up about it

- ☐ Educating The Heart

2. Murray Gell-Mann is a theoretical physicist and was the winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1969 for his work on the classification of subatomic particles.

- o Gell-Mann, talks about how the unconscious and conscious mind each play a role in our seeking solutions to problems

- o His comments are found between 04:20 - 07:25 of the video's total of 1:29:05

3. This was a hard decision for me to watch this video. I had to get over my inhibitions. Fears of all kinds are evoked as soon as I see a collection of great thinkers like this, none of whom seem to know or refer to the Gospel.

4. After watching this, I found myself burdened. Heavy hearted that we, Christ's body, are left out of such conversations such as these, not because we are Christ Like, but because we are the way we are. I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ would sit among these fellows with ease, and be part of the conversation. I hope God keeps me alive long enough to become like that JESUS CHRIST.

Laurence Brand

LIST OF BOOKS I'VE READ LIST TWO

Books I've read

I suppose it could be regarded as vanity, supposing my making a point of counting how many books I've read, and what I've read. It is an accomplishment of a different sort though. The number isn't to impress you in the usual way. It gives weight to how much I would recommend YOU read. I'm up to 106 books now, and that's not including audio podcasts like Freakonomics Radio show, and the sermons of Earl Palmer and countless sermons from this website, which include a radio show called The Prince of Preachers, where a man named Charles Koelsch read the archived sermons of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, bringing them to life! I've included in my book list a book written about him called Bright Days, Dark Nights. But it might seem I've digressed from 'books' in speaking of these audio recordings. Being a good listener has been for me a polite thing to pursue, because it is so difficult. I have a good friend that God put in my life, Arthur Ferreira, who is a talented listener. His effect on me is profound, and has made one of my aspirations to be a good listener.

It was a couple of years ago that my two brothers, Andrew and John, introduced me to the audio book format through a website, Librivox. I'd already heard of and made use of Gutenberg.org, and that enabled me to read even more. I am an auditory learner. So even now if I read a book with an eReader like Kindle or Kobo, or an actual physical book, reading out loud to myself results in much better comprehension.

I had a hard time with books for two reasons. For a large portion of my life I didn't see my anxiety disorder as being a thing distinct from myself. I thought of it as just a part of me, as in it was something to yield to, rather than something to overcome. But when you yield to anxiety, it swallows you up, and pushes you down. When I saw the movie A Beautiful Mind, with Russel Crowe, from the book of the same title about the mathematician, John Forbes Nash, Jr. He is more of an example of schizophrenia, but I see my anxiety as thoughts which I do not own, and treat as separate from my true self. The Bible talks about holding our thoughts captive. I still have the anxious thoughts, but do not obey them, for want of a better way of expressing it. Anxiety manifested itself in how I viewed books, in that I feared that if I read a book, I'd lose my own mind, and become brain washed by the author of that book, and most importantly I would somehow lose God. It at last sounds ridiculous to me now, but as is always the case, an unchallenged thought is a like a dream where it all makes sense, until you wake up. Waking up from a dream, is parallel to confronting an anxiety, and instead believing and obeying the TRUTH. It's the difference between walking according to my own understanding, and walking by faith. But that's another topic altogether.

But so far I've only partially described my difficulty with reading. In High School I was to have read Crime and Punishment. I got part way through it, and got completely messed up, psychologically. I felt the guilt of the main character. Maybe it's because I'm such an empathetic person, maybe because Dostoevsky is such a good writer! But I had to put it down to put myself out of my misery. I tried again many years later, same thing happened again, and maybe a couple times more, then finally about 10 years ago maybe, I made up my mind that I would do it! And I did do it! I found that the best way to describe my experience with that book as being crucified, and resurrected! Put to death and healed again! It's utterly awe-inspiring book.

From that book it was like I had a new suit of armour with which I could take on every book, and I eagerly read every book I choose. But the armour in all actuality is the armour of God...

Because it wasn't all bad, not reading books for most of my life. For the one book I DID read was the bible, and as a consequence I know my bible better than most people I know. And again, that's not to brag, its actually a frustration because I love to discuss the bible, and people I talk with get distracted by my knowledge of it, and/or intimidated by it. That part cannot be helped. But the benefit of knowing the bible so well is that as I read about the world through the eyes of authors both secular and Christian, I am able to better discern the truth, and appreciate the points of view expressed. Most of all it is the Holy Spirit that preserves me, and keeps me close. God is true to his promise expressed in John 14:26.

But that is merely scratching the surface of what reading will do for you! I also find that it connects me with others, because I am better able to understand others, because I'm not afraid of listening to them tell me their point of view. The beliefs and world view of people are for the most part a passive experience, in that they haven't really sat down and thought it all the way through. They think that they are independent thinkers, but really, they have been influenced in one way or another by films, magazines, TV shows, news media, and the books they've read. Stephen Covey talks about this in his book, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Habit 5 is Seek first to understand, before seeking to be understood. Instead of a finding a world far from God, I find a world working out their version of the meaning of life. Every single one of us has to make up our minds about the one fact... we are all going to die. Life comes to an end one day for all of us. And along the way, our youth gives way to old age, our one time abilities fade away, and we are no longer quite so able. Trouble comes, and threatens our peaceful, blissful dancing around in the garden... and life becomes serious.

But now I'm rambling...

One more thing before you read on here... the way I've chosen what to read has been no way in particular. At first it was to read the books I was supposed to have read in school. Then it was to read the books recommended by others, and then as I discussed books with people, they would tell me of their books, and I'd read a book they'd recommend. Andrew, John and I had a book club, and it ended up that Andrew would tell us which book we'd be reading, and I'd take part. It was a challenge. So, it stretched me, and I read outside of my comfort zone, and enlarged my point of view.

I hope to add my thoughts on each book at some point, for now all's I can do is list them!

The Cost of Discipleship – Bonhoeffer

I'm not sure anymore if I actually made it to the end of this book, but nonetheless it's been so long that it's time to do it again, in order to claim having read it! The quote that keeps me going back to it is here.

Babbitt

This book by Sinclair Lewis is another book which I struggled to read. But it was merely because it was so well written! As we get to know the true character, the initial irritation with the man Babbitt begins to fade. His persona is an expression of the 'fake' or 'facade' of the American man of the early 20th century.

When I got to the end of the book, there's one sentence that culminates the whole book, and I burst into tears.

The Count of Monte Cristo

The Three Musketeers

Another great book by Alexandre Dumas, its one of six in a series about the life of these four men of French history. I'm not sure how much fact and how much fiction, but it isn't a story that has a Hollywood ending. One of the books is 'The Man In The Iron Mask' and differs pretty significantly from the movie made.

Works by Jacob Abbott:

Alexander The Great

History of Julius Caesar

Hannibal

Cleopatra

The Gold Finch

The Awakening (Resurrection)

This book was one that I found so hard to read! But it was so good to have gotten through it. The first few paragraphs ended up being a kind of poem that described the whole rest of the book.

Books read by David Clarke

The Promise of Paradox

The Far Pavilions

My mother's sister, Auntie Barbara, gave me this book upon the birth of our son, Ashton, which is the name of the protagonist in the story.

The Cremation of Sam McGee

My Financial Career

I've always loved this piece about a man who becomes flustered trying to do his banking. I've found it on-line, and have copy/pasted it here to my blog. If only because webpages come and go. The original page is [here](#).

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Another favourite poem

How To Read The Bible For All It's Worth by Gordon D. Fee , Douglas Stuart

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich by Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Abbot, Jacob

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Here is the story of Alexander and Bucephalus

In fact, this combination of a calm and calculating thoughtfulness, with the ardor and energy which formed the basis of his character, was one great secret of Alexander's success. The story of Bucephalus, his famous horse, illustrates this in a very striking manner. This animal was a war-horse of very spirited character, which had been sent as a present to Philip while Alexander was young. They took the horse out into one of the parks connected with the palace, and the king, together with many of his courtiers, went out to view him. The horse pranced about in a very furious manner, and seemed entirely unmanageable. No one dared to mount him. Philip, instead of being gratified at the present, was rather disposed to be displeased that they had sent him an animal of so fiery and apparently vicious a nature that nobody dared to attempt to subdue him.

In the mean time, while all the other by-standers were joining in the general condemnation of the horse, Alexander stood quietly by, watching his motions, and attentively studying his character. He perceived that a part of the difficulty was caused by the agitations which the horse experienced in so strange and new a scene, and that he appeared, also, to be somewhat frightened by his own shadow, which happened at that time to be thrown very strongly and distinctly upon the ground. He saw other indications, also, that the high excitement which the horse felt was not viciousness, but the excess of noble and generous impulses. It was courage, ardor, and the consciousness of great nervous and muscular power.

Philip had decided that the horse was useless, and had given orders to have him sent back to Thessaly, whence he came. Alexander was very much concerned at the prospect of losing so fine an animal. He begged his father to allow him to make the experiment of mounting him. Philip at first refused, thinking it very presumptuous for such a youth to attempt to subdue an animal so vicious that all his experienced horsemen and grooms condemned him; however, he at length consented. Alexander went up to the horse and took hold of his bridle. He patted him upon the neck, and soothed him with his voice, showing, at the same time, by his easy and unconcerned manner, that he was not in the least afraid of him. A spirited horse knows immediately when any one approaches him in a timid or cautious manner. He appears to look with contempt on such a master, and to determine not to submit to him. On the contrary, horses seem to love to yield obedience to man, when the individual who exacts the obedience possesses those qualities of coolness and courage which their instincts enable them to appreciate.

At any rate, Bucephalus was calmed and subdued by the presence of Alexander. He allowed himself to be caressed. Alexander turned his head in such a direction as to prevent his seeing his shadow. He quietly and gently laid off a sort of cloak which he wore, and sprang upon the horse's back. Then, instead of attempting to restrain him, and worrying and checking him by useless efforts to hold him in, he gave him the rein freely, and animated and encouraged him with his voice, so that the horse flew across the plains at the top of his speed, the king and the courtiers looking on, at first with fear and trembling, but soon afterward with feelings of the greatest admiration and pleasure. After the horse had satisfied himself with his run it was easy to rein him in, and Alexander returned with him in safety to the king. The courtiers overwhelmed him with their praises and congratulations. Philip commended him very highly: he told him that he deserved a larger kingdom than Macedon to govern.>>

An excerpt from a book by Jacob Abbott, "Alexander The Great"

Is the CORPORATION the horse or the rider? If CMBC is the horse, and I am that horse's rider, then we are together, riding into battle. The battle is against the enemy... what is the enemy? See that fellow there, with a

couple of nickels bouncing around in his pocket? He needs a ride to a job interview. His suit is just this side of thread bare, and that matches the condition of his dignity, too. He's on the edge. He waits at the appropriate bus stop, and I pull up, open the door, and welcome him aboard. I've seen 'his story' before I even got there, from blocks away. He begins his request... I gently interrupt, and invite him to have a seat, maybe ask him where he's going, and if he's sure he knows how to get there... that fellow has one less obstacle in his way. I don't need to know his whole story, I have no need to judge how he got there, nor how he's chosen to get out of 'there'. I can be part of his solution, for this moment in time. I am Alexander The Great, (there are many of us) riding Bucephalus (aka CMBC) slaying the threat to this man's dignity (no transportation to his job interview) with a single well aimed blow of my sword, (I'm not required to force anyone to pay their fare) and I carry on to my next battle, and he to his.

Alexander took the time to UNDERSTAND Bucephalus, and then applied that understanding in such a way as to become the horse's rider. The 'Philip' referred to is King of Macedonia, and Alexander is his young son.

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Crime and Punishment

Brothers Karamazov

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Notes From The Underground

Shut Up and Eat Your Snow Shoes

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Dickens, Charles

Dickens, Charles

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor

Douglas, Jack

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The Big Sleep Raymond Chandler

A Beautiful Mind Sylvia Nasar

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- 2 History of Julius Caesar Jacob Abbott Abbott
- 3 Hannibal Jacob Abbott Abbott
- 4 Cleopatra Jacob Abbott Abbott
- 5 Charles I Jacob Abbott Abbott
- 6 Julius Caesar Jacob Abbott Abbott
- 7 Mary Queen of Scotts Jacob Abbott Abbott
- 8 Peter The Great Jacob Abbott Abbott
- 9 Romulus Jacob Abbott Abbott
- 10 Cleopatra Jacob Abbott Abbott
- 11 God's Smuggler Brother Andrew Andrew
- 12 How to Read and Why Harold Bloom
- 13 The Cost of Discipleship – Bonhoeffer Dietrich Bonhoeffer Bonhoeffer

Within the spiritual community there is never, nor in any way, any "immediate" relationship of one to another, whereas human community expresses a profound, elemental, human desire for community, for immediate contact with other human souls, just as in the flesh there is the urge for physical merger with other flesh.

Laurence

Because Christian community is founded solely on Jesus Christ, it is a spiritual and not a psychic reality. In this it differs absolutely from all other communities. The Scriptures call "pneumatic," "spiritual," that which is created only by the Holy Spirit, who puts Jesus Christ into our hearts as Lord and Saviour. The Scriptures term "psychic," "human" that which comes from the natural urges, powers, and capacities of the human spirit. The basis of all spiritual reality is the clear, manifest Word of God in Jesus Christ. The basis of all human reality is the dark, turbid urges and desires of the human mind. The basis of the community of the Spirit is truth; the basis of human community of spirit is desire. The essence of the community of the Spirit is light, for "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5) and "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1:7). The essence of human community of spirit is darkness, "for from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts" (Mark 7:21). It is the deep night that hovers over the sources of all human action, even over all noble and devout impulses. The community of the Spirit is the fellowship of those who are called by Christ; human community of spirit is the fellowship of devout souls. In the community of the Spirit there burns the bright love of brotherly service, agape; in human community of spirit there glows the dark love of good and evil desire, eros. In the former there is ordered, brotherly service, in the latter disordered desire for pleasure; in the former humble subjection to the brethren, in the latter humble yet haughty subjection of a brother to one's own desire. In the community of the Spirit the Word of God alone rules; in human community of spirit there rules, along with the Word, the man who is furnished with exceptional powers, experience, and magical, suggestive capacities. There God's Word alone is binding; here, besides the Word, men bind others to themselves. There all power, honor, and dominion are surrendered to the Holy Spirit; here spheres of power and influence of a personal nature are sought and cultivated. It is true, in so far as these are devout men, that they do this with the intention of serving the highest and the best, but in actuality the result is to dethrone the Holy Spirit, to negate Him to remote unreality. In actuality, it is only the human that is operative here. In the spiritual realm the Spirit governs; in human community, psychological techniques and methods. In the former naive, unpsychological, unmethodical, helping love is extended toward one's brother; in the latter psychological analysis and construction; in the one the service of one's brother is simple and humble; in the other service consists of a searching, calculating analysis of a stranger.

Perhaps the contrast between spiritual and human reality can be made most clear in the following observation: Within the spiritual community there is never, nor in any way, any "immediate" relationship of one to another, whereas human community expresses a profound, elemental, human desire for community, for immediate contact with other human souls, just as in the flesh there is the urge for physical merger with other flesh. Such desire of the human soul seeks a complete fusion of I and Thou, whether this occur in the union of love or, what is after all the same thing, in the forcing of another person into one's sphere of power and influence. Here is where the humanly strong person is in his element, securing for himself the admiration, the love, or the fear of the weak. Here human ties, suggestions, and bonds are everything, and in the immediate community of souls we have reflected the distorted image of everything that is originally and solely peculiar to community mediated through Christ.

Thus there is such a thing as human absorption. It appears in all the forms of conversion wherever the superior power of one person is consciously or unconsciously misused to influence profoundly and draw into his spell another individual or a whole community. Here one soul operates directly upon another soul. The weak have been overcome by the strong, the resistance of the weak has broken down under the influence of another person. He has been overpowered, but not won over by the thing itself. This becomes evident as soon as the demand is made that he throw himself into the cause itself, independently of the person to whom he is bound, or possibly in opposition to this person. Here is where the humanly converted person breaks down and thus makes it evident that his conversion was effected, not by the Holy Spirit, but by a man, and therefore has no stability.

- 15 Rising Strong as a Spiritual Practice Brene Brown Brown
- 16 Playing With Holy Fire Michael Brown Brown
- 17 Little Lord Fauntleroy Frances Hodgson Burnett Burnett
- 18 How To Win Friends and Influence People Dale Carnegie Carnegie
- 19 Prison To Praise Merlin R. Carothers Carothers
- 20 Multiply Francis Chan Chan
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- 28 Great Expectations Charles Dickens Dickens
- 29 Oliver Twist Charles Dickens Dickens
- 30 Crime and Punishment Fyodor Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky
- 31 Brothers Karamazov Fyodor Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky
- 32 The Idiot Fyodor Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky
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- 37 His Last Bow Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Doyle
- 38 The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Doyle

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40	The Sign of The Four	Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	Doyle
41	A Study in Scarlet	Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	Doyle
42	The Valley of Fear	Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	Doyle
43	The Adventures of Gerard	Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	Doyle
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95 Devil in a Blue Dress Walter Mosely Mosely

96 The Man in My Basement Walter Mosely Mosely

97 White Butterfly Walter Mosely Mosely

98 Black Betty Walter Mosely Mosely

99	Never Cry Wolf	Farley Mowat	Mowat		
100	The Boat Who Wouldn't Float	Farley Mowat	Mowat		
101	Of Men and Numbers	Jane Muir	Muir		
102	A Beautiful Mind	Sylvia Nasar	Nasar		
103	Changed Into His Likeness	Watchman Nee	Nee		
104	Foolishness To The Greeks	Lesslie Newbigin	Newbigin		
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109	A Hidden Wholeness	Parker J. Palmer	Parker J. Palmer	Parker	
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122	One Day In The Life of Ivan Denisovich	Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn	Solzhenitsyn		
123	How To Read The Bible For All It's Worth	Gordon D. Fee, Douglas Stuart	Stuart		
124	The Gold Finch	Donna Tartt	Tartt		
125	Resurrection	Leo Tolstoy	Tolstoy		
126	I Call It Heresy	A. W. Tozer	Tozer		
127	The Crucified Life	A. W. Tozer	Tozer		
128	How to Be Filled with The Holy Spirit	A. W. Tozer	Tozer		

129	The Narcissism Epidemic	Jean M. Twenge	Twenge	
130	HBR's 10 Must Reads on Managing Yourself	Various Authors		various
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132	The Book of God	Walter Wangerin Jr.	Wangerin Jr.	
133	The Purpose Driven Life	Rick Warren	Warren	
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135	Anatomy of an Epidemic	Robert Whitaker	Whitaker	
136	Daring to Draw Near	John White	White	
137	When The Spirit Comes With Power	John White	White	
138	The Cross and the Switchblade	David Wilkerson	Wilkerson	
139	The Prayer of Jabez	Bruce Wilkinson	Wilkinson	

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT BY FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY VERSION ONE

Anyway so many books and having all those books is ultimately through reading crime and punishment by Dostoevsky are dusty ASCII three a F.

In high school can't remember which created that was our assignment to lead a hushed, but when I got us are ardent book not wanting to ruin the first time reading experience for anyone, I was so messed up that I had to quit reading. A few years after high school I tried reading crime and punishment again and the same thing at. For dust as key is a very good writer for getting your inside hand of his main characters in a skillet of what is during a stop at a team and Slaney and had a conscience is reacting to society around him to resolve family life and E was similar to a habit of a period. I mean child reunion for a couple of times but when I got my forties I finally decided that this was the time that I was going to actually do and what is happening is I eat deficit is suffered a whole time I read it that the best analogy of it would be back for I was put to death and brought back to life on the other side. When of things that it's hard for me to read is a character Dana Miller not because he is a classic alcoholic and very very sight of a hollowed I have relatives who are of this type in such hits close to home I also have F2 daughters and a way that the stand treats his daughter allow start treating up makes it hard as well and that course I first read his book reading avenue dollars but it does is I reread it as a €57.00 and highly definitely an investigative and scour audience and I remember when ever detected in his arm dictating because you're messing up so bad and the period

Once I defeated this will be men the whole world is by most recent speech and so right against you read other books that I had neglected to read and high school and really enjoyed a part of late fear of reading has been the fear that my mind would be stolen away from a direct the brain washed and the following some idea that had to invent an issue that book that is part of crime and punishment to be sure but what I've learned since I've ventured out into reading many different genres and points of view is that F it's not just the receiving of the knowledge but it's believing what you're hearing and that aspect of it your mind takes hold and then it works its way out into your life unanswered questions and questions that need to be chased down in satisfied don't go away if you just try not to think about the image and nor them and do all kinds of things to make him to wait a skull repression and I can tell you that all the things that I ever did not think about ½ comeback win also the things that I was called to do keep coming back to for resolution was raised in that you more than by the monarchy is about death idea of repressed things coming out and raise.

I grew up in a panic hostile church by teachers like began in a Baptist church or Lancaster Baptist from before when I was born may that it might cost will church and were taken a toll not because my parents wanted a bible base church and they weren't happy when we came home from Sunday school wave pictures of mickey mouse and other Disney characters and courses nothing wrong was making us a Disney characters when you go to Disneyland you hope to come home was pictures of mickey mouse and design characters will go to church know coach of comes back with bible stories and knowledge but because that's why it's church so we found time to implement a and definitely the hearts of Ast reach age barber was Christian education and the knowledge that by other chemicals to move itself is definitely part of the protestant evangelical movement where the bible is the sole authority and F to put it into my own words is much easier than trying to put words

in the mouths of organizations that everything that you must be found in the bible I must be able to rescind my life out and it's you want to hold me accountable in my actions you, nesting for the reason that do or don't do something that level is good, because that's where my babies come from and indeed that's where my feet comes from and how it was in the company of my two older brothers that I ventured into books that I really would never read either for a lack of interest or fear that the men might be stolen wife but I found is that my mind stay strong I was now able to rid myself of fear of the Foss and beliefs of others so bad I didn't feel the need to destroy designer belief system sort of people believed in them I didn't feel the need to convert them over to my Mage thinking of money by the school history professor raunchy and put it this way he said that when you learn about history you can act instead of react when a history repeats itself in some way or another F F so also when you know that the that premise and the teachings of a particular religion you can act instead react and also I found that when you come across the NIC hearings most of the time you're not in the across the devout intensely educated and well versed individual you're coming across just happening here someone to doesn't have any idea about the course use of a presentation of the entire thing that they cling to delete prince has a lot of people talk about, and so you might jump to the conclusion that they are into a minimal words fail me read it on again into the intellectuals written a Izvestia says many seem to think back Carnell happens within your lifetime but really cause for a single time is about of dying in this world and having to be a punished for your misdeeds in the next life that's your karma of ethical borrow from that buys by talking about the fact that you your actions will be punished because you'll have to live the consequences of what you've done so this videos car was a ditch were solidly passes on other vehicle aggressively hamstringing ask you to somebody and then 2 seconds later the crash into wall. See coming and solicit that scarred to soak it might think from cows is Mrs. Zeile a person whose religious and such a prodigious boring and religious church and had no idea what it means a map that same sort of thing with words can happen over golden and as myself words mean a great deal and socket wrench to the march but what I've learned to do over the course of time is listened to hear if that person is just parenting and some worded acreage and it is in common use on crime is definitely in common use everybody uses that term but they don't necessarily know what it means of properly and they definitely not the considering up to life in that religion which a religion that comes from the Nino F.

But interesting to me also is that after reading all these books to came across a book called rising straw was a spiritual practice and in that book the author talks about in lots buchberger a bird which is very high rate of books books and animal of talks about writing she first drafts and that when you do write your first draft and you just our say whenever it is a new mining you go back to me fix it later I thought if I found that eventually there is a flow of words that come as you lose yourself in what you're writing and something truly dynamic happens that unconscious repressed part of you, comes out and so I realize that when I read truly brilliant writing I'm only witnessing a almost a divining act, because it's so wonderful this gives me hope that I could write a great work of the history of trying to copy may make recreate what degree authors of written his was really designed thing right to set out and be like somebody else in altar inspired by them that's wonderful if you trying to be them redo what they did experience that think we all over over again offers is not thrilled about the outcome of their lives and of finding Forrester a movie with the Sean Connery better wash recently again on Gigi rice is bestseller and they never writes anything ever again because he's very disenchanted with if the entire publish world and of the people his readers and an average of the true fans of his reading which this year and continued writing because they really enjoyed his book so than a witness that's the is this the whole point

identify myself most desiring to write because I want to know what's inside and is no other way for me to find out what's inside them to write it down and see for myself and so it's my own personal interest in quest and, and lots as proven to me, she said weekends and I tried out the team came to pass this is perfect example of when talking about is that knowledge is their belief is there and the practice of that is what completes the entire song system if you will believe in god and his word and putting into practice is what features in a voice said that a faith is like a is best seen when someone asks us that's a great bridge and see our bridge where is the bridges and can't you'll fall, is amazed to death and say yes of course it's perfectly sound region me ask you to walk on bridging same on a greedy that what fall to my death so do you really believe that that's a bridge and the person who actually steps but an average of whether they completely believe it or not they are testing their belief that testing the knowledge the information that they can get them and their walking out on it and send the it's in the walking across the bridge where their belief fuses interface and they get to the outside and they know that that bridge is indeed a bridge and they have some idea of whether not some crumbling world was that just pulling away from it and made just barely got to the other side to realize will never allowed rich Gannon Alf they handed down isn't strictly steered the ambulance fear of the knowledge and they said one of her go cross that bridge into the fix it harm if so, but in the case of faith in god and Satan is word of a we only come to no more strongly what it is to put our faith in god and in its word of we've become engulfed in the sense of knowing his love for us so when he was 116 as a part from Fay Vincent possible to restock those that comes here must first believe any excess and is rewards and diligently seeking the part of the church and state it means that you must no one got said so when a conversation was stopped and honest the first speaker a home of sorts and because he brings us his word and I don't think I can quickly discounts the the aspect of, if we need to speed to god and to create a because we're crying out to large but I believe also that our desire for Ghana and are clustered on is because he's come knocking our door in some way she performed we desired audit of john 644 cheeses says no one can come to me unless the father draws him so he initiates the conversation and until if a conversationalist ideas college and SP to redress speak to someone who does all the talking were a joy to speak to someone who wants to hear me you have to say a and equally a socially take god's word that's listing to what god has to say and then if the the belief of that of Dawson has written his word and U.S. is work because he sang this is the way to meet knowing me and standing me and to know all about my world that I created and how the stadium where you are in picture and so are graffiti is then that knowledge is god's word that we then begin to act on an athlete act on it that there's a fusion between knowledge and belief that occurs and the resulting action is faith so not just the act itself is based but the result is faith because I now have faith in god's word that I understood it correctly and I know it because I can see the results and know the results one more mysterious things that's very hard to explain to someone is never experienced a is the assurance of the presence of the holy spirit in my heart and Paul speaks about this in a few things he says that's a key sticking to the church in essence of Kinney says that once they believe what he said they received a holy spirit which was a guarantee of their adherents a down payment and F to the holy spirit's presence in my heart of witnesses that yes this is not speaking and becomes this protector who protected me through all my reading to a two games, what got lots of my faith in god is only become stronger no matter what I've read up because my faith comes from this relationship with dog through its wholly spirit living in my heart and heighten freely invite anyone into this journey knowing that that god two was true to me will be true to that person and they can genuinely of desired and they can of try it out and whenever level they desire to because god is a loving god he's not quite secure the sox of you scoring to be gently and patiently of coaxing into himself and unless does

happen sure all two daunting to her very powerfully of when she first began going to church and she responded with obedience so I guess when I talk about knowledge and beliefs and actions it's really a case of knowledge belief in a PDA it's how the actions obedience to what I have come to know and belief and other south would lead to these high school begins and what it would happen as the air and disobedience of something results in the case of a survey stagnation but standing there up in god's waiting for you to take that step and when you do it opens up a whole world so perhaps it's like opening a door and that door of opens up to another room that she could not access unless you to come through that door and I do still going back because now that tourist and opened and see what's in there but there are many challenges a new thing so was always this journey forward to sever increasing a desire to start is not a clinching of the questions in the sense that you have a cessation of desire to know god but there is a satisfaction that you are no need god that you are in the presence of living god did he loves you and that you know him and that he's there all the time and so a continual conversations happening between yourself and not and that is the satisfaction but for a I suppose there might be someone who would like to antagonize the same old and she's not really is not really satisfying his persecutors for more well, anybody who has a cameo and is it still looks forward to next time they're hungry because they're going to enjoy a meal they know where to eat and who they haven't cut for them when you use them sell to someone else and they know that there didn't join a meal again and so they're not worried about the hungry up being hungry isn't something it fears being hungry something that they look for cheap and so their debt hunger in this summer's is satisfied in the sense that they know where to go when that feeling cars and a wealth of some of his first the hungry and doesn't know where to get food and drink of that person's and quite different predicament, I think it's pretty clear and so if we get back to let F the period.

Bit so when someone is writing their writing is coming out of the department and the brilliance and the genius of the writing is because they've learned how to let go and allow their unconscious mind to two write home so also is when you read there is an aggressive kind of I'm going to get something out of the someone to understand this and say you engage in some polls your thoughts and ideas not really listing your you're just only seem ready offer agrees with U.N. and U.S. and understandable stance that you don't have your mind taking away from the city are very aggressive in a perceptive the game as a matter of trusting in the holy spirit and the up believing that he's going to look after used on the way you trust and offer the more you would be able to do this on I like to know really where an author comes from all read about Cooley is and that is to find a visa Christian at some level of comfort because I know that I can hold what he's written accountable to god's word of that I can listen for rare has some points of view originate from F to a this has been quite the opening trusting and ventured into dictation and I'm glad that I have this as such a of the shows coming down the site as the party's over

ONE OF THE DREAMS IN CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

There is a dream early on in the book, of a pathetic horse whose owner resolves he will make him gallop with a wagon loaded down with drunken revelers. This is what he declares to those around, anyway. Does he truly believe that he can get the task done by whipping and beating a horse who is not physically capable of doing that task? So, it is a matter of overcoming the stubbornness of the animal? Laying the blame of the horse's inability on the horse's will power. The beating will overcome the horse's rebellious nature? But the dream clearly depicts the horse as being evidently to all incapable of pulling the cart at all, never mind galloping. The laughter of the crowd is proof that none of them believed it possible. The resolution is that he will beat the horse to death.

<<<"Where is it I've read that someone condemned to death says or thinks, an hour before his death, that if he had to live on some high rock, on such a narrow ledge that he'd only room to stand, and the ocean, everlasting darkness, everlasting solitude, everlasting tempest around him, if he had to remain standing on a square yard of space all his life, a thousand years, eternity, it were better to live so than to die at once! Only to live, to live and live! Life, whatever it may be!>>>

Is Raskolnikov the helpless onlooker? The innocence of child, and a weak father, unable or unwilling to do anything for the horse, "it's none of our business" Calling upon God to end the suffering in the world? Is this the framework of Raskolnikov's mind?

Or, is Raskolnikov the horse, being required to do the impossible in order to live? Raskolnikov must do something to live that will result in his death. The horse has no choice but to cling to life. The mindless lack of logic of the horse owner, he's a fool for supposing that the horse is merely refusing to pull the load rather than being unable to pull the wagon load. The horse owner is angry that he has a useless horse, but how did the horse get that way?

The limitations of man are all in the mind. The inability of man to progress are the artificial restraints brought on by society, brought about by religion. Morality is the thing which holds us back. We simply need to overcome this fake construct, and on the other side we'll find freedom of movement.

The pawn broker represents what others have referred to as "the wicked prospering". One sees the profit and success of the wealthy, and wonders what sins and crimes they have committed to get to their position. One looks at one's own pathetic state of affairs, and blames the moral code one has been taught.

Fearful Dream

Raskolnikov had a fearful dream. He dreamt he was back in his childhood in the little town of his birth. He was a child about seven years old, walking into the country with his father on the evening of a holiday. It was a grey and heavy day, the country was exactly as he remembered it; indeed he recalled it far more vividly in his dream than he had done in memory. The little town stood on a level flat as bare as the hand, not even a willow near it; only in the far distance, a copse lay, a dark blur on the very edge of the horizon. A few paces beyond the last market garden stood a tavern, a big tavern, which had always aroused in him a feeling of aversion, even of fear, when he walked by it with his father. There was always a crowd there, always shouting, laughter and abuse, hideous hoarse singing and often fighting. Drunken and horrible-looking figures were hanging about the

tavern. He used to cling close to his father, trembling all over when he met them. Near the tavern the road became a dusty track, the dust of which was always black. It was a winding road, and about a hundred page 84 / 879 paces further on, it turned to the right to the graveyard. In the middle of the graveyard stood a stone church with a green cupola where he used to go to mass two or three times a year with his father and mother, when a service was held in memory of his grandmother, who had long been dead, and whom he had never seen. On these occasions they used to take on a white dish tied up in a table napkin a special sort of rice pudding with raisins stuck in it in the shape of a cross. He loved that church, the old-fashioned, unadorned ikons and the old priest with the shaking head. Near his grandmother's grave, which was marked by a stone, was the little grave of his younger brother who had died at six months old. He did not remember him at all, but he had been told about his little brother, and whenever he visited the graveyard he used religiously and reverently to cross himself and to bow down and kiss the little grave. And now he dreamt that he was walking with his father past the tavern on the way to the graveyard; he was holding his father's hand and looking with dread at the tavern. A peculiar circumstance attracted his attention: there seemed to be some kind of festivity going on, there were crowds of gaily dressed townspeople, peasant women, their husbands, and riff-raff of all sorts, all singing and all more or less drunk. Near the entrance of the tavern stood a cart, but a strange cart. It was one of those big carts usually drawn by heavy cart-horses and laden with casks of wine or other heavy goods. He always liked looking at those great carthorses, with their long manes, thick legs, and slow even pace, drawing along a perfect mountain with no appearance of effort, as though it were easier going with a load than without it. But now, strange to say, in the shafts of such a cart he saw a thin little sorrel beast, one of those peasants' nags which he had often seen straining their page 85 / 879 utmost under a heavy load of wood or hay, especially when the wheels were stuck in the mud or in a rut. And the peasants would beat them so cruelly, sometimes even about the nose and eyes, and he felt so sorry, so sorry for them that he almost cried, and his mother always used to take him away from the window. All of a sudden there was a great number of big and very drunken peasants came out, wearing red and blue shirts and coats thrown over their shoulders. "Get in, get in!" shouted one of them, a young thick-necked peasant with a fleshy face red as a carrot. "I'll take you all, get in!" But at once there was an outbreak of laughter and exclamations in the crowd. "Take us all with a beast like that!" "Why, Mikolka, are you crazy to put a nag like that in such a cart?" "And this mare is twenty if she is a day, mates!" "Get in, I'll take you all," Mikolka shouted again, leaping first into the cart, seizing the reins and standing straight up in front. "The bay has gone with Matvey," he shouted from the cart--"and this brute, mates, is just breaking my heart, I feel as if I could kill her. She's page 86 / 879 just eating her head off. Get in, I tell you! I'll make her gallop! She'll gallop!" and he picked up the whip, preparing himself with relish to flog the little mare. "Get in! Come along!" The crowd laughed. "D'you hear, she'll gallop!" "Gallop indeed! She has not had a gallop in her for the last ten years!" "She'll jog along!" "Don't you mind her, mates, bring a whip each of you, get ready!" "All right! Give it to her!" They all clambered into Mikolka's cart, laughing and making jokes. Six men got in and there was still room for more. They hauled in a fat, rosy-cheeked woman. She was dressed in red cotton, in a pointed, beaded headdress and thick leather shoes; she was cracking nuts and laughing. The crowd round them was laughing too and indeed, how could they help laughing? That wretched nag was to drag all the cartload of them at a gallop! Two young fellows in the cart were just getting whips ready to help Mikolka. With the cry of "now," the mare tugged with all her might, but far from galloping, could scarcely move forward; she struggled with her legs, gasping and shrinking from the page 87 / 879 blows of the three whips which were showered upon her like hail. The laughter in the cart and in the crowd was redoubled, but Mikolka flew into a

rage and furiously thrashed the mare, as though he supposed she really could gallop. "Let me get in, too, mates," shouted a young man in the crowd whose appetite was aroused. "Get in, all get in," cried Mikolka, "she will draw you all. I'll beat her to death!" And he thrashed and thrashed at the mare, beside himself with fury. "Father, father," he cried, "father, what are they doing? Father, they are beating the poor horse!" "Come along, come along!" said his father. "They are drunken and foolish, they are in fun; come away, don't look!" and he tried to draw him away, but he tore himself away from his hand, and, beside himself with horror, ran to the horse. The poor beast was in a bad way. She was gasping, standing still, then tugging again and almost falling. "Beat her to death," cried Mikolka, "it's come to that. I'll do for her!" "What are you about, are you a Christian, you devil?" shouted an old page 88 / 879 man in the crowd. "Did anyone ever see the like? A wretched nag like that pulling such a cartload," said another. "You'll kill her," shouted the third. "Don't meddle! It's my property, I'll do what I choose. Get in, more of you! Get in, all of you! I will have her go at a gallop! . . ." All at once laughter broke into a roar and covered everything: the mare, roused by the shower of blows, began feebly kicking. Even the old man could not help smiling. To think of a wretched little beast like that trying to kick! Two lads in the crowd snatched up whips and ran to the mare to beat her about the ribs. One ran each side. "Hit her in the face, in the eyes, in the eyes," cried Mikolka. "Give us a song, mates," shouted someone in the cart and everyone in the cart joined in a riotous song, jingling a tambourine and whistling. The woman went on cracking nuts and laughing. page 89 / 879 . . . He ran beside the mare, ran in front of her, saw her being whipped across the eyes, right in the eyes! He was crying, he felt choking, his tears were streaming. One of the men gave him a cut with the whip across the face, he did not feel it. Wringing his hands and screaming, he rushed up to the grey-headed old man with the grey beard, who was shaking his head in disapproval. One woman seized him by the hand and would have taken him away, but he tore himself from her and ran back to the mare. She was almost at the last gasp, but began kicking once more. "I'll teach you to kick," Mikolka shouted ferociously. He threw down the whip, bent forward and picked up from the bottom of the cart a long, thick shaft, he took hold of one end with both hands and with an effort brandished it over the mare. "He'll crush her," was shouted round him. "He'll kill her!" "It's my property," shouted Mikolka and brought the shaft down with a swinging blow. There was a sound of a heavy thud. "Thrash her, thrash her! Why have you stopped?" shouted voices in the crowd. And Mikolka swung the shaft a second time and it fell a second time on the spine of the luckless mare. She sank back on her haunches, but page 90 / 879 lurched forward and tugged forward with all her force, tugged first on one side and then on the other, trying to move the cart. But the six whips were attacking her in all directions, and the shaft was raised again and fell upon her a third time, then a fourth, with heavy measured blows. Mikolka was in a fury that he could not kill her at one blow. "She's a tough one," was shouted in the crowd. "She'll fall in a minute, mates, there will soon be an end of her," said an admiring spectator in the crowd. "Fetch an axe to her! Finish her off," shouted a third. "I'll show you! Stand off," Mikolka screamed frantically; he threw down the shaft, stooped down in the cart and picked up an iron crowbar. "Look out," he shouted, and with all his might he dealt a stunning blow at the poor mare. The blow fell; the mare staggered, sank back, tried to pull, but the bar fell again with a swinging blow on her back and she fell on the ground like a log. "Finish her off," shouted Mikolka and he leapt beside himself, out of the cart. Several young men, also flushed with drink, seized anything they could come across--whips, sticks, poles, and ran to the dying mare. Mikolka stood on one side and began dealing random blows with page 91 / 879 the crowbar. The mare stretched out her head, drew a long breath and died. "You butchered her," someone shouted in the crowd. "Why wouldn't she gallop then?" "My property!" shouted Mikolka, with bloodshot eyes, brandishing the bar in his hands. He stood as though

regretting that he had nothing more to beat. "No mistake about it, you are not a Christian," many voices were shouting in the crowd. But the poor boy, beside himself, made his way, screaming, through the crowd to the sorrel nag, put his arms round her bleeding dead head and kissed it, kissed the eyes and kissed the lips. . . . Then he jumped up and flew in a frenzy with his little fists out at Mikolka. At that instant his father, who had been running after him, snatched him up and carried him out of the crowd. "Come along, come! Let us go home," he said to him. "Father! Why did they . . . kill . . . the poor horse!" he sobbed, but page 92 / 879 his voice broke and the words came in shrieks from his panting chest. "They are drunk. . . . They are brutal . . . it's not our business!" said his father. He put his arms round his father but he felt choked, choked. He tried to draw a breath, to cry out--and woke up. He waked up, gasping for breath, his hair soaked with perspiration, and stood up in terror.

"I say, sir," the girl shouted after him. "What is it?" She hesitated. "I'll always be pleased to spend an hour with you, kind gentleman, but now I feel shy. Give me six copecks for a drink, there's a nice young man!" Raskolnikov gave her what came first--fifteen copecks. "Ah, what a good-natured gentleman!" "What's your name?" "Ask for Duclida." "Well, that's too much," one of the women observed, shaking her head at Duclida. "I don't know how you can ask like that. I believe I should drop with shame. . . ."

Raskolnikov looked curiously at the speaker. She was a pock-marked wench of thirty, covered with bruises, with her upper lip swollen. She made her criticism quietly and earnestly. "Where is it," thought Raskolnikov. "Where is it I've read that someone condemned to death says or thinks, an hour before his death, that if he had to live on some high rock, on such a narrow ledge that he'd only room to stand, and the ocean, everlasting darkness, everlasting solitude, everlasting tempest around him, if he had to remain standing on a square yard of space all his life, a thousand years, eternity, it were better to live so than to die at once! Only to live, to live and live! Life, whatever it may be! . . . How true it is! Good God, how true! Man is a vile creature! . . . And vile is he who calls him vile for that," he added a moment later.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT BY FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY VERSION TWO

I owe a debt of gratitude, but also this book owes me! I wasted so much time in fear! Right away I chide myself, for I am the one that responded to this book in fear. It was just being itself, inanimate, stationary, as is. Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote this great work, Crime and Punishment. My first invitation to read this was in high school, I can't remember which grade. I could blame the book, but I can also credit the book for playing such a big part in my life. My response to my fear of reading resulted in my reading only the bible. I got to know it really well consequently. I owe that to Crime and Punishment, but also to any person who fear mongered me as well. Outside influences being warned against in Christian circles I frequented in. This solid base of Christian Faith allows me now to venture forth, not just because of the knowledge but because of the relationship I have with The Living God through his Holy Spirit, who looks after me, and my mind.

In high school, I can't remember which grade, that was our assignment to read Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment. When I got to this certain part of the book - not wanting to ruin the first time reading experience for anyone, I'll be vague about it - I was so messed up emotionally, and/or psychologically, that I had to quit reading.

This has happened many times in my life. With other things, not just books. And it's a part of my own personal battle with mental illness, chiefly what could broadly be called Anxiety.

A few years after high school I tried reading crime and punishment again and the same thing happened, and I laid it down again, defeated, not ready. For Dostoyevsky is a very good writer for getting your inside the head of his main characters. Raskolnikov was a tormented young man. I have learned from reading other books, and even from watching a good movie, that I am so empathetic that my own personality falls into the background, and I become that personality. It isn't a conscious choice. But soon this wears off and I suppose I become a hybrid of sorts, I'm still me, but I remain effected by this strong character that I have met. Raskolnikov was reacting to the society around him, there were many theories being discussed, and he decided to act upon one of the worst of them. He wrote a paper that was published, and it comes up later, one which the police detective reads, and gains insight into the motives of Raskolnikov, and instead of attacking the problem head-on, he uses psychological tactics to gain his end. He appeals to Raskolnikov through respect, into giving himself up. The detective becomes convinced that Raskolnikov is his man, but then he works to prove it to others. Surely, he also had to prove it to himself. The motive for crime solving is to find the true suspect. Satisfying the requirements of his superiors would be to hand over a suspect, and convince of guilt is one thing, to resolve the issue in your own mind, is when you have taken your job description to heart. But this detective goes one further, he convinces Raskolnikov to turn himself in. To admit that he did wrong according to law, but also that it was wrong according to Raskolnikov's own conscience. To give up on the ideology. Indeed, Raskolnikov is immediately converted when he did the crime. He was at very least not the example of the human being who could successfully carry out his theory. Perhaps Dostoyevsky's whole point is to convince the rest of us of the consequences of coming up with our own truth to solve the problems in this world.

There is a dream early on in the book, of a pathetic horse whose owner resolves he will make him gallop with a wagon loaded down with drunken revelers. This is what he declares to those around, anyway. Does he truly believe that he can get the task done by whipping and beating a horse who is not physically capable of

doing that task? So, it is a matter of overcoming the stubbornness of the animal? Laying the blame of the horse's inability on the horses will power. The beating will overcome the horse's rebellious nature? But the dream clearly depicts the horse as being evidently to all incapable of pulling the cart at all, never mind galloping. The laughter of the crowd is proof that none of them believed it possible. The resolution is that he will beat the horse to death.

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Is Raskolnikov the helpless onlooker? The innocence of child, and a weak father, unable or unwilling to do anything for the horse, "it's none of our business" Calling upon God to end the suffering in the world? Is this the framework of Raskolnikov's mind?

Or, is Raskolnikov the horse, being required to do the impossible in order to live? Raskolnikov must do something to live that will result in his death. The horse has no choice but to cling to life. The mindless lack of logic of the horse owner, he's a fool for supposing that the horse is merely refusing to pull the load rather than being unable to pull the wagon load. The horse own is angry that he has a useless horse, but how did the horse get that way?

to resolve family life and E was similar to a habit of a period. I mean child reunion for a couple of times but when I got my forties I finally decided that this was the time that I was going to actually do and what is happening is I eat deficit is suffered a whole time I read it that the best analogy of it would be back for I was put to death and brought back to life on the other side. When of things that it's hard for me to read is a character Dana Miller not because he is a classic alcoholic and very very sight of a hollowed I have relatives who are of this type in such hits close to home I also have F2 daughters and a way that the stand treats his daughter allow start treating up makes it hard as well and that course I first read his book reading avenue dollars but it does is I reread it as a €57.00 and highly definitely an investigative and scour audience and I remember when ever detected in his arm dictating because you're messing up so bad and the period

Once I defeated this will be men the whole world is by most recent speech and so right against you read other books that I had neglected to read and high school and really enjoyed a part of late fear of reading has been the fear that my mind would be stolen away from a direct the brain washed and the following some idea that had to invent an issue that book that is part of crime and punishment to be sure but what I've learned since I've ventured out into reading many different genres and points of view is that F it's not just the receiving of the knowledge but it's believing what you're hearing and that aspect of it your mind takes hold and then it works its way out into your life unanswered questions and questions that need to be chased down in satisfied don't go away if you just try not to think about the image and nor them and do all kinds of things to make him to wait a skull repression and I can tell you that all the things that I ever did not think about ½ comeback win also the things that I was called to do keep coming back to for resolution was raised in that you more than by the monarchy is about death idea of repressed things coming out and raise.

I grew up in a panic hostile church by teachers like began in a Baptist church or Lancaster Baptist from before when I was born may that it might cost will church and were taken a toll not because my parents wanted a bible base church and they weren't happy when we came home from Sunday school wave pictures of mickey mouse and other Disney characters and courses nothing wrong was making us a Disney characters when you go to Disneyland you hope to come home was pictures of mickey mouse and design characters will go to church know coach of comes back with bible stories and knowledge but because that's why it's church so we found time to implement a and definitely the hearts of Ast reach age barber was Christian education and the knowledge that by other chemicals to move itself is definitely part of the protestant evangelical movement where the bible is the sole authority and F to put it into my own words is much easier than trying to put words in the mouths of organizations that everything that you must be found in the bible I must be able to rescind my life out and it's you want to hold me accountable in my actions you, nesting for the reason that do or don't do something that level is good, because that's where my babies come from and indeed that's where my feet comes from and how it was in the company of my two older brothers that I ventured into books that I really would never read either for a lack of interest or fear that the men might be stolen wife but I found is that my mind stay strong I was now able to rid myself of fear of the Foss and beliefs of others so bad I didn't feel the need to destroy designer belief system sort of people believed in them I didn't feel the need to convert them over to my Mage thinking of money by the school history professor raunchy and put it this way he said that when you learn about history you can act instead of react when a history repeats itself in some way or another F F so also when you know that the that premise and the teachings of a particular religion you can act instead react and also I found that when you come across the NIC hearings most of the time you're not in the across the devout intensely educated and well versed individual you're coming across just happening here someone to doesn't have any idea about the course use of a presentation of the entire thing that they cling to delete prince has a lot of people talk about, and so you might jump to the conclusion that they are into a minimal words fail me read it on again into the intellectuals written a Izvestia says many seem to think back Carnell happens within your lifetime but really cause for a single time is about of dying in this world and having to be a punished for your misdeeds in the next life that's your karma of ethical borrow from that buys by talking about the fact that you your actions will be punished because you'll have to live the consequences of what you've done so this videos car was a ditch were solidly passes on other vehicle aggressively hamstring ask you to somebody and then 2 seconds later the crash into wall. See coming and solicit that scarred to soak it might think from cows is Mrs. Zeile a person whose religious and such a prodigious boring and religious church and had no idea what it means a map that same sort of thing with words can happen over golden and as myself words mean a great deal and socket wrench to the march but what I've learned to do over the course of time is listened to hear if that person is just parenting and some worded acreage and it is in common use on crime is definitely in common use everybody uses that term but they don't necessarily know what it means of properly and they definitely not the considering up to life in that religion which a religion that comes from the Nino F.

But interesting to me also is that after reading all these books to came across a book called rising straw was a spiritual practice and in that book the author talks about in lots buchberger a bird which is very high rate of books books and animal of talks about writing she first drafts and that when you do write your first draft and you just our say whenever it is a new mining you go back to me fix it later I thought if I found that eventually there is a flow of words that come as you lose yourself in what you're writing and something truly dynamic

happens that unconscious repressed part of you, comes out and so I realize that when I read truly brilliant writing I'm only witnessing a almost a divining act, because it's so wonderful this gives me hope that I could write a great work of the history of trying to copy may make recreate what degree authors of written his was really designed thing right to set out and be like somebody else in altar inspired by them that's wonderful if you trying to be them redo what they did experience that think we all over over again offers is not thrilled about the outcome of their lives and of finding Forrester a movie with the Sean Connery better wash recently again on Gigi rice is bestseller and they never writes anything ever again because he's very disenchanted with if the entire publish world and of the people his readers and an average of the true fans of his reading which this year and continued writing because they really enjoyed his book so than a witness that's the is this the whole point identify myself most desiring to write because I want to know what's inside and is no other way for me to find out what's inside them to write it down and see for myself and so it's my own personal interest in qwest and, and lots as proven to me, she said weekends and I tried out the team came to pass this is perfect example of when talking about is that knowledge is their belief is there and the practice of that is what completes the entire song system if you will believe in god and his word and putting into practice is what features in a voice said that a faith is like a is best seen when someone asks us that's a great bridge and see our bridge where is the bridges and can't you'll fall, is amazed to death and say yes of course it's perfectly sound region me ask you to walk on bridging same on a greedy that what fall to my death so do you really believe that that's a bridge and the person who actually steps but an average of whether they completely believe it or not they are testing their belief that testing the knowledge the information that they can get them and their walking out on it and send the it's in the walking across the bridge where their belief fuses interface and they get to the outside and they know that that bridge is indeed a bridge and they have some idea of whether not some crumbling world was that just pulling away from it and made just barely got to the other side to realize will never allowed rich Gannon Alf they handed down isn't strictly steered the ambulance fear of the knowledge and they said one of her go cross that bridge into the fix it harm if so, but in the case of faith in god and Satan is word of a we only come to no more strongly what it is to put our faith in god and in its word of we've become engulfed in the sense of knowing his love for us so when he was 116 as a part from Fay Vincent possible to restock those that comes here must first believe any excess and is rewards and diligently seeking the part of the church and state it means that you must no one got said so when a conversation was stopped and honest the first speaker a home of sorts and because he brings us his word and I don't think I can quickly discounts the the aspect of, if we need to speed to god and to create a because we're crying out to large but I believe also that our desire for Ghana and are clustered on is because he's come knocking our door in some way she performed we desired audit of john 644 cheeses says no one can come to me unless the father draws him so he initiates the conversation and until if a conversationalist ideas college and SP to redress speak to someone who does all the talking were a joy to speak to someone who wants to hear me you have to say a and equally a socially take god's word that's listing to what god has to say and then if the the belief of that of Dawson has written his word and U.S. is work because he sang this is the way to meet knowing me and standing me and to know all about my world that I created and how the stadium where you are in picture and so are graffiti is then that knowledge is god's word that we then begin to act on an athlete act on it that there's a fusion between knowledge and belief that occurs and the resulting action is faith so not just the act itself is based but the result is faith because I now have faith in god's word that I understood it correctly and I know it because I can see the results and know the results one more mysterious things that's very hard to explain to someone is never experienced a is the

assurance of the presence of the holy spirit in my heart and Paul speaks about this in a few things he says that's a key sticking to the church in essence of Kinney says that once they believe what he said they received a holy spirit which was a guarantee of their adherents a down payment and F to the holy spirit's presence in my heart of witnesses that yes this is not speaking and becomes this protector who protected me through all my reading to a two games, what got lots of my faith in god is only become stronger no matter what I've read up because my faith comes from this relationship with dog through its wholly spirit living in my heart and heighten freely invite anyone into this journey knowing that that god two was true to me will be true to that person and they can genuinely of desired and they can of try it out and whenever level they desire to because god is a loving god he's not quite secure the sox of you scoring to be gently and patiently of coaxing into himself and unless does happen sure all two daunting to her very powerfully of when she first began going to church and she responded with obedience so I guess when I talk about knowledge and beliefs and actions it's really a case of knowledge belief in a PDA it's how the actions obedience to what I have come to know and belief and other south would lead to these high school begins and what it would happen as the air and disobedience of something results in the case of a survey stagnation but standing there up in god's waiting for you to take that step and when you do it opens up a whole world so perhaps it's like opening a door and that door of opens up to another room that she could not access unless you to come through that door and I do still going back because now that tourist and opened and see what's in there but there are many challenges a new thing so was always this journey forward to sever increasing a desire to start is not a clinching of the questions in the sense that you have a cessation of desire to know god but there is a satisfaction that you are no need god that you are in the presence of living god did he loves you and that you know him and that he's there all the time and so a continual conversations happening between yourself and not and that is the satisfaction but for a I suppose there might be someone who would like to antagonize the same old and she's not really is not really satisfying his persecutors for more well, anybody who has a cameo and is it still looks forward to next time they're hungry because they're going to enjoy a meal they know where to eat and who they haven't cut for them when you use them sell to someone else and they know that there didn't join a meal again and so they're not worried about the hungry up being hungry isn't something it fears being hungry something that they look for cheap and so their debt hunger in this summer's is satisfied in the sense that they know where to go when that feeling cars and a wealth of some of his first the hungry and doesn't know where to get food and drink of that person's and quite different predicament, I think it's pretty clear and so if we get back to let F the period.

Bit so when someone is writing their writing is coming out of the department and the brilliance and the genius of the writing is because they've learned how to let go and allow their unconscious mind to two write home so also is when you read there is an aggressive kind of I'm going to get something out of the someone to understand this and say you engage in some polls your thoughts and ideas not really listing your you're just only seem ready offer agrees with U.N. and U.S. and understandable stance that you don't have your mind taking away from the city are very aggressive in a perceptive the game as a matter of trusting in the holy spirit and the up believing that he's going to look after used on the way you trust and offer the more you would be able to do this on I like to know really where an author comes from all read about Cooley is and that is to find a visa Christian at some level of comfort because I know that I can hold what he's written accountable to god's word of that I can listen for rare has some points of view originate from F to a this has been quite the opening

trusting and ventured into dictation and I'm glad that I have this as such a of the shows coming down the site as the party's over

1. As for the Indians, evidence suggests that they tended to view Europeans with disdain as soon as they got to know them. The Wendat (Huron) in Ontario, a chagrined missionary reported, thought the French possessed “little intelligence in comparison to themselves.” Europeans, Indians told other Indians, were physically weak, sexually untrustworthy, atrociously ugly, and just plain smelly. (The British and French, many of whom had not taken a bath in their entire lives, were amazed by the Indian interest in personal cleanliness.) A Jesuit reported that the “savages” were disgusted by handkerchiefs: “They say, we place what is unclean in a fine white piece of linen, and put it away in our pockets as something very precious, while they throw it upon the ground.” The Mi’kmaq in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia scoffed at the notion of European superiority. If Christian civilization was so wonderful, why were its inhabitants all trying to settle somewhere else?

a. 1491: *New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*, Charles C. Manne

HENRY FIELDING

TOM JONES

In our last book we have been obliged to deal pretty much with the passion of love; and in our succeeding book shall be forced to handle this subject still more largely. It may not therefore in this place be improper to apply ourselves to the examination of that modern doctrine, by which certain philosophers, among many other wonderful discoveries, pretend to have found out, that there is no such passion in the human breast.

Whether these philosophers be the same with that surprising sect, who are honourably mentioned by the late Dr Swift, as having, by the mere force of genius alone, without the least assistance of any kind of learning, or even reading, discovered that profound and invaluable secret that there is no God; or whether they are not rather the same with those who some years since very much alarmed the world, by showing that there were no such things as virtue or goodness really existing in human nature, and who deduced our best actions from pride, I will not here presume to determine. In reality, I am inclined to suspect, that all these several finders of truth, are the very identical men who are by others called the finders of gold. The method used in both these searches after truth and after gold, being indeed one and the same, viz., the searching, rummaging, and examining into a nasty place; indeed, in the former instances, into the nastiest of all places, A BAD MIND.

But though in this particular, and perhaps in their success, the truth-finder and the gold-finder may very properly be compared

together; yet in modesty, surely, there can be no comparison between the two; for who ever heard of a gold-finder that had the impudence or folly to assert, from the ill success of his search, that there was no such thing as gold in the world? whereas the truth-finder, having

raked out that jakes, his own mind, and being there capable of tracing no ray of divinity, nor anything virtuous or good, or lovely, or loving, very fairly, honestly, and logically concludes that no such things exist in the whole creation.

To avoid, however, all contention, if possible, with these philosophers, if they will be called so; and to show our own disposition to accommodate matters peaceably between us, we shall here make them some concessions, which may possibly put an end to the dispute.

“Tom Jones” by Henry Fielding

LETTERS TO FRIENDS

ARLENE FEZZIWIG

Theologians may roll over in their graves here... but hear me out.

12 Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. 13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. 14 Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come." Daniel 10:...

Or Moses when he changed God's mind about wiping out Israel and starting again with Moses' seed...

Or Moses when God gave in and brought Aaron in to be the spokesman...

I tend to underestimate prayer, I wonder "why bother?"

When I see that Michael was delayed but the King of Persia...

You reminded me just now of a scripture:

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1 Corinthians 1:13-17

As I've pondered this scripture over the years... one commentator noted in reference to a different passage entirely, that Paul dictated his letters to a scribe. They didn't have a word processor where you could back space and insert, etc. The scribe was probably one of Paul's co-workers... you can just hear him interjecting... "I was there when you baptized Stephanas" This add something I can't quite put into words, and I like it a lot. But I bet you don't lie very much.

It's along the same lines as saying, "go back and read that again, I'll wait here."

7 Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. 8 He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

9 "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him.

"There, in the tent," he said.

10 Then one of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. 11 Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. 12 So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

13 Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child, now that I am old?’ 14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

15 Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, “I did not laugh.”

But he said, “Yes, you did laugh.”

Another story you reminded me of while I did the edits for this chapter... I have a brother in southern Manitoba whom I had an email relationship over the course of over 15+ years. My finances and personal life gave me no freedom to go spend time with him. I lived in BC during that time. He expressed to me the heretical idea that can't just rely on our confession of faith, that there must be works in keeping with our confession. (I self-mock here) He had two masters degrees in Theology, one of them in the original languages of the bible. I felt that he was slipping away into heresy and I had to grab onto him, and make him think about things. I was yet again, the little brother, shouting down the street to my brother, "don't go there... you'll get into trouble!!" then as we ran along side of each other. . . LOL

anyways, I told him one day (I had taken one year of Koine Greek in Bible School) that sometimes - whenever I was going through a time of awe and wondering at how amazing God was - the greek word *etoimadzo* would come to mind instead of the english word(s): I Marvel. John, my brother, said to me, "Laurence, that doesn't mean 'I Marvel' that means 'I Prepare'..." I burst into tears! God waited all that time to tell me, for it to be translated for me after all these years, that all of those marvelous times were him preparing me for what was to come.

Pray this with me –

“Lord Jesus, I surrender the certainty that I crave, and I give it all to you. I lay the plans for my life down in total surrender. You know the plans you have for me, plans to prosper me not to harm me. I lay down my need for worldly certainty at the foot of the cross and ask you for the courage and strength to go to the land you will show me.”

Our only certainty in this world is in Him. Knowing who He is and knowing His goodness. That is all the certainty we need.

For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT)

My sister, Diana, is 7 years younger than I. She married Dave Hamata. She is a dreamer, who didn't give up on her dreams. I am a dreamer who laid them down at the foot of the cross, and went on with my life. Believing many lies along the way, but also believing that He is my only Obstacle... I see that he had things to do in my life in the meantime. I'm 58 years old now.

Step I Dream Avoidance

If you sense your dream is coming alive again

Lie down until the feeling passes. Tell yourself about all past failures, and, lie down until the feeling passes. Think of all your shortcomings, and, lie down until the feeling passes.

Don't Dream your Dream No More . . .

A Little South West of Boise Idaho There lives a certain Indian, and his wife the Eskimo. This Indian has no legs, and his wife no eyes you know Their life's quite pleasant and satisfactory you know. Their child never knew them any other way, it's just the way they always been It really ain't no problem, not to him you know.

Down in the garden beneath the big oak tree Underneath the grass and dirt are his legs and her eyes you know. The child's never seen 'em, he don't know they're even there

The child's never known 'em any other way, it's just the way they always were you know

This Indian and his wife have a pleasant life, they've long since forgotten they ever 'ad 'em, No dreams, no legs, no eyes, you know.

Laurence Brand December 4, 2000

I got married, had a wife and two children... got a job as a bus driver. A few times over the years, after leading a youth bible study one time, for example, one of the youth exclaimed out loud, "why are you a bus driver?"

Well soon we had 4 children... then via divorce I had no wife, in the above 'prose' the Eskimo/Indian image is two different cultures maybe? It was a goofy song I sung while driving my bus through an Indian reservation on Vancouver's North Shore, on my way back to the depot, NIS (Not In Service) more poetic than I can imagine! The same words kept coming, and it was when I wrote them down, that I saw the message God had for me. And the one the enemy had me tied up with... the divorce, then 4 children estranged from me. In 1996 I stood on the corner of St George's and 3rd in North Vancouver, BC and declared to God that my life was a mess... John 15's message passed through my mind, and I confessed that I must not be abiding in him, and he in me, cuz the fruit of my life was not the fruit he was describing... my prayer was then and there that he show me what is was to abide in him and he in me... and lets just see what fruit comes then... fast forward to today.

My sister published a book, "Hope In The Mourning" about her experience of losing her beloved David on November 12, 2011 after 10 years battling 4 different cancers. When she wanted to re-publish it she decided to do so with a new self-publishing company (if you wanna know who, keep reading! Don't be impatient LOL) well, she said to me, "Hey, you remember when you read my book and said you spotted some edit's...?" If I sent you the manuscript... could you...

Well, I accepted... she sent it to me, I went through it (if you want to know the process you're living through it now) and sent it back to her. She then sent it to AWM Publishing WHOLE... and Dee's reaction was to send me an email out of the blue on June 10, 2021 saying,

On Jun 10, 2021, at 8:14 AM, AWM Publishing House <info@awmpublishing.ca> wrote:

Hello Laurence

How are you and your family doing?

Your sister, Diana mentioned you might be interested in doing some editing work for us. We are in need of editors to do final proofread of manuscripts. Would you be interested in working for us on a part time basis?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you

Since then God has been bringing into fruition HIS lifelong dream for me... that I hardly knew. There's this prophet way back when that my ex-wife's parents had brought in with similar motives to Balaak when he called upon Balaam... he was a 'seer' who was to come look into my life and give them ammo to get rid of me... for their daughter to drop her engagement to me... but it backfired. He instead, Alec Hart, told me that what God had planned for me, and the training for it wouldn't necessarily be through Bible school – it was late summer, and I was just about to go to Central Pentecostal College in Saskatoon, Sk. We lived in Winnipeg at the time.

During the previous summer God had given me visions during the district wide youth conference at Manhattan Beach camp. One of the visions I had – while kneeling at the front altar after going forward for prayer – was me in a tower, God called me over to a veiled window, he drew back the veil, and bid me look out... I did so, my eyes began to follow a path from the base of the tower that led up over the horizon... as my eyes travelled up the path my heart was filled with such JOY that I actually couldn't stand it at one point, so I literally stood up and ended the vision. Talk about prophetic! Over and over again my inability to cope has caused me to drift away from him. Things got too hot! I had to stop reading my bible, I stopped praying! What I eventually learned is that on my own, isolated from the body of Christ, I could not bear God's Glory... in community I am thriving. So much to learn, God so patient, God with all the time in the world.

I've had a glorious career as a bus driver, and learned many things that I could not have learned anywhere else, cuz he knows the teachers we need!

Reaching out to 'save' my brother John led me out of a Hollow faith with no substance into one which only Zechariah 3 can aptly describe, go look at the If... Then... Statements in there, I'll wait here...

My brother John was my bible school professor... he's a janitor, working for Manitoba School board in southern Manitoba. He's now head custodian btw.

I accepted my fate like this: I am his undercover "nobody in particular" man behind enemy lines. The divorce shot me out of the elite... outside the camp (see Hebrews 13:13)

13 Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.

But Diana's request to make use of a talent God honed... there is a certain kind of writers muse that happens to me. . . with John I typed my butt off... we exchanged 10-15 page emails with each other... labouring to LOVE one another (Galatians 5:6) at times I told him I had to take a break from him... and then I went back to it with him after a few months. I told you the etoimadzo story already.

It's Over

I'm overwhelmed by my failure to live up to whom I was suppose to be by now.

I'm sealed up, in my coffin, waiting for the lowering and the scoops of dirt.

I can't hear any tears, nor any handfuls of dirt being lightly sprinkled by loved ones left behind.

Just a cold, dark waiting... here at the end of my days.

I lift my eyes up to heaven, and tell God how he's let me down.

I'm being let down, into a 6-foot pit dug by anonymous grave diggers.

Just then, God, busy with some intricate matter, has one eye adorned with one of those high-powered magnifying lenses you see jewelers use, just above that there's a visor, above these, a low hanging bright light illuminates his work space.

He sighs, as my words arrive at his ear, it's a patient, loving sigh.

"Who is it that has disappointed expectations of you?"

he asks, turning towards me, after having lifted his visor and letting the lens pop out into his lightly outstretched hand,

"I, myself, am very pleased with you, and the life you are living. Why don't you come out from under those covers and make us both a coffee"

I wrote that November 5, 2020

As I responded in faith to Dee's invitation, I received my first book from her (God was at work in other areas of my life, I'm the secretary of our Board of Directors at the coop we live in for example) Dee gave me no limitations nor job description, she set me free with my first author, and I remember my friend saying to me, "...are you supposed to be doing that?" when I told him about the kinds of things I was doing in my edit's. I shrugged and said, "well, I guess we'll see..." and so why continue preaching the choir, Arlene, you are now experiencing what God has taught me to do. I've had a few books now, and Dee loves my work, and so also the authors. Even my sister has given me even more license to help her with her current book. TBA LOL

A while back my regular JOB of driving a bus has been getting in the way of Dee getting her workload met. I told her my idea, and then my wife... retire and do this fulltime.

I spoke with my wife (you know the not so timid wife who could have just as easily told me I was living in lah lah land) and to my surprise she agreed! YIKES! Well, that was a Saturday. Due to covid19 we had not been to church building for over a year. Our home group was and is one of the only "fellowship" we had. The next day my fellow home group members were going to another church in our community, and I tagged along. Over night the seeds of faith were displaced with the GIANTS of fear. I'd talked myself out of it... PHEW! Well... the sermon that day, from this stranger preacher who knew me not was, Peter getting out of the safety of the boat, to meet Jesus on the water... I have witnesses that I'm not making this stuff up!!!

In October I signed my holidays for 2022 at work. I have 8 weeks holidays now after 32 years of driving a bus. I booked them all to link up with the two weeks off I have from the end of this year. As of December 17, 2021 I'll have 10 weeks off to work for/with Dee.

On November 5, 2021 I called my wife to my side. My application to begin the retirement process was signed and ready to deploy via email to the benefits department of Coast Mountain Bus Company. I'd asked the lady in charge there, once I send this, is there any hope of cancellation? She says, "oh, yes, you just have to make an application to the labour relations board and ah . . . " so that's kind of a no LOL

We prayed. Her courage means so much to me. My home group is also with me. I pressed SEND... and release and joy, replaced the doubt. Satan regularly reminds me that I'm gonna die soon.. and I lay that at Jesus feet... let me get the work you have for me done... I have a 21 year old autistic spectrum disorder high functioning son that needs a permanent place to live when I'm called up over yonder... I have a book to write (dang it! That's your fault NOW Arlene... jk jk jk) but I've been fighting tooth and nail this whole book page by page... but you've been convincing me! God's been convincing me!

My retirement date is March 31, 2022. That just so happens to be the insurance expiration date of the buses each year, LOL

I see it every day I do my pre-trip inspection walk around the outside of the building.

KEN ARDING

November 14, 2021

Ken and Marg;

So good to talk to you.

I find it curious that today you spoke up, and I was just in the verge of saying to you "louder!"

When you did so!

Have you organized your thoughts and put your experience into words?

I am not pretending that I know what you have in your heart.

But if you have thought of it... think of Revelation 12:11

Theories... if I might be so blunt, those things we preached in our ignorant youth... are for those who haven't yet gone through life...

There is a union of faith in action that you pointed out today

Galatians 5:6

I myself write all the time, but it's due to God calling me to organize my thoughts, preparing myself for conversations that he has scheduled for me!

I find myself referring to my notes

But it's only upon the fruition that I know for sure God has called me to do it.

I am requesting for our church family to remember the Arding and Letkemann families specifically over the next few months, in their grieving process. Tomorrow is Jeff and Katelyn's anniversary / at the end of the month is Jeff's birthday / in November is Landon and Keegan's birthday / then there is Christmas / then one year anniversary of Jeff's passing.

We have our good days. we know we are blessed in many ways. God is near. Other days we can't believe Jeff is not here. Deep pain, anger, tears. Going to church is hard as pre COVID he was with us. Family gatherings he's just not there. Katelyn - single, single parenting. Justin daily struggles with not working with Jeff. We feel ripped off.

I've given you a peek into our hearts. We need you to pray as often we can't. Healing will come, although we will always miss Jeff.

thank you

Marg

This prayer request blessed me.

This is what we as a church need to hear! It's the church I want to go to!

It's your call, your decision, but I know that I for one would be blessed to hear your story.

But the writing of it is worth so much... if even it's to... well anyways... I'm not going to re-write what I've just written.

Thanks for the hug, and your kindness towards me today... I hope I can explain why you remembering my Hello that day on Milsom Wind means a lot to me. I have many more stories where God has called upon me to do things... and I today am like the disciples in the last chapter of John's gospel... after the fish were caught... "hey That's Jesus that told me to do that!"

Going to church is always such a challenge for me. Obedience without expectation beyond the promise... "why be obedient" will be my book if I ever finish writing it

Laurence

TIM BATEMAN

Cross section of the community doctors, nurses, workers, miners, wives, husbands, etc

family history, birth, etc

...everyone has a story, and that story is in a constant state of changing

until I heard that story, there was no point talking about the coal mining.

one fellow who had been working in a glove factory, all he wanted to tell me, was that he was a prisoner of war in Egypt, and played against the Germany in this prisoner of war soccer team, playing for the British.

FAMILY MEMBER STORIES

NICHOLAS BENJAMIN DANIEL

November 8, 2021

Dear Nicholas;

That I love you is a constantly beating heart within me, never doubt that, but that I remind you from time to time is equally right and most important.

I've lost track of when, where and how I gave up expectations and instead I began to embrace discovery. I do know it began during my experience of raising children. Part of the need to do this is that I need to apply this to myself. I am in self-discovery! Does that ever end? I'm 58 years old and that part is stronger than ever.

The desire to be in control is in there somewhere, don't you think?

This reminds me of a quote from Abraham Maslow's "Towards a Psychology of Being", who was quoting from yet someone else if I'm not mistaken.

Also, we must realize that only the future is in principle unknown and unknowable, which means that all habits, defenses and coping mechanisms are doubtful and ambiguous since they are based on past experience. Only the flexibly creative person can really manage future, only the one who can face novelty with confidence and without fear. I am convinced that much of what we now call psychology is the study of the tricks we use to avoid the anxiety of absolute novelty by making believe the future will be like the past. Abraham Maslow, "Towards a Psychology of Being"

In a marriage? Discover your wife, who she is, and embrace her. Believe in her! The biggest foe is fear! Therefore, this is where our faith comes into play, do you see? Trusting that God is the one that brought Pegah along. It's not luck or mere random chance, and not your ability to shop around for the right person, but rather one chosen by God for you. What comes from your heart is guided deeper than what comes from a spread sheet of pluses and minuses. The heart is where intuition rules, and therein is the Holy Spirit of God, also. This is where he does his work. I wonder if this is what is meant by that proverb,

*A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps and makes them sure. Proverbs 16:9
Amplified Version*

If only we learn to listen to this inner place, or would that be listen in that inner place? Teaching a child to trust this part of themselves is so important for this reason. The hardest but most important thing for us to do as parents is to listen to the inner voice of one's children. One day your child will see it: your utter depravity; your fallen sinful, grave bound, ugly self. How do you answer on that day? If you are self-aware, you can look at your watch and declare that it happened a lot quicker than you thought it would. You can then ask them not to give up on you, to persevere. Hopefully you've been able to demonstrate this same kind of unconditional love and everlasting HOPE in your dealings with them up to that point. I first heard of an idea from a course offered through the Adlerian School of Psychology called STEP parenting. Systematic Training for Effective Parenting.

Sigmund Freud

1856 - 1939

Alfred Adler 1870-1937

Carl Jung 1875 – 1961

That idea is that we instead of taking on our children like they are our adversaries, we come along side of them in their battle against their own inner darkness. With the light of my own faith, and scripture by extension I came to see that your child hasn't sinned against YOU, but against God. Even there they haven't broken some arbitrary rules put in place in order to be sure to beat us up all the time. God's word is full of truth about makes His perfect kingdom tick.

“What you're doing here will work against you as you enter the real world, my child...”

The poison of holding a grudge, the use of “something” to kill the pain of inner conflict... it's only as have fought these inner battles in yourself that you can pass on battle strategies to your young one.

I once saw a child take a large Tonka Truck and hit his playmate over the head with it. The “time out” was for me, and for that child. The language used is calm, and deliberate. “You need to go be alone for a while, see you again soon.” Then later you can help them see that as they grow up, they too can remove themselves from a situation until they are more in control. Then you can discuss how to best feel the consequences of what just happened. The other child has a fear of others to deal with now, and maybe bruises, or a cut to the scalp. Maybe social isolation will help them

CLINTON HORSMAN

Sigh... I'm two people.

Blame isn't the right word.

Don't pretend to know what happened with the adoption of my youngest 3 children. Don't touch that. Lori and I know what happened. God knows. I have lots of regrets. Sarah's voice on the phone when she called me trying to take back what she'd done... and me so scared of what would be coming next. Not afraid of Sarah, but afraid of Lori, yet Sarah paid the price, as did the rest of the kids. It took a long time to unravel the mess of wrong choices. I'm haunted by Sarah's voice... the the Highway 1 and McCallum overpass is the scene in my mind, as my ear is pressed to a cell phone. I'm sorry Sarah, for that, and so much more.

Your words to Cheryl are pretty much the separation at the moment. Your lofty opinions stated flippantly on fb.

I miss all of you, and am working on my end to see Cheryl through to some clarity, and calm.

I have some time off coming. Pray something will show itself through the murk.

Something in your tone towards me makes me wanna run the other direction, Clint.

" Sarah's voice on the phone when she called me trying to take back what she'd done..."

But that was merely Sarah's point of view. She'd been - yet again - a pawn in Lori and Laurence's battle against one another.

Their trip to the RCMP to claim that I'd kicked Sarah in the head, during our camping trip to Golden Ears Provincial Park.

Cheryl was pregnant by then, and the night before and had an IBS episode of explosive diarrhoea and we had to run into town to wash all of our linen. We left poor ole Sarah in charge of the two young ones, Jamie wasn't there. It wasn't fair to have done that to her. None of what happened to the kids during that time period was fair. My introduction of Cheryl into the situation was my inability to handle being on my own with the kids, my pursuit and marriage to Cheryl was perhaps my unconscious way of making sure that I never ended up with Lori ever again. We decided to have Ashton because I wanted Cheryl to have kids, but I know that it also hurt Lori deeply. It hurt her deeply whenever I baked biscuits for Cheryl! Just think of what it meant when I dared to have a child with someone else, somethings she could never do because she got her tubes tied. You see, Clint, it was a never ending war against one another using the children, hurting the children, in order to hurt one another, revenge, revenge, revenge...

So perhaps that's what motivated Lori, the simmering anger that I had had a child Cheryl, or I was about to have a child and Cheryl.

But another possibility is that the entire visit I had badgered and pestered Sara about coming to live with me, Jamie had already come to live with me. This was twofold one by constant desire to take revenge on Lori, but also it was in response to the guilt I felt for the previous visit that we've had with one another with Sarah

had begged me not to send her back to her mother and I regretted it and I found out that Sarah could live with me if she chose. But I didn't know then how torn Sarah was between Lori and I, how really it was actually a case of Sarah needing to be with both of us at the same time not wanting to let go of her family not wanting to her child at the end. Sarah was then and always has been a person who saw farther into the future than me, taking after her mother. And so I'm sure she's told her mother how I badgered her, although I don't know for sure. Which would've pissed her mother off hugely.

Regardless of who you blame for the situation the one good thing that happened is that six years of separation. Because it was during that time where I can no longer blame Lori, or anyone else for my predicament. I faced up to where I was for myself, putting the balloon clearly on my shoulders and the choices that I've made throughout my life.

In order to get through those years I was on a very high dose of Effexor an anti-depressant. I miss the children so bad.

But let's not forget that when I had all those children I resent it all of them because I had to let go of my dreams of what my life would be, my calling on my life of being a pastor, my desire to get back to Bible college I just saw the children as obstacles between me and when I felt God called me to do, it's absolutely ridiculous now to look back on and realize this, but this is a confession of sin not a recollection of great ideas. When the children were torn away from me that's when I couldn't give a shit about anything but getting them back into my life and they have been my life ever since.

So, my darling wonderful Sarah, you were not to blame! You've never been to blame! You're still not! I'm so thankful for Clint because he has giving you the strength to have a family and to know for your own children sake the life that you yourself were denied. I needed a pigheaded arrogant asshole like Clint to stand up to me and stand up to Lori. And that's what he's done.

I'm crying now because it's so hard to go back and think things through because your heart gets so muddled how are you we should've gone and how you thought it would go great plan see-through had as you ploughed ahead doing your own thing.

I'm still in it now I am so hurting right now! How long to be sitting on the couch with children piled on top of me. Begging me to read them another story before bedtime.

I don't know how to get there Clint get there. I'm so sorry for all the things that I need to get me to where I am....

GLENN RICHARD BRAND

One of the reasons I am so thrilled with my job as an editor is that I can affirm folks like you! I used to have a recurring dream that I couldn't get to work. I'm waiting for a bus that doesn't come, or I can't find my car, or when I do get onto transport, it doesn't go where I need it to go... even when I get there, I can't get through the front door to my work station... I wake up frustrated! Through my reading I realized this wasn't about my job through-out most of my life, I was a bus driver, it was about my calling. The job God had for me to do. I am currently doing the thing I fear :) Anyways, my recurring dream changed. I am now waiting at a bus stop, and someone else is there with me, it's their concern when the bus is coming, and I am merely with them. I am already where I need to be, because I am doing what I was called to do. When I brought up this chapter to begin work on it, and saw the opening lines I almost did a double take! Because it's the message of my heart to the world as well! I remember standing in the living room of our old place, telling my wife in an authoritative voice, "We are not governed by fear!" The amazing thing is my very feisty, take no _____ wife sat there and submitted to the truth I'd just boldly proclaimed. She always submits to the Holy Spirit, and she always stands up to and against the weaker, or fallen me. When she and I agree, I know that God is in it. If I'm convinced God is speaking to me about something, I tell him he's got some work to do in the other room there – The Wife. LOL – well I submit to agreement. If we disagree, I ask that God bring agreement. That's my story of course, but I just wanted you to know how absolutely wonderful God is.

In late 2019 I found out that my oldest brother, Glenn, had had a complete nervous breakdown, and was in a psych ward. He is my Kathy. He had a 2 million dollar home over looking Horseshoe Bay in West Vancouver, BC, his own business (paperless office software) a loving wife, a ministry to others through AA... two cars, vacations... and ALL of it is now gone. Yes, even his wife "left him". By February 2020 he was released from the psych ward, and taken by taxi to the down town east side of Vancouver. One of the roughest skid-rows anywhere. But they dropped him at the Union Gospel Mission. His wife, Debbie called me, I booked off work for the following day, and my wife and I got there in time to see him waiting in the lobby of UGM, with his bag. He was completely emptied of all that made him my big brother. The little brother that worshipped and leaned on him, was there... Hoo Haa... I felt like I was oughta place... so, Hey, maybe I can write my book about my brother Glenn, and about his little brother than set aside being a little brother to walk alongside him, using the honed skills that he'd taught me, to raise him out onto the shore again.

I am the fourth boy, number 4 of 5. My always favoured little sister, Diana, was born 7 years after me. The long-awaited girl. She was always favoured and spoiled. Take for example, she has four brothers, and I only have three! Do you see what I mean?

So, yes, my beloved sister and I laugh now tenderly at my battle for belonging.

Sorry for this segue into my life, but I wanted you to know you're preaching to the choir in my case, but at the same time I realize I've been putting off writing my books. I have a blog, I have tonnes of diaries, and have helped many others with their writing, including my sister. But my book remains unwritten, for all of the above reasons and more.

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Galatians 5:6b The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Fear would have led us to war against her, bring her down, and rescue our son. Love would have us work with her, and trust God would lead us through it. He did indeed.

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Arlene;

You are very patient with me. I have sent you a lot of extra reading as I share my heart with you. I don't have a method that others can read about and follow. I have this heart that hears God's word, and obeys it.

Luke 11:27-28

If an idea or thought comes to me, I tie a string to it, walk out into the wind, and see if it flies!

When you send me back a response like, "you have me in tears" its like looking up into the sky seeing the Kite God sent my way, high in the air. I don't own it. Only He. But my part is listening-obedience. (see Hebrews 5:11)

Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. - KJV

I have a lot more to say about this, but it is hard to get it across to you since you've picked up this bad habit of not listening. (The Message)

These words here, and others I've sent, are coming to me. And what I'm noticing is that you take them as encouragement. Your pleas within your book that this book do this or that... I'm leaving them right where they are! That came from your heart! And it's working!

One of the reasons I am so thrilled with my job as an editor is that I am in a place to affirm folks like you! But also, I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. (Romans 1:11-12 NIV)

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I may ask you to be a proof-reader for me, what would you think of that?

Go team! Carl G Jung tried to describe the intimate working of God in his creation, I believe, when he talked about the collective consciousness. He was a Christian, I believe, by very definition, but he did a lot of good work in separating fact from fiction and true spirituality from superstition. I firmly believe he was not trying to start a new religion, but trying to describe what he saw. If there ever was a person I'd like to have met, and had a conversation with, it's Carl Jung.

Acts 9... we see Jesus speaking to Saul after knocking him off his horse, and then to poor old Ananias... "you want me to WHAT?!?"

What is happening here between author and editor? Is it not the dynamic of brother and sister in Christ? Our publisher Dee Adekugbe has this same heart.

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, (Hebrews 10:24)

I gotta find the quote, but one person said, humility is knowing the truth about _____

Your humility, Arlene, is evident here, and it is adding to this work God has called you to do.

He's given me a gift or two, one is that I hear scripture (at times) when listening to the hearts of others. The other is that I am still that shy little brother, willing to be unknown. The work of editor for me is that God, you (the author) and my publisher know who I am, but I don't need anyone else to know. What goes along with that is that this work is God's work, and my contribution is to fan into flame what the Holy Spirit has sparked in you!

ASHTON PHILIP BRAND

The Squirrel House

The little squirrel appeared the front door of his house, nose quivering in the easy breeze of that spring morning. He pranced and bounced back and forth from the door stoop, then stopped to quiver and listen some more. Sensing no danger, she emerged, took one last look to her left and to her right, then closed and locked the door. Lifting the flower stem in the flower pot, she dropped the key beneath it, plopped the plumage back into place, looked around again, then sprang forward on a wild zig zag run for the trees, up the nearest trunk, then took one look back at her little house.

Now, we know Squirrel's can't speak. How she ever figured out how to use the key, we'll never know for precisely that reason. There are animal behaviour experts working on this right this minute.

How did this squirrel, of no particular lineage or personal wealth come to own her own house? Well, that can only be answered if we tell you about, Ashton Philip Brand.

He just wanted to build a Squirrel house one day, and so he did.

PONY PALS

The following is an email sent to Pony Pals on May 12, 2016, 3:21 PM

Candice;

I got home from work today, changed my clothes, then sat down in our office with Ashton and Cheryl and had a talk. I reminded Ashton of a couple of stories from his childhood, both occurred when he was 7 years old.

* like you right now, you want to know what I'm getting at

well, at 7 years old he walked into the kitchen one day and told me that HE is in charge, he's the boss. I said, "well, actually God's in charge, and we have his word to understand just how that works, so if you ever see where I'm messing up feel free to point it out, and I'll do the same for you."

Next is when his grade one teachers wanted to put him on medication. We went to our pediatrician and talked to the principal, etc. Then the time came to give it a shot and Ashton refused to take the meds "I'm not sick" he said.

We refused to slip it into his peanut butter, or force it down his throat, and the next meeting at the school we brought Ashton, the 7 year old with us. We informed the shocked group that Ashton has 1/3 of the say in the household, and unless they can convince Aston that he needs it, it won't be happening. Once they got over that initial shock that a child had the right to have a part in his own life, they explained the reasons, the things they'd done to otherwise overcome the struggles, etc. At some point the principal and Ashton had an epiphany, and Ashton was once and for all convinced, and started on it the next day. He calls it his concentration pill.

So he had decision to make today, and it's his life, his body, his well being at stake, and I gave him the floor to tell me what he'd like to do with Pony Pals in the future and he says,

"first of all we need to get some knee pads and elbow pads, and some gloves, and possibly re-design the reigns..."

"So" I interrupted him, "you mean, you wanna go back to riding Mercedes?"

"We're Brands, Brand's don't quit, we never back down from a challenge"

I added that one to one lessons would be a good route to equipping him for the future, and he agreed that might be a good idea. We also agreed that the person that'd know solutions best is you, the coach, so be ready :) as I'm sure you are.

so, give me a call, and we can talk things over.

thanks for your care,

Laurence, Cheryl and Ashton

End of Brand's Never Quit

SARAH ASHLEY MIRAE HORSMAN (BRAND)

MY MOM AND DAD

KEN, IS THIS NORMAL?

TOMB STONE.



PERSONAL PROSE AND POETRY

WHERE IS JESUS

Where are you looking for Jesus this Christmas?

The question is, will you find Jesus this Christmas, and if you do, where do you expect to find him?

If you are a Christian, perhaps you ' ll be proper enough to say,

“He lives within my heart! ”

*But, if you are like me, and you ' re looking for him still,
seeking the savior, where do you expect to find him?*

If you ' re a churchgoer, perhaps you ' ll be proper enough to say,

“He ' s standing up there speaking into our elder ' s ear, telling him what to say. ”

*But, if you are like me, and you ' re looking for him still, not just up on the podium,
but looking for him to be with you all week long, where do you expect to find him?*

If you ' re one who knows how to pray, perhaps you ' ll be proper enough to say;

“I find him every morning, and every evening, too, as I search for him on my knees! ”

*But, if you are like me, and you ' re looking for him still,
not just on your knees eyes clenched tightly closed,
perhaps some Kleenex close by (he sometimes makes me cry),
but all day long at work and play, and along life ' s way, where do you expect to find him?*

If you met him, would you know him?

If he walked up to you, and held out his hand, would you know him?

Where do you expect to find him?

Matthew 25:

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ³⁷"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' ⁴⁰"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' ⁴¹"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' ⁴⁴"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' ⁴⁵"He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' ⁴⁶"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Where did you expect to find him?

ITS OVER

It's Over



I'm overwhelmed by my failure to live up to whom I was supposed to be by now.

I'm sealed up, in my coffin, waiting for the lowering and the scoops of dirt.

I can't hear any tears, nor any handfuls of dirt being lightly sprinkled by loved ones left behind.

Just a cold, dark waiting... here at the end of my days.

I lift my eyes up to heaven, and tell God how he's let me down.

I'm being let down, into a 6-foot pit dug by anonymous grave diggers.

Just then, God, busy with some intricate matter, has one eye adorned with one of those high-powered magnifying lenses you see jewelers use, just above that there's a visor, above these, a low hanging bright light illuminates his work space.

He sighs, as my words arrive at his ear, it's a patient, loving sigh.

"Who is it that has disappointed expectations of you?"

he asks, turning towards me, after having lifted his visor and letting the lens pop out into his lightly outstretched hand,

“I, myself, am very pleased with you, and the life you are living. Why don’t you come out from under those covers and make us both a coffee?”

Laurence Brand, November 5, 2020

ANOTHER BIT OF TRIPE I'VE WRITTEN

FULFILMENT

I'm reading - concurrently - "The Element" by Sir Ken Robinson (a book referred to me by my brother John) and The Body Keeps The Score by Bessel Van der Kolk. Previously (a book my daughter Sarah told me about)

Also, I've read and re-read my favourite book to quote, "Towards a Psychology of Being" Maslow (recommendation by one of my son-in-laws, Andre Fonseca)

The idea of "fulfillment" is a new age term that makes me throw up in my mouth a little bit... I'm not up on these things, but maybe its just a term that gets thrown around by people who are trying to sound intelligent, and that's the part that bothers me. Their apparent insincerity... but Robinson mentions it and I allowed him and his book to continue to exist... Maslow talks about it in terms of Self Actualization... but what about God? What does he have to say about this fulfillment of who we are?

Our calling, who we are in Christ, why God invented ME - the person that I AM - is part of his plan... see Ephesians 1:11

"In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,"
Ephesians 1:11 NIV

Don't miss that end part:

<<< him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will >>>

So... how does this fit into Listening Obedience?

God, by way of the Holy Spirit, see John 14:26, is at work in us to bring us to Christ-likeness. But what was Christ like?

One mix up that occurs, even as we practice, "what would Jesus Do" is that we focus on being Jesus Copy Cats... there's problems with this. Not the least of which is the attributes of God that are not within our capacity. For example, we are not omniscient, nor capable of being so.

So the part we are needing to be like is what would come under character traits. And these allow for the wide range that each of us... what I mean is, that the body is made up of many parts, and many functions. In the analogy of Christ as the Body, and that body being the Church, and Christ is the head... as each part embraces who they are... they fulfill their calling.

One constant issue that is on my heart is the virtue or use of Psychology in regards to Christians.

At one time I believed that they were/are rivals of one another. The age of enlightenment comes into this... but its possible that at least in part the corruption of the church – way back then – is what gave way to mankind searching for answers...

In the Book "Of Men and Numbers" There is this origin explained. Man's search for knowledge began, among other areas, with the search for the proverbial fountain of youth. Eternal-ness without the need for God to exist, or to intervene. This collates well with the Tower of Babel, do you see? They tried to build a tower that would

reach up to heaven, through human, temporal means... they tried to “go be with God” by physically building a means to get up there to reach him. But religion is no less this same error.

In “Of Men and Numbers” there is also how they discovered the elements, and eventually the periodic table of the elements. There was a hope that they could discover a means by which they could take the un-precious things like rocks and dirt, and mix them up together via some unknown recipe, into precious items like Gold and Silver.

What they ended up finding out is that atomic particles cannot be changed. That they are independently different from one another, distinct, unique, and constantly repeating synonyms won’t help me express any further, so if you don’t understand what I’m getting at, go take a ladle (used to dispense soup) and have your wife/husband smack you over the head with it and say “you’re a waste of space” and yes, that’s cruel. I apologize, but I just wanted to make sure you are listening, and still reading here.

So, by extrapolation... I’ll wait here while you go look that up... through creative thinking, each of us is our own “element” constitutionally we are who we are.

Men like Maslow called the discovery of this essence of who we are Self Actualization.

Paul spoke of pressing on to the high calling of God.

In that verse that I’ll quote below, its easy to miss it. IT is that he . . . of that which Christ took hold of me...

Philippians 3:¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Philippians 3

3:12	ΟΥΧ ouch G3758 Part Neg NOT	ΟΤΙ hoti G3754 Conj that	ΗΔΗ EdE G2235 Adv ALREADY	ΕΛΑΒΟΝ elabon G2963 vi 2Aor Act 1 Sg I-GOT I-obtained	Η E G2228 Part OR	ΗΔΗ EdE G2235 Adv ALREADY	ΤΕΤΕΛΕΙΩΜΑΙ teteleiOmai G5048 vi Perf Pass 1 Sg I-HAVE-been-maturED have-been-perfected	ΔΙΩΚΩ diOkO G1377 vi Pres Act 1 Sg I-AM-CHASING I-am-pursuing	ΑΕ de G1161 Conj YET	ΕΙ ei G1487 Cond IF	¹² Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.
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Not that already I-Got or Already I-have-been-matured I-am-chasing yet if also I-may-be-grasping on which also I-was-grasped by the Christ

OR

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

The reason God took a hold of me... doesn’t this seem to be what the psychologists are talking about?

Maybe in there some place is atheism, and hostility toward God.

But there is also another possibility. That as honest men and women search for the answer... picture coming to mind is a man who puts his shovel into the ground at his feet, to search for answers... Romans 1: says that men are without excuse because creation itself is a witness of God's existence.

Yes, psychology is in some respect the poor substitute for Faith... an inadequate attempt, just as the Tower of Babel is and Religion is. . . but all that being said, adherent behaviours, that come out of our depravity show us that there is a direction that leads to a continually increasing tumbling down the path of depravity.... See the sin list of Romans chapter one?

I see in Maslow's work, a book which he wrote and published when he was 62 years old, he lived from 1908-1970. This book was written in the year of his death. It was the culmination of his life's work, and is filled with his honest observations of phenomena that were both undeniable, and at times unexplainable. He discusses the conscience, for example, and how it defies searching out the origin of.

<<< But there is also another element in conscience, or, if you like, another kind of conscience, which we all have either weakly or strongly. And this is the "intrinsic conscience." This is based upon the unconscious and preconscious perception of our own nature, of our own destiny, or our own capacities, of our own "call" in life. It insists that we be true to our inner nature and that we do not deny it out of weakness or for advantage or for any other reason. He who belies his talent, the born painter who sells stockings instead, the intelligent man who lives a stupid life, the man who sees the truth and keeps his mouth shut, the coward who gives up his manliness, all these people perceive in a deep way that they have done wrong to themselves and despise themselves for it. Out of this self-punishment may come only neurosis, but there may equally well come renewed courage, righteous indignation, increased self-respect, because of thereafter doing the right thing; in a word, growth and improvement can come through pain and conflict. >>> page 16 Towards a Psychology of Being

I guess what I'm getting at here is that psychology in and of itself does not necessarily have to lead us away from God. It is man's stubborn nature, his rebelliousness that causes him to look away from what is obvious...

Romans 1:

God's Wrath Against Sinful Humanity

¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

So I'm very far afield of where I began it seems. Yes?

I haven't even talked about poorly choosing Chickens... hahahaha LOL

Experiments were done, Maslow reports, on chickens, in a natural environment. There were these chickens in a farm yard, with dirt, pebbles, and stuff to eat littering the ground. Some of the chickens chose good, nutritious food, and they called them good choosers... some of them made bad choices...

guess what they were called? Twits? No, that's being ugly and cruel, they were called Poor Choosers. The good choosers grew stronger and healthier, the poor choosers were kicked out of the chicken society and formed gangs, and lived in and out of crack houses, where they ate their own eggs and . . . are you still reading this? The good choosers flourished, while the bad choosers wasted away and died. If the poor choosers were hijacked and ordered to fly to an Islamic country... oh, wait, that went bad... if the bad choosers were fed food that the good choosers would choose, they would get healthier, but still not as healthy as the good choosers themselves.

ANOTHER BIT OF TRIPE I'VE WRITTEN

ANOTHER BIT OF TRIPE I'VE WRITTEN

ANOTHER BIT OF TRIPE I'VE WRITTEN

PHOTOGRAPHS AND ARTWORKS

HIGH SCHOOL PENCIL ART



MY FIRST MOTHER IN LAW



ANOTHER RANDOM PHOTO

DORTHY

On a Thursday night in the middle of my crib game with my wife, Cheryl, I went to my computer, & looked up the poem, "The Cremation of Sam McGee", and printed it.

(I intended to start memorizing it the next day on my shift)

I folded it neatly and put it in my briefcase, then returned to my crib game.

The next day, on one of my last trips to Steveston Village as a "407 Gilbert" a little old lady of my Mum's height and weight, got on my bus. She looked to be about 80's or so.

I was bored in a happy kind of playful way. She'd been waiting at the bus stop in the cool wind a bit too long and was shivering. The idea came to me that she and I could have a chat, since we were all alone as we drove along.

I picked my favourite topic, "What books have you read?"

"none for a long time" she said... "but I use to read a lot, but I can't remember any of them, but I can remember a poem."

"like what?" I said

"The Cremation of Sam McGee" she says,

Well! That was very exciting to me!

I pulled over, got out my briefcase, and handed her the folded paper, she looked at it, and instead of being amazed like me, she immediately read it out loud, with beautiful expression, she knew it well!

"My father", she told me, "used to read it to me all the time."

"What's your name," I asked, "Dorthy" she says,

"Do you know what your name means?"

"Yes," she says,

"A gift" I said,

"A gift from God" she corrected, and then added "But i don't think so"

"Well you're a gift to me today, Dorthy" and I bid her goodbye "until we meet again..." I haven't see her since, I Hope she is at Peace wherever she is. Before she went on her way she gave me another poem by the same fellow, My Madonna

That was in the spring of 2018, shortly after my Mum had passed away.

DEAR LADNER LIGHTHOUSE MEN'S GROUP

Let me tell you a bit about myself.. I am a writer :)

I'm a talker

and what you have here is my honest heart towards you all... don't worry about reading what I've written here... peace be to you... but if you wonder who this guy is, here is who I am... in this hour's context... and below is the short version LOL

I bless God for your warm embrace this morning. If you don't mind an honest heart, you won't mind me. I want you all to know that God has confirmed to me what he's been up to in the last week. I NEED TO BE IN THE BODY of Christ, in fellowship.

As a bus driver for around 32 years, I found that my most valuable friends were the ones who were bold enough to observe me driving, and if they saw me driving in a not so good idea kinda way :) they'd call me on it! They were the ones who had their eye on the big picture, and were bold enough to let me know of my own values! Yes, they were reminding me, sometimes not so gentle, but all in all, "Hey, that's not like you, Laurence"

Today was an experience in Matthew 7:1-6 once again for me. Joey's rebuke is well served. It is not ours to judge... here's the scripture in defense of his rebuke:

This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God. 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

We are called to be SALT and LIGHT...

I would ask, humbly, that you consider prayer, and the image of prayer set out in Exodus 17. God has chosen to work through us, his body, in this world. I would caution you not to run away too quickly from this truth, God has chosen to go OUR speed in this world. I'd direct your mind to the story of Esther, when her Uncle Mordechai exhorted her to "love not her life so much as to shrink from death"

For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14

When I sit at the bus stop, waiting for the rapture bus, the rest of the world isn't going to Hell... God will raise up those who will speak the word, be the light, be the difference... Yes, he's limited himself to working through his body, but he disciplines the son's he loves (see Hebrews 12) and he works out everything in conformity with the purpose of HIS WILL. He is not limited by the will of man, or more pointedly, by me... I'm the one that misses out when I say, "I've arrived" or "I'm all done now, I'm waiting at the bus stop, come pick me up, Lord"

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, Ephesians 1:11

So, God already embraced me through you.

I'm reminded also of Romans 6:16

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? Romans 6:16

There's only two masters available, death or Life, Sin or Righteousness. Which one am I in pursuit of.

Sitting at the bus stop means that I have decided I have arrived, I'm ready... but Hebrews 5:7 says that Jesus

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Hebrews 5:7

Jesus' love for us, brought him to the earth, to seek and to save that which was lost,

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Luke 19:10

Here's a few other scriptures God brought to mind this morning, here's the word brought to us through Shaun,

45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:45-48

Isn't it interesting when we look at the larger context of that central word, that Shaun brought, none of us has arrived, none of us is perfect, all of us are in need of God's grace, recipients of God's grace.

John 1:12 in the King James version is rendered,

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

That power to become is later more fully defined when we look at the "if...then" statement(s) Jesus made in John 15...

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.

They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Revelation 12:11

All of you are men who are by very evidence of being in a men's group, seeking the Lord, NOT at the bus stop... I'm in the right place!

and finally, what do we do when we encounter lost souls?

15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 17 For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 1 Peter 3:15-17

Love to you all,

Laurence Brand

DEAR LEE KOSA;

After reading the following article,

<https://anabaptistworld.org/3-mb-pastors-resign-over-lgbtq-role-of-confession/>

I found myself deeply effected or affected in my spirit. I took on a burden. In the following one-sided dialogue... I guess it's a monologue LOL I explain more. Its my burden of where I'm at. I first found and added Lee Kosa, former lead pastor of Cedar Park Church, as a friend on Facebook. Then after he accepted my request, I sent him a fb messenger message, or two (place toothy grin here)

You don't know me at all. I'm 59... I read about your resignation, and was heart broken over it... I just feel led to encourage you to continue to pursue the Love that you have in your heart... and your commitment to lead others to Christ, and like Paul who said

1 Corinthians 1:11 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Hebrews 11:6 is a very personal message... the word ANYONE jumped out at me yesterday as I shared this verse with my daughter

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

And without faith

it is impossible to please God,

because

anyone

who comes to him must:

believe that he exists

and that he rewards

those who

earnestly

seek

him.

Anyone has inherent in it... inclusion... none of us is a special case. Neither is anyone exclusively worthy of knowing him, all of us are included in verses like Ephesians 2: while we were yet sinners... but also, anyone, points to what AA literature talks about where the addict believes that they are different than others... they are a uniquely disqualified set... etc

"In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him

because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings."

1 Peter 5:5-9 NIV

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

I'm nobody to you, indeed I'm nobody to most... but I just want you to know that you are pleasing God... to present the word about Christ... ring a bell?

Romans 10:???

17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

We need to preach Christ, not religious actions... admonishing and exhortation isn't excluded when I mention this. You are preaching Christ, in word and deed. God Bless you.

I'd encourage you to re-read Romans 14... with this heart in mind... to be encouraged that you are pleasing God by loving...

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Some strange reading I'd recommend is Marion Milner perhaps... A Life of One's Own... from the 30's. I learned her name through a book I've read so many times that I've lost count... I didn't count cuz that wasn't the point... but it might show how long it takes things to sink in... C S Lewis gives us permission to read and re-read in "An Experiment in Criticism"

<<<An Experiment in Criticism is a 1961 book by C. S. Lewis in which he proposes that the quality of books should be measured not by how they are written, but by how they are read. To do this, the author describes two kinds of readers. One is what he calls the "unliterary", and the other the "literary".>>>

I digress... Abraham Maslow's "Towards A Psychology of Being" is where I heard about her... She struggles out loud in that book with the disconnect that occurred in her life... the crisis that arose from following the external rules of her culture, both secular and church culture, rather than an intimacy with God... as you read her book you'll have to make up your own mind about her faith, and her evolving Christianity... C S Lewis, as you must know started out as an atheist... but the book "A Life of One's Own" is largely her diary, that she then comments on... her journey toward knowing who she is... from being disconnected in her identity, to knowing who she is... she deals with her feminine and masculine character traits... its funny but for me God had already taken me through this journey of confusion so many years ago I'd have to get out my calculator... I grew up in the PAOC . . . so that should tell you two things, legalism, and charismatic "second blessing" spirit filled, spiritual gifts teaching and experience... As another case in point, when I read Studies in Pessimism, by Arthur Schopenhauer:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-h/10732-h.htm>

The chapter where he describes women, were many things I knew about myself! But I must also tell you that when I was going through later stages of puberty, my youth pastor, who was teaching our Sunday School class, taught about homosexuality and the bible... pointed out two clear things:

1. verses that showed which side of sin and righteousness same-sex-relations fell

2. God will not tempt us beyond our ability to withstand it

But also, there must be room for God to be the one who enables us each to be saved... ours is to bring the good news... God's work is to bring about the miracle of Salvation.

A W Tozer mentioned more than once I imagine . . . that salvation is not a case of merely human reasoning... it is a miracle... Praying Hyde...

https://www.amazon.ca/Praying-Hyde-Life-John-ebook/dp/B08GZD57PY/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

This man of God first struggled to know he was saved... he persevered for the experience of salvation... to know and to realize the assurance of his salvation... this was first given to me by an alliance pastor over 30 years ago... it was a foreign concept to me... later I read Tozer talking about the difference...

We as a church have run away from the kind of miraculous kind of intervention of God... that we read about in the scriptures... but look at Paul, arguably "the man" to look up to in regards to preaching and harvesting souls....

1 Corinthians 2:4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

Am I rambling? Are you following what I'm struggling to say? A W Tozer in Man: The Dwelling place of God, which I'm reading currently for the 2nd time... confronted my all too willing tendency to dub a person a Christian....

There is a common thread among the lost... there goes a pointer to ANYONE as mentioned earlier, the lost do not recognize their sin, and therefore do not recognize the gift that is Christ Jesus. there is NO OTHER GROUP we all fall into that group there, sinners in need of salvation. In Daring To Draw Near by John White... he points out that Daniel's prayer in Daniel chapter 9... Daniel used the word WE when praying for his nation that's my heart toward you, Lee Kosa.

I don't imagine that what I have written here is new to you, that's not my point... but its possible that it may focus what God is moving in each of us as we reach out to this weeping, hurting world we find ourselves burdened for. As for myself, I found myself at one point waiting at the bus stop, for the rapture bus, and wondering what's taking so long... then God pointed out there's some passengers that still need to come... what's taking you so long?!?!?

Doesn't that sound a bit like Daniel? I'm a retired 59 year old father of 5, 7 grandchildren... The message of my youth pastor allowed me to love my sisters and brothers whole heartedly Without regard for my sexuality I didn't need to decide that. That's just how it is for me.

My point is... salvation is a miracle, and Gods healing comes after and through that right relationship. These "old books" don't know about our current dilemma. That's why I'm pointing them out to you...

In that great and terrible day, there will be those white with shock when they find that they have depended upon a mental assent to Christianity instead of upon the miracle of the new birth." The Tozer Pulpit, Vol I

I also find myself not belonging in any church btw. I shocked the guy - I called him up to tell him that his sign had been defaced and needed to be replaced - it was a poster for the LGBTQ+ announcement of their next meeting, in the Coast Mountain Bus Company crew room at Phibbs Exchange...

"Oh," he said, "it was probably one of those Christians," I told him that I'm a Christian actually

My Mum taught me not to require the world to live by the bible standard, first things first, first the miracle of re-birth, then comes the living according to the likes of Hebrews 11:6... hey, do you mind if I'm chatting with you here? ...at very least your heart, and who I think you are is connecting me with my own need to know why I decided to reach out to you. At the crux is how I found you, and about your resignation.

One of his life skills workers was Karalee Congo, through my work as a bus driver for CMBC I met up with a young man named Andrew Rooney.

Andrew got on my bus one day out in Tsawwassen, where he lived at the time, and he was upset about how another operator had treated him. The Op was impatient with Andrew's slowness in producing proof of fare... as I comforted this young man, I found a love in my heart that was beyond the usual love for the lost one's... and as I spoke with him I realized that I was speaking to my own son. Not really, I'd never met his mother LOL... its just that he reminded me very deeply of my own son, and the burden I had to reach him was the same as that of the one I have for my own children.

by the end of our conversation, we were up at Pebble Hill school, terminus of the 601... and I did what I've done many times, I exchanged phone numbers etc with him (I wanted him to meet my wife and Ashton) His Mom Carol, dropped him off the following Saturday, and he came and sat in our car port.



this picture is from that day

Andrew has been going from Church to church, angry each time he's left. Searching and needing... his belonging is in and through Christ. He regards me as a true Christian because of the witness in his heart about me. Their diagnosis is the same, the body type (large, low muscle tone, lack of a sense of physical balance...)

Anyways... after getting to know Andrew since that day back in 2019, I have never lost touch with him, and he one day contacted me after the Covid19 things died down, we got together for coffee long story curtailed here... Andrew and Ashton are now friends.

Andrew is 39 I'm 59 and Ashton is 21



That's Adam in the first picture there, Andrew's jujitsu coach



Adam is not a confessing Christian... he may or may not be approaching that... but he is a person who is not unaware of his search to make sense of this world... he is a fan of that psychologist... Jordan Peterson (as I am also) My own church was once upon a time called Ladner Christian Fellowship, Danny Stebeck, now it is called Lighthouse Ladner campus. Anyways, there's no young adults' group there.

I went looking/am looking for a young adult's group for Andrew and Ashton... one where Christ will be preached, where the Bible in its wholeness is taught, and so I remembered Cedar Park... and looked it up, only to find the Pastor roles vacant... I looked deeper and found that article. With Ashton I CANNOT rely on "mere mental ascent" as Tozer put it. And God has already made himself known to Ashton, he's confessed faith in Christ, he was baptized, after telling me he wanted victory over sexual sin... when he told me that, and I looked into what he was talking about, it was sexy YouTube videos, as far as I could tell... but he was and is at war with what has been in battle about... tempted to give in, and give up, but knowing in his heart of hearts what is God honouring, and yet what he is driven to do... sounds like Paul in Romans there, eh? Anyways, he is Heterosexual... he innocently expressed this one day to me... anyways his reason for being baptized was from his own heart... and I was thrilled. I have 4 children from my first marriage... Jamie, Sarah, Nicholas, and Cherish. Jamie stopped talking to me last year around this time... I've been very close to all my children btw... Cherish was soon after... both long stories yet not so long, and I sit here with nothing else to do but pray that he will show himself to these two John 15 is my chapter about this...

the if/then statement....

if I... then I will bear much fruit. I don't have the conclusive evidence of it just yet, but that verse that says "...and his household" says to me that if there is any hope of my children crossing over from mental ascent to true faith it will be through my own John 15 experience of abiding in him and he in me

if you have ever talked with Andrew Rooney, I want you to then imagine what it must be like for him to try and make sense of the needs of the LGBTQ+ community... his is a response of fear due to someone very gruffly

rebuking him because of a remark he innocently made about Gay men... he was taken into the managers office, verbally reprimanded and fired...

Our brains always put things in order with a story... what's the story with Laurence Brand?

I follow my heart, I do what I want, after first putting Christ first, Hebrews 11:6 is one of my central verses... I don't officially belong to any denomination, not for readily apparent reasons, just one really. My wife doesn't believe in it. And we do things together. Somehow along the way I found myself saying, "we are governed by one another's strengths, not by one another's weaknesses" its true of marriage, but also of Board of directors, churches, prayer groups... but Romans 14 shows a caution about that notion, to honor the need of my wife we also don't tithe, because she can't accept its validity... I was raised in church, my Mum was a Christian her whole life, and took me to church in her womb, ie) she was pregnant with me when she went to church. I know God has no grandchildren; we all come to the Father through Christ, experiencing him for ourselves. I remember where I was when I accepted Christ as my personal saviour, I remember my baptismal service. My pastor was H H Barber growing up. My parents originally went to a First Baptist church in Calgary, Alberta... but when they moved to Winnipeg, they soon were disheartened by the First Baptist church there. Its particularly important what makes us dissatisfied with an organization, right? It was and is particularly interesting to me, for want of a better expression. They took us to church there in Winnipeg. I was about 6 years old; I only know that by doing the math, we moved there in 1968 and I was born in '62. They followed along with tradition of where they had always gone. But it ended up being something deeper than that, as it turned out. I'm sorry for belabouring this in a way, but I want you to yearn to know, and to wonder what it might be? Maybe I'll pause here LOL... you will (like any and all of us) fill in the missing information with FEAR and BELIEFE says Brene Brown. Our yearning for story. Our need for a narrative that makes sense of all the known facts causes or at least results in us having this story in our heads that makes sense of things.

Well, they left that Baptist Church because my brothers and I came home with Mickey Mouse and Donald duck, and not God's word... they left and found a bible preaching teaching church, Calvary Temple Winnipeg

it was a return of the clan so to speak... to the PAOC that had started with my great grandfather Alexander Brand... I'm looking for a safe place for Andrew and Ashton, a place that teaches God's word... a safe place for them, that will deal with them according to the Spirit, according to understanding. So, I FELT your heart when I read that article... and this is what you can pray for on my behalf. Andrew literally got Ashton his job at Save-On-Foods Tsw.

Andrew is attending the United Church at the moment, but needs a mentor to help him translate the interpersonal challenges that are always present with ASD's



DEAR EMMA;

In my book “Why Be Obedient” or “Listening Obedience”...

The first things first part of it has become clear as I think of, and pray for YOU.

As an author I have to come to terms with – over and over again it seems – why should I write a book? Or what makes me think I should write a book, or “Who are *YOU*, Laurence, to write a book...?” I’m driven to write this book. It’s a case of being obedient, and its obedience that has been a long time coming, because it has been a fight to get past my inhibitions and short comings.

One thing that you, my reader, must be told is that I am not a theologian, though at times you will think that either I am indeed a theologian, or at least I’m trying to pass myself off as one. To that I have to go to the poetic, cryptic... when I have folks coming over for a dinner, or bring something to a potluck supper, if I’m right on the mark that day, folks who enjoy my food (for whatever reason) have various levels of high praise... and sometimes they’ll say stuff like “...you should do this for a living!” or “You should open a restaurant!” same is true when I finish a wood working project... like “...you should do this for a living!” or “You should open a restaurant!” What does wood working have to do with opening a restaurant?!?! And I always respond in my heart with a thank you, glad you enjoyed yourself, I already have a job, and lastly... one more, ok? I play somebody a game of chess and they’re like “...you should do this for a living!” or “You should open a restaurant!” What does Chess have to do with opening a restaurant?!?! A Chess pro is so far and above and beyond my skill set... not me. Its not a matter of humility, in the sense of me pretending to be humble. I know of many times where I have eaten a meal, held a piece of woodworking, or played against a Chess Champ that surpasses my own ability.

I’ll just jump out of that whole mindset now, and let you draw your own conclusions maybe. I want to quote the scripture Revelation 12:11

1. They overcame [the evil one] by
 - a. Blood of the lamb
 - b. Word of their testimony
 - c. Loved not their lives to much as to shrink from death

I am one of the ones there, I am part of THEY.

I am a voice. In many ways I am nobody in particular. There is nothing particularly fantastic about me that has resulted in any level of success I now see in my life at 59 years of age. Which brings to mind Luke 11:27-28 I have been blessed by hearing the word of God and obeying it. The secret to my success is my submission to the one has taken the time to speak his word. I’ve heard the word of God, and been obedient to it. Have I been 100% perfect in that? No. Is there still time to get perfect at it? Yes. Are we called to be perfect? Well, yes we are... “be ye perfect as your father in heaven is perfect” is scripture.

The tragic thing about the lost is that they keep doing whatever they want, and inevitably end up in trouble. The blessed thing about our lives as Christians, as the THEY in Revelation there, is that we do whatever we want, and end up in awe that we are blessed. There’s that quote about skills being second nature from Seven Pillars of Wisdom.

7 pillars of wisdom

Meanwhile it was breakfast time with a smell of sausage in the air. We sat round, very ready: but the watcher on the broken tower yelled 'Aeroplane up', seeing one coming over from Deraa. Our Australians, scrambling wildly to their yet-hot machines, started them in a moment. Ross Smith, with his observer, leaped into one, and climbed like a cat up the sky. After him went Peters, while the third pilot stood beside the D.H.9 and looked hard at me. I seemed not to understand him. Lewis guns, scarf mountings, sights, rings which turned, vanes, knobs which rose and fell on swinging parallel bars; to shoot, one aimed with this side of the ring or with that, according to the varied speed and direction of oneself and the enemy. I had been told the theory, could repeat some of it: but it was in my head, and rules of action were only snares of action till they had run out of the empty head into the hands, by use. No: I was not going up to air-fight, no matter what caste I lost with the pilot. He was an Australian, of a race delighting in additional risks, not an Arab to whose gallery I must play.

<<< but it was in my head, and rules of action were only snares of action till they had run out of the empty head into the hands, by use.>>>

<https://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks01/0100111h.html>

It's a quote about things becoming second nature, about becoming habits.

When learning to become a bus driver they taught me the skills necessary, but part of that was good habits, so that I habitually did the safest thing. Going the speed limit, putting the wheel block under the back passenger side rear wheel, on the opposite side of the wheel that the hill is... every new skill has in it good habits that result in success and safety, they are the foundation of that success.

When you are in a situation that demands immediate action, not careful thought, it can be a matter of life or death. T E Lawrence knew that he was as good as dead if we went up in the airplane, because he would not be fluid and intuitive.

So... though I'm playing a little bit... we are all built to do whatever we want. That's what feels best, its what works best. But if doing whatever we want keeps getting us into situations where we suffer, or we keep finding ourselves at a standstill, up against a rock and hard place, and the only way out is to call for help, or back the way we came... we messed up.

But its new habits, it's a change in our behaviour that is needed.

But we need to realize it all starts with SIN and who we listen to and why.

Love the lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and do whatever you want.

CASCADE MOUNTAIN CLIMB

Andrew and I were in our teens. My parents were with us, I don't know if Diana was. We were staying at the Banff Ptarmigan Inn



In the photo above you can see Cascade Mountain. Andrew and I saw it, and my brother of dreams and glory wanted to climb that mountain and stand between the pillars, and I was going with him!

In my conversation with Mike at a car dealership, waiting for our oil changes in the lounge area, I explained Andrew's predicament in Korea using that climb as a poetic background. Andrew's journey to where he lives now was driven by his passions. His passion to be an actor, to travel, and to out run his personal demons.

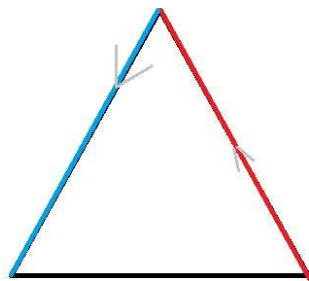
So I will tell you, my reader that same story, and about where our family is at right now.... Each of us on our climb up/down this mountain of life.. but in the shroud of this story from my past.

"Sometimes I regret the fact that man can go anywhere" famous line from Laurence's mouth regretting their decision to climb, and ability to get into such exhausting situations. At that moment it seemed ridiculous to Andrew. For me it was like an aside in a Shakespeare play. It was just after having my hopes crushed. The hope was that the horizon line was the top of the mountain, but it was merely a plateau. The ground was mainly shale



Shale is thin, flat rock that looks somewhat like the material school black boards are made of. When we finally got home later that night, as I closed my eyes, that's all I could see, and dream of was that shale, so profoundly did it imbed itself into my psyche. That moment alone was a foreshadowing of what was to come in our lives. I looked at that situation, saw my part in getting into the dilemma, the crunch. There was no stopping, I had to strive to go forward, and strive to go back where I came from. The only relief for me was to have foreseen the circumstances, and made the decision to do it or not based on those very real consequences.

We went out dressed in our summer attire, not accounting for the temperature drop as you ascend such a high mountain. Not thinking about letting local authorities know what we were up to. We walked to the base of the mountain, and began our ascent through bushes, taking the path of least resistance. Usually, I'm told, its best to come up with my own way of describing things rather than a pat phrase like "path of least resistance" but for now I'll keep it. Water when it flows from one place to another does this. For us on our way up there was the single objective of getting to between those two pillars. Dense bush, or slippery shale would be poor choices, low lying foliage and hard packed shale would be better, so we'd go that way, as long as it went up. When we finally stood between those pillars, exhausted and triumphant, Andrew had changed his mind, he would ascend higher! We shouldn't separate! I went with him. Those pillars go straight up pretty nearly, but there was a goat path that wound its way around the curve of them, and we proceeded to the right-hand side. Andrew was older and more agile perhaps, but nevertheless he got way ahead of me, and it didn't take much to be out of view, around the corner as it wound its way up. All of a sudden Andrew yelled for me to LOOK OUT!!! And I had no where to go. A small ledge of maybe 12 inches lay at my feet in front and back, a straight up rock wall to my left, and thin air to my right. I can't remember if I even had time to flatten myself against the rock as a large, basketball sized, jagged boulder flew past my head, with a horrible ripping sound as the jagged rock edges cut through the air at high speed. That was enough for me, I would go no further, I was turning back, but Andrew refused, so he went his way, and I began my descent. Once again it was a case of path of least resistance, as long as I was going down. But even a slight deviation right or left made for a large departure from where we had begun our climb. Think of a triangle, the point at the top being where I began my descent, and the bottom right of the triangle being where we began our climb that day. No matter what, I could not replicate the path I'd taken up, in going down. We left no bread crumb trail, no reminders, inexperience, and lack of planning forethought.



Fortunately for me, I ended up a little bit of a walk along the same road we'd taken to the beginning of our hike upwards. But on the way down I came to places where there were no GOOD choices, only "bad" and "not so bad" ones. One place I'll always remember, all these years later, was a gulley that opened up, and I had to jump/slide down it to continue. I made my way back to the Inn, and let my parents know.

Andrew in the meantime got to the top of the mountain, and had his imaginary flag planting life experience. When he was on the way down, it was the same for him as myself, only a bit worse. Since I'd begun my downward climb on the same face of the mountain, not quite to the top, I'd only deviated slightly from the point of origin. But Andrew got to the top, and his descent happened to be down the backside of the mountain, miles away from where we'd set out. More so was that he found a crevice, that he began edging his way down, with his back against one rock wall, and his feet against the other, and worked his way down, and as the

darkness yielded more details to his eye, he found himself at a point where the crevice went too much wider for his feet/legs to reach, and he had nothing to do but drop to the bottom, and when he fell he broke his collar bone. He continued down the mountain, got to a highway, and hiked home. I guess my parents had phoned the RCMP “lost and found stupid teenagers” hotline, because they told us how many laws and rules we’d broken. All was well in the end, with lifetime memories, and lessons learned as a take away.

But this is very much the case for all of us. Small decisions made early in life have profound impact on future events. And we all often find ourselves in these same spots, on the way up, when we are happily seeing our wonderful plans coming to fruition, and on the way back down where survival is our only goal, getting back to safety, to point zero.

Andrew finds his world-wide wander lust having deposited him in South Korea, and its exactly like that crevice. NO easy way to safety and comfort of the life he’d left behind over 20 years ago in Canada. None of us here are in a position to rescue him, take him in, and help him on his feet. We have our own life repercussions to deal with. Our own Rock and a hard place.

Perhaps at some point I can describe

BIRTHDAYS OF MY BELOVED

In 2023

Jamie Grey Brand	June 27, 1984	39
Sarah Ashley Mirae Brand	May 17, 1985	38
Nicholas Benjamin Daniel Brand	November 8, 1990	33
Cherish Amber Catherine Brand	January 8, 1992	31
Ashton Philip Brand	October 16, 2000	23

STEP OUT OF THE LIGHT AND INTO THE DARKNESS

"But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light." John 11:8-10

IT IS WHEN A PERSON WALKS AT NIGHT THAT THEY STUMBLE, FOR THEY HAVE NO LIGHT.

If there ever were a time where one could walk out the front door into the light of day, I don't know.

I just can't express this in plain words.

The picture I see is a fractured planet. A chaotic event occurred. An epidemic that nobody saw coming, and when it came, they didn't know what it was. They sat with the victims and became infected by the same disease, and soon succumbed it themselves, and died. The death toll was in the neighborhood of 90%. They'd never known these diseases. They'd been around for hundreds of years. And into their context came people they didn't know existed. Indeed, the people that came didn't know, really, that there would be people there. These were explorers. These people kept things simple, were they content to make the most of their environment? Who am I to come up with reasons why the whole western hemisphere, with all of their intelligence, did not venture beyond their shorelines. The Pacific Ocean on the west, and the Atlantic Ocean on the east. They remained here. The Europeans, they built ships, they explored. There were at least

ALL MY SINS

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us...

Hebrews 12:1

...and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Romans 14:23b

If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

James 4:17

I've given lots of thought to this topic of my own personal struggle with sin. First and foremost, there is, whether we agree with it or not, a perception that there are "not so bad" sins, and "really bad sins". It's the hard-to-resist comparing of ourselves to others, translated into the realm of comparing one sin over the other.

I list three scriptures to begin here. The writer of Hebrews goes even further than merely exhorting us to throw off sin, and points to "everything that hinders." The image is of a person who's dressed to win a race. The bare minimum is worn! The focus is on winning the race, and also, perseverance. It's a long -distance race!

Next is the last verse in Romans 14, where Paul has begun with, verse one:

¹ Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters.

How are we to handle one another's sin? Acceptance. And very quickly he comes to an important point,

⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

James again, talks about knowing to do the right thing. That's strictly between me and God. We can get away with fooling those around us, but not God. If there is a person in need, we can claim that we didn't realize, but if we did indeed realize their need, and we were in a position to do something about it, but failed to do so, that is sin.

Sin is falling short of God's perfect way. We are not at any point trying to keep away from sin in order to qualify for heaven. Christ already did all of that for us. Our obedience comes from joining God in the battle against the enemy, to proclaim Christ, that others also may look to him and live!

We live in a world where good and bad coexist. Each of us is good and bad. One day we will be made perfect and complete. And so also the world will be stripped of the evil, and only good will be. The Kingdom of God is now and not yet. He is sanctifying each of us. To sanctify is to make holy. To make holy is to set apart for God. We are his vessels. Part of his plan for this world, to save it.

One day, when Christ returns, all those who refused to acknowledge Christ, who chose to stay enslaved to sin, will be completely cut off from God. No more will they share in the shelter of the blessed. Heaven is nothing more and nothing less than the complete absence of evil, and the completely present goodness of God. Hell is

the complete absence of God. The torment is the absence of God. Whereas God is life giving, his complete absence can only be death itself.

There are many sin lists in the New Testaments, but none of them are exhaustive. None of them are complete lists. We have the whole book of the Law in the Old Testament to give us an idea of what sin is.

I am deliberately NOT going to tell you what sins I struggle with. Some will be comforted, and thereby say, "OH! Phew! Me too! Boy oh Boy, I'm not so bad if HE struggles with this same one!!!" and so the sin becomes excusable, instead of forgivable. The same goes for those who do not struggle with these same sins, "Oh! Phew! Well, at least I don't struggle with that." And their sins go unconfessed, unforgiven, and continue to hinder them from doing the work God has called them to do.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

Reading this verse in context, you will be able to see that John is being clear. Call sin what it is. Sin. Make no excuses, no buts. Where ever and what ever you struggle with, call it what it is. Make no excuse. Even if you can't even cease from whatever it is, the most important thing is that you do not accept it as excusable. He then forgives us, and purifies us!

Paul says this,

Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else,

Galatians 6:4

There is comparison but only in terms of personal best. If I ran the track and completed the course at 2 minutes 55 seconds yesterday, I can be encouraged when I only take 2 minutes and 47 seconds the next day! There's pride allowed. The right sort of pride. The pride that comes from overcoming! Its hearing God say, "Good work!" when we've done what he's needed to have done!

STEP OUT OF THE LIGHT AND INTO THE DARKNESS

This word came from my wife, and like all prophetic words, it needs to be tested!

The world we live in has evolved away from honoring God's word as the source of truth. Right and wrong have received new definitions. The standard has changed. Songs in pop culture have declared this to us. Bachman Turner Overdrive with their song, "Looking Out For Number One"

You're gonna get things done
I found out the only way to the top
Is looking out for number one
And that's me
I'm looking out for number one

glorifies self centred living. The knowledge of the survival of the fittest! A race of a different kind is seen! One which takes advantage of the weaknesses of others to get ahead! The one who dies with the most toys wins! Take a look at the lyrics of so many popular songs. Me and Mrs Jones,

Me and Mrs., Mrs. Jones
Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Jones
We got a thing goin' on
We both know that it's wrong
But it's much too strong
To let it go now...

I guess lots of songs just plain say, "I couldn't help myself..." and so the sin is excused.

Everybody's doing it... comfort in crowds.

Change crowds then!

The light of this world has become darkness. Reminds me of

"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Matthew 6:22-23

So Cheryl's call is to walk away from the world's light, and into the unknown. The darkness is a couple of things. When we walk according to the light of this world, we are also walking according to our own understanding. We have our logical sequences. Our idea of what will happen, what the ramifications of our actions will bring, can only be from what we know. And what we know is ONLY what has happened in the past.

I am convinced that much of what we now call psychology is the study of the tricks we use to avoid the anxiety of absolute novelty by making believe the future will be like the past.

Abraham Maslow, Towards a Psychology of Being

Plainly, this psychologist observed at the end of his career, that mental illness comes from believing we can predict

Abraham Maslow (April 1, 1908 – June 8, 1970) published *Towards a Psychology of Being* in 1962.

54 years old when he published this, and uses many examples from his clinical practice to expound his findings. He died at the age of 62.

Step out of the light of this world's wisdom, and into the darkness of living life moment to moment hearing from God, in every minute of the day... merely desiring one thing, to please the father... take up your cross and follow him is taking on an "even if I follow him into death, I will do so" attitude

Look at,

John 11:8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. 10 It is when a person walks at night that

they stumble, for they have no light.” 11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.” 12 His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” 13 Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. 14 So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” 16 Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

Part of the shedding of all that hinders is the family heritage itself. Jesus tells us in Luke to hate our father and mother, brother and sister... but its hyperbole to say that we must take up our cross... we must acknowledge how stupid it is to do things God’s way! Be an idiot in this world, if it means to be seen as a goof by the world, yet God himself will be pleased!

Is it so impossible to know what God would have you to do?

Bonhoeffer talks about not taking your spiritual pulse. So... that’s another thing to ponder here.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

There is a dream early on in the book, of a pathetic horse whose owner resolves he will make him gallop with a wagon loaded down with drunken revelers. This is what he declares to those around, anyway. Does he truly believe that he can get the task done by whipping and beating a horse who is not physically capable of doing that task? So, it is a matter of overcoming the stubbornness of the animal? Laying the blame of the horse's inability on the horses will power. The beating will overcome the horse's rebellious nature? But the dream clearly depicts the horse as being evidently to all incapable of pulling the cart at all, never mind galloping. The laughter of the crowd is proof that none of them believed it possible. The resolution is that he will beat the horse to death.

<<<"Where is it I've read that someone condemned to death says or thinks, an hour before his death, that if he had to live on some high rock, on such a narrow ledge that he'd only room to stand, and the ocean, everlasting darkness, everlasting solitude, everlasting tempest around him, if he had to remain standing on a square yard of space all his life, a thousand years, eternity, it were better to live so than to die at once! Only to live, to live and live! Life, whatever it may be!>>>

Is Raskolnikov the helpless onlooker? The innocence of child, and a weak father, unable or unwilling to do anything for the horse, "it's none of our business" Calling upon God to end the suffering in the world? Is this the framework of Raskolnikov's mind?

Or, is Raskolnikov the horse, being required to do the impossible in order to live? Raskolnikov must do something to live that will result in his death. The horse has no choice but to cling to life. The mindless lack of logic of the horse owner, he's a fool for supposing that the horse is merely refusing to pull the load rather than being unable to pull the wagon load. The horse own is angry that he has a useless horse, but how did the horse get that way?

The limitations of man are all in the mind. The inability of man to progress are the artificial restraints brought on by society, brought about by religion. Morality is the thing which holds us back. We simply need to overcome this fake construct, and on the other side we'll find freedom of movement.

The pawn broker represents what others have referred to as "the wicked prospering". One sees the profit and success of the wealthy, and wonders what sins and crimes they have committed to get to their position. One looks at one's own pathetic state of affairs, and blames the moral code one has been taught.

Fearful Dream

Raskolnikov had a fearful dream. He dreamt he was back in his childhood in the little town of his birth. He was a child about seven years old, walking into the country with his father on the evening of a holiday. It was a grey and heavy day, the country was exactly as he remembered it; indeed he recalled it far more vividly in his dream than he had done in memory. The little town stood on a level flat as bare as the hand, not even a willow near it; only in the far distance, a copse lay, a dark blur on the very edge of the horizon. A few paces beyond the last market garden stood a tavern, a big tavern, which had always aroused in him a feeling of aversion, even of fear, when he walked by it with his father. There was always a crowd there, always shouting, laughter and abuse, hideous hoarse singing and often fighting. Drunken and horrible-looking figures were hanging about the

tavern. He used to cling close to his father, trembling all over when he met them. Near the tavern the road became a dusty track, the dust of which was always black. It was a winding road, and about a hundred page 84 / 879 paces further on, it turned to the right to the graveyard. In the middle of the graveyard stood a stone church with a green cupola where he used to go to mass two or three times a year with his father and mother, when a service was held in memory of his grandmother, who had long been dead, and whom he had never seen. On these occasions they used to take on a white dish tied up in a table napkin a special sort of rice pudding with raisins stuck in it in the shape of a cross. He loved that church, the old-fashioned, unadorned ikons and the old priest with the shaking head. Near his grandmother's grave, which was marked by a stone, was the little grave of his younger brother who had died at six months old. He did not remember him at all, but he had been told about his little brother, and whenever he visited the graveyard he used religiously and reverently to cross himself and to bow down and kiss the little grave. And now he dreamt that he was walking with his father past the tavern on the way to the graveyard; he was holding his father's hand and looking with dread at the tavern. A peculiar circumstance attracted his attention: there seemed to be some kind of festivity going on, there were crowds of gaily dressed townspeople, peasant women, their husbands, and riff-raff of all sorts, all singing and all more or less drunk. Near the entrance of the tavern stood a cart, but a strange cart. It was one of those big carts usually drawn by heavy cart-horses and laden with casks of wine or other heavy goods. He always liked looking at those great carthorses, with their long manes, thick legs, and slow even pace, drawing along a perfect mountain with no appearance of effort, as though it were easier going with a load than without it. But now, strange to say, in the shafts of such a cart he saw a thin little sorrel beast, one of those peasants' nags which he had often seen straining their page 85 / 879 utmost under a heavy load of wood or hay, especially when the wheels were stuck in the mud or in a rut. And the peasants would beat them so cruelly, sometimes even about the nose and eyes, and he felt so sorry, so sorry for them that he almost cried, and his mother always used to take him away from the window. All of a sudden there was a great number of big and very drunken peasants came out, wearing red and blue shirts and coats thrown over their shoulders. "Get in, get in!" shouted one of them, a young thick-necked peasant with a fleshy face red as a carrot. "I'll take you all, get in!" But at once there was an outbreak of laughter and exclamations in the crowd. "Take us all with a beast like that!" "Why, Mikolka, are you crazy to put a nag like that in such a cart?" "And this mare is twenty if she is a day, mates!" "Get in, I'll take you all," Mikolka shouted again, leaping first into the cart, seizing the reins and standing straight up in front. "The bay has gone with Matvey," he shouted from the cart--"and this brute, mates, is just breaking my heart, I feel as if I could kill her. She's page 86 / 879 just eating her head off. Get in, I tell you! I'll make her gallop! She'll gallop!" and he picked up the whip, preparing himself with relish to flog the little mare. "Get in! Come along!" The crowd laughed. "D'you hear, she'll gallop!" "Gallop indeed! She has not had a gallop in her for the last ten years!" "She'll jog along!" "Don't you mind her, mates, bring a whip each of you, get ready!" "All right! Give it to her!" They all clambered into Mikolka's cart, laughing and making jokes. Six men got in and there was still room for more. They hauled in a fat, rosy-cheeked woman. She was dressed in red cotton, in a pointed, beaded headdress and thick leather shoes; she was cracking nuts and laughing. The crowd round them was laughing too and indeed, how could they help laughing? That wretched nag was to drag all the cartload of them at a gallop! Two young fellows in the cart were just getting whips ready to help Mikolka. With the cry of "now," the mare tugged with all her might, but far from galloping, could scarcely move forward; she struggled with her legs, gasping and shrinking from the page 87 / 879 blows of the three whips which were showered upon her like hail. The laughter in the cart and in the crowd was redoubled, but Mikolka flew into a

rage and furiously thrashed the mare, as though he supposed she really could gallop. "Let me get in, too, mates," shouted a young man in the crowd whose appetite was aroused. "Get in, all get in," cried Mikolka, "she will draw you all. I'll beat her to death!" And he thrashed and thrashed at the mare, beside himself with fury. "Father, father," he cried, "father, what are they doing? Father, they are beating the poor horse!" "Come along, come along!" said his father. "They are drunken and foolish, they are in fun; come away, don't look!" and he tried to draw him away, but he tore himself away from his hand, and, beside himself with horror, ran to the horse. The poor beast was in a bad way. She was gasping, standing still, then tugging again and almost falling. "Beat her to death," cried Mikolka, "it's come to that. I'll do for her!" "What are you about, are you a Christian, you devil?" shouted an old page 88 / 879 man in the crowd. "Did anyone ever see the like? A wretched nag like that pulling such a cartload," said another. "You'll kill her," shouted the third. "Don't meddle! It's my property, I'll do what I choose. Get in, more of you! Get in, all of you! I will have her go at a gallop! . . ." All at once laughter broke into a roar and covered everything: the mare, roused by the shower of blows, began feebly kicking. Even the old man could not help smiling. To think of a wretched little beast like that trying to kick! Two lads in the crowd snatched up whips and ran to the mare to beat her about the ribs. One ran each side. "Hit her in the face, in the eyes, in the eyes," cried Mikolka. "Give us a song, mates," shouted someone in the cart and everyone in the cart joined in a riotous song, jingling a tambourine and whistling. The woman went on cracking nuts and laughing. page 89 / 879 . . . He ran beside the mare, ran in front of her, saw her being whipped across the eyes, right in the eyes! He was crying, he felt choking, his tears were streaming. One of the men gave him a cut with the whip across the face, he did not feel it. Wringing his hands and screaming, he rushed up to the grey-headed old man with the grey beard, who was shaking his head in disapproval. One woman seized him by the hand and would have taken him away, but he tore himself from her and ran back to the mare. She was almost at the last gasp, but began kicking once more. "I'll teach you to kick," Mikolka shouted ferociously. He threw down the whip, bent forward and picked up from the bottom of the cart a long, thick shaft, he took hold of one end with both hands and with an effort brandished it over the mare. "He'll crush her," was shouted round him. "He'll kill her!" "It's my property," shouted Mikolka and brought the shaft down with a swinging blow. There was a sound of a heavy thud. "Thrash her, thrash her! Why have you stopped?" shouted voices in the crowd. And Mikolka swung the shaft a second time and it fell a second time on the spine of the luckless mare. She sank back on her haunches, but page 90 / 879 lurched forward and tugged forward with all her force, tugged first on one side and then on the other, trying to move the cart. But the six whips were attacking her in all directions, and the shaft was raised again and fell upon her a third time, then a fourth, with heavy measured blows. Mikolka was in a fury that he could not kill her at one blow. "She's a tough one," was shouted in the crowd. "She'll fall in a minute, mates, there will soon be an end of her," said an admiring spectator in the crowd. "Fetch an axe to her! Finish her off," shouted a third. "I'll show you! Stand off," Mikolka screamed frantically; he threw down the shaft, stooped down in the cart and picked up an iron crowbar. "Look out," he shouted, and with all his might he dealt a stunning blow at the poor mare. The blow fell; the mare staggered, sank back, tried to pull, but the bar fell again with a swinging blow on her back and she fell on the ground like a log. "Finish her off," shouted Mikolka and he leapt beside himself, out of the cart. Several young men, also flushed with drink, seized anything they could come across--whips, sticks, poles, and ran to the dying mare. Mikolka stood on one side and began dealing random blows with page 91 / 879 the crowbar. The mare stretched out her head, drew a long breath and died. "You butchered her," someone shouted in the crowd. "Why wouldn't she gallop then?" "My property!" shouted Mikolka, with bloodshot eyes, brandishing the bar in his hands. He stood as though

regretting that he had nothing more to beat. "No mistake about it, you are not a Christian," many voices were shouting in the crowd. But the poor boy, beside himself, made his way, screaming, through the crowd to the sorrel nag, put his arms round her bleeding dead head and kissed it, kissed the eyes and kissed the lips. . . . Then he jumped up and flew in a frenzy with his little fists out at Mikolka. At that instant his father, who had been running after him, snatched him up and carried him out of the crowd. "Come along, come! Let us go home," he said to him. "Father! Why did they . . . kill . . . the poor horse!" he sobbed, but page 92 / 879 his voice broke and the words came in shrieks from his panting chest. "They are drunk. . . . They are brutal . . . it's not our business!" said his father. He put his arms round his father but he felt choked, choked. He tried to draw a breath, to cry out--and woke up. He waked up, gasping for breath, his hair soaked with perspiration, and stood up in terror.

"I say, sir," the girl shouted after him. "What is it?" She hesitated. "I'll always be pleased to spend an hour with you, kind gentleman, but now I feel shy. Give me six copecks for a drink, there's a nice young man!" Raskolnikov gave her what came first--fifteen copecks. "Ah, what a good-natured gentleman!" "What's your name?" "Ask for Duclida." "Well, that's too much," one of the women observed, shaking her head at Duclida. "I don't know how you can ask like that. I believe I should drop with shame. . . ."

Raskolnikov looked curiously at the speaker. She was a pock-marked wench of thirty, covered with bruises, with her upper lip swollen. She made her criticism quietly and earnestly. "Where is it," thought Raskolnikov. "Where is it I've read that someone condemned to death says or thinks, an hour before his death, that if he had to live on some high rock, on such a narrow ledge that he'd only room to stand, and the ocean, everlasting darkness, everlasting solitude, everlasting tempest around him, if he had to remain standing on a square yard of space all his life, a thousand years, eternity, it were better to live so than to die at once! Only to live, to live and live! Life, whatever it may be! . . . How true it is! Good God, how true! Man is a vile creature! . . . And vile is he who calls him vile for that," he added a moment later.

SHOUTING DOWN A WELL.

Sometimes I go out into the country and look for one of those old-fashioned wells with a little Rock wall around the mouth of it, best yet has a roof, with a bucket and rope. Sometimes I'll find one with an ingenious winch attached - turning the handle this way or that way the bucket is lowered and raised up once again, and it's full of water! These are the best type!

Once found I go and lean on the rock wall, and after having placed my mouth over the open well, I shout my heart out to my children! All my advice, encouragement, and admonitions for them to honour the Lord, but sometimes I just text them. It's the same effect but not as romantic.

I mentioned them in my prayer time when I cannot get back to sleep and the hamster wheel rules interview. I turn away from it and begin to methodically run through my Co-Op mentioning each one at times particular things concerning them comes to mind and I mentioned these also I've learned to alternate starting from Unit 44 and winding my way back down and then starting at unit one and winding my way up because I usually fall asleep before I'm done and I don't like missing folks if God what? But it since God since God really exist speaking with him is it once a holy and fear inducing thing barging into his presence with my list of demands? I look around me out in the wilderness. I see that we are losing the battle, we need help, where is our help, and so I run through the woods out through the open planes, heading towards that castle there when I get there at the centuries on the wall pay no attention to me. They know me, I am no, the Door always moves me before I reach out to push it open it's enormous over 20 feet high and proportionally wide with large brass fasteners and hinges cedar square and I tug the doors handle and lean and lean in as I push it a jar enough to sneak through down the hall on the left I run out of breath by now and it's somewhere along this run that I am at odds with myself, I am running to the high God, the God who sees and knows all about me. Why not just let him see and know it all without me risking my own neck, but those are thoughts for those who have never ventured to do it.

God's word is ripe with messages, urging and commands for me to pray story of great things that begin continue and come to fruition based washed and engulfed and pushed along with prayer picture occur in a rushing, mighty river flowing into and out of the heart of God, I get to the door and he knows me also he's already been speaking interceding for me with the father. My tears sometimes comes as I see his wounds healed yet still visible, not hidden, but on display as Valient metals are proudly worn, I knew before him and worship him. Then he pats me on the shoulder and gives me a push into the father's presence, and my head of his garment is flowing at the foot of his throne and lose myself in them covered there by who is my father and I cry loud to him in words that he understands, but I do not, but I feel the flow I sense, the knowing like a silent movie with the voice in a foreign language this scenes flow through my mind I mentioned names and places that conspiracies and hearts and lives, and sometimes I fall asleep there and awaken with the morning dude and a soft bed of spruce bells the sun trickling through the branches above, and there's Jesus by an open fire, cooking us all breakfast. I put off my sleeping blanket that smells of him who loves me and shuffle over to the coffee pot.

Arthur Schopenhauer> Studies in Pessimism>

Everything that is really fundamental in a man, and therefore genuine, works, as such, unconsciously; in this respect like the power of nature. That which has passed through the domain of consciousness is thereby transformed into an idea or picture; and so, if it comes to be uttered, it is only an idea or picture which passes from one person to another.

Accordingly any quality of mind or character that is genuine and lasting is originally unconscious; and it is only when unconsciously brought into play that it makes a profound impression. If any like quality is consciously exercised, it means that it has been worked up; it becomes intentional, and therefore a matter of affectation, in other words, of deception.

If a man does a thing unconsciously, it costs him no trouble; but if he tries to do it by taking trouble he fails. This applies to the origin of those fundamental ideas which form the pith and marrow of all genuine work. Only that which is innate is genuine and will hold water; and every man who wants to achieve something, whether in practical life, in literature, or in art, must *follow the rules without knowing them*.