

# Heart & Hand

Quarterly Newsletter of the **Spiritual Care Support Ministries**<sup>sm</sup>

Reaching for a hand, and touching a heart

Vol. 13, Ed. 2, June 2017

Issuing four times yearly - March, June, September and December

## Greetings from Chaplain Liz

Greetings from the Spiritual Care Support Ministry Center! A question often asked by support providers at SCSM to those who come to us is, "Do you want to be healed?" Let me ask you a question? What keeps you from being healed? We often hear from those who come to SCSM that they want to be healed, but they do not want to do the work that is needed to find healing. People of all ages want emotional, physical, relational, and spiritual health. Couples want their marriages to be the way they were "intended to be". Parents want their children to love them and also care for them when it is necessary. We want others to understand our pain and the struggles that we are experiencing. When they do not listen or understand, the emotions of anger, bitterness, and isolation become our conversation.

The truth is that healing is available to all

of us, but it is a process, and it takes commitment. For some people, it takes longer than others to heal, but it is still possible. God has a perfect plan, and His plan can change everything in your life. God is always at work around you, and His desire is for you to have healing. God invites you to become involved in the healing process as you take the steps that are necessary.

Find the person or place where your healing can begin. If you have experienced losses because of illness, loss of a loved one, or any personal loss, call the Spiritual Care Support Ministry office at 540-349-5814. The staff and volunteers



can give you the support you need to begin the process of healing. This will begin the process of finding purpose and hope again.

Life is so short and there is so much to celebrate, but you need to believe that there is healing. Pray and ask God to help you make the decision to be willing to find healing. Are you willing to do what is necessary

to make this possible? If so, we are here at SCSM to help give you the support you need. Check out our website at [www.scsm.tv](http://www.scsm.tv) and see the services we provide. If you have any questions, please write me at [ChaplainLiz@scsm.tv](mailto:ChaplainLiz@scsm.tv).

*Chaplain Liz Danielsen*

## Chat with the Chaplain Chaplain of the Month

"We are happy to announce the selection of Chaplain Liz Danielsen as our December Chaplain of the Month. Chaplain Danielsen leads a grief counseling ministry. Through support group meetings and individual counseling, she ministers to hundreds of people each year. Liz and her staff assist individuals to deal with loss of loved ones, loss of home, loss of jobs, loss of relationships, and many other situations that may cause grief. Even though her husband Arvid has been ill (he has been on our prayer request lists), she has been able to lead this ministry with distinction. Chaplain Liz is a fine example of a dedicated and committed servant of God." - Chaplain Cordero

I am the founder and executive director of Spiritual Care Support Ministries ([www.scsm.tv](http://www.scsm.tv)). We offer support to the chronically ill, those grieving the loss of loved ones or experiencing personal losses, as well as supporting those who journey with them. We train people of all ages so they can be effective in helping others. We also have opportunities for interns

to come alongside us to learn.

Our ministry reaches beyond Virginia state lines and goes throughout the U.S. and the world. I have trained pastors and leaders in Bangladesh and Nepal. The desire those leaders showed while with them in wanting to learn touched me deeply. I was in Nepal not too long before the earthquake to give training on how to support people who are experiencing grief, never realizing that the training would help those dealing with the result of the earthquake. Through technology such as Skype, Facetime, email counseling, texting and Facebook, we are able to reach out to others who do not live near our headquarters or satellite offices.

For almost twenty years, I was hired to be on staff as a hospital chaplain and hospice chaplain. I worked in two hospitals and two hospices. It was a training ground for me. Preparation for ministry that God calls us to is very important. As a young chaplain, I listened to discouraged Christians. Many of them left their church because of the losses in their lives that

were unresolved. They felt that the church, which consisted of the Body of Christ, did not understand their pain and the process needed for healing. Then I met those who did not know God and they, too, seemed so hopeless. Neither felt that they would ever be the same nor had any future. It was as if they died themselves because of the loss they experienced. My heart grieved for all of them.

One night after many losses that day, I went to bed with a burden. I took it to the Lord in prayer, and that night I had a dream and a vision as to how we could help those who were grieving and without hope. Sixteen years later in Warrenton, Virginia, in 2004, it became a reality and the Center's doors opened. Sixteen years of waiting on God. Waiting is hard. It was hard for me, but I had so much to learn about myself and others. I was weak in so many areas of ministry, and God knew that. God's timing is perfect. I thank God for the vision He entrusted to me, but also for the

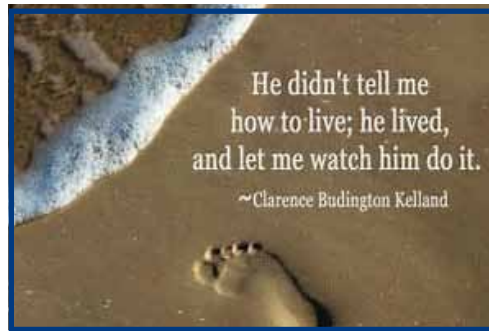
(Cont'd page2, Column 1)

# Father's Day by A.G. "Andy" Budd

Dear Dad, Happy Father's Day!

I thought I would take a moment to share with you some thoughts that have bubbling around in my head these last few years since you passed away. Somehow I believe the message will get to you if I present it publicly. Even if this isn't the case, perhaps some father or child who reads this will get something out of it. Like it or not, I am who I am today in large part because of who you were.

I remember that my allowance reached a high of fifty cents per week in 1972. In exchange for my allowance, I was expected to perform various chores. One of these chores was to wash the cars. It was one of the chores I dreaded most. Not because washing cars wasn't any fun, it was your inspection of my work that took all the fun out of it. You always seemed to find the spots I had missed, or come up with something that I had overlooked. It frequently made me feel as though I could do nothing right – you were always so critical, always looking for the imperfections. Then you would make me do the job over again. You would say, "Son, if you have time to do it over, you have time to do it right the first



time." I used to hate hearing that. You taught me that anything worth doing was worth doing well. That anything less than my best effort would produce less than the desired result. You said I should approach every job as if someone was watching – and if I did – that it would serve me well. You were right as it has. Thank you.

I remember that you weren't around much – off fighting the war, on some overseas assignment or just building your career. Seems like you were always working, making sure that we always had what we needed. Today that kind of fatherly absence would be socially incorrect. I had to face the many challenges of youth without fatherly guidance. I made mistakes; I made poor choices, and I took the wrong path a few times. I learned many of life's lessons the hard way. Thank you. You taught me self-reliance.

I remember not being too interested in school or homework. I don't ever remember you helping me get my homework done, or giving me the answers to problems I thought were too tough to solve. Because of this, I frequently turned in shoddy work and got the grade I deserved. You used to say, "Sooner or later, everyone gets exactly what they deserve, both good and bad." You would preach that "the results achieved were generally an accurate reflection of the effort applied." I remember a few times when I got in trouble and was sent to the principal's office. You always believed their side of the story over mine. You almost always agreed with their punishment and (on more than one occasion) encouraged them to dole out more. You didn't come to my defense or rescue me from the consequences of my behavior. Today I see so many parents who blame the teacher for their child's behavior problems. They blame the schools for their child's lack of education. They cry, "That's not fair!" You used to say, "Life is not fair – get over it, deal with it." You never asked that I get any special treatment, you always made me accept the consequences of my actions, fair or unfair. You helped me recognize that I, alone, would be accountable and responsible for my actions, my successes and my failures. At times, I thought you were being a little too tough. I remember you saying, "You don't learn the tough lessons in life from easy people." Thank you. You taught me to be accountable and to accept responsibility.

Thank you for not buying me everything I asked for, especially my car. I remember you telling me that I would appreciate it more if I bought it myself. I bought my first car with the money I made mowing neighborhood lawns. You were right. Thank you. You taught me "there is no free lunch – so if you want it – work for it."

That old car was a junker that needed a lot of work. When I asked you for money to repair it you said, "No, it's your car, and your responsibility." Because of this, I was forced to learn the science (art?) of shade tree mechanics just to keep it running. I would go to the library and read the auto repair manuals so I could learn to fix it myself. I made a lot of mistakes, and I busted more than a few knuckles, but it was worth it. You used to tell me "You can do, be or have anything, anything at all, if you want it bad enough." Thank you. You taught me perseverance and you taught me to believe in myself.

We never put down roots anywhere. Your military career kept us moving from one duty station to another. Just as soon as I would make a few friends, we'd be moving along to the next temporary house, base and school. I never liked all that moving around, but I did get used to it. Because of it, I get to say, "Been there, done that" more than anyone else I know. I learned to make friends easily. I acquired social skills that now enable me to get along with just about anyone. I was exposed to many different cultures and learned to appreciate the differences in people. I would not trade these experiences for anything. You used to say, "Do the best you can with what you have to work with. Take what life hands you, find the good in it, and make something of it." Thank you. You gave me invaluable experienced and taught me to be flexible.

I remember Christmas Eve 1973 – Camp Lejeune, N.C. – You were the Commanding Officer – 1st Battalion 2nd Marines. It was 7PM, and we had just finished our dinner, when you directed that we were going down to the barracks. I remember thinking, "What does he need me for?" I complained that I did not want to go. You told me, "YOU ARE GOING – so, grab those boxes, put them in the car, and be quick about it." I'm sure I mumbled something under my breath (as a 15 year old rebellious son is likely to do), and I did as ordered. (Sir, Yes Sir.)

I inquired, "What are we going to the barracks for? It's Christmas Eve. Who's going to be there on Christmas Eve?" You didn't say anything; you just gave me that strange impatient look. We arrived at the barracks, and I was surprised to find so many young Marines there. They were just milling about with nothing much to do. We carried in the boxes. You ordered, "All hands front and center!" The troops came

(Chat, cont'd from page 1)

waiting time of preparation which had me on my knees seeking Him before SCSM even became a reality. I thank God for those who were willing to journey with me and to encourage me through it. I learned how to pray and the necessity of taking time to be with God to recharge and be refreshed, so I could minister to others in their time of need, as well as have a healthy relationship with my husband, three children, and seven grandchildren.

Perhaps you are reading this article and are waiting right now on something that you believe God has shown you, but it has not happened yet. The waiting period can be a sacred time for you. It can be a time for healing of unresolved situations that you have not taken time to work through, or for your family. The waiting time is a time of surrender, a time of trusting, a time of faith. Faith is not really faith until it is exercised in the darkness. Out of the time of waiting, healthy ministry flourishes, and God gets the glory for great things He has done in you and through you as chaplains. There is nothing I'd rather be doing than serving the Lord as a chaplain. I myself have been changed by those who have allowed me to share their journey of suffering, but also their moments of victory as they found healing. "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18). "He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

(Father's Day, Cont'd on page 3)

running, no doubt thinking "What the heck is 'The Old Man' doing here on Christmas Eve?" As soon as all were assembled, you broke open the boxes and pulled out Christmas Cookies, Mom's homemade eggnog, and a large bottle of bourbon. (I found out later that you and Mom had been up until the wee hours of the morning baking those cookies.) The troops thought it was really cool that the "Old Man" would break the no-alcohol rule for their Christmas Eve enjoyment. I remember you telling them that you would deny that it ever happened if word got out. We stayed a few hours, serving those lonely young Marines who couldn't afford to go home, or had no place to go. I remember the smiles on their faces and how they thanked us for helping to make their Christmas a little less lonely. The shared stories of Christmas at home with one another and compared their different family traditions. It was truly a joy to witness.

On the way home, I asked you why you felt compelled to stand there serving up the lightly spiked eggnog and cookies instead of just having some yourself and letting everyone serve himself. You said, "The troops always come first. It is not our place to feast until all the troops are fed." And then you said something that I didn't understand until many years later. You said, "To lead is to serve." Thank you. You taught me kindness, concern for the well-being of others. You taught me "sacrifice of self" for the benefit of those I am privileged to lead. And most importantly, you taught me to appreciate the blessings that have been bestowed upon me.

In high school, I was not much of a student, and I remember you telling me that I wouldn't amount to much without a college education. I know that you were very disappointed that I did not continue my formal education. But I must tell you that your comment about "not amounting to much without college" was the driving force behind my every action in the years to follow. I was determined to prove you wrong. Whatever degree of success I have achieved probably would not have happened had you happily accepted my decision not to continue my formal education. Thank you. You challenged me. You taught me persistence, you inspired me to work hard.

I have reprinted here a prayer by Douglas MacArthur that you shared with me many years ago. I still have the copy you gave to me. In the upper right hand corner you scribbled a note that said, "Dear Son, this prayer accurately represents what I hope for you. Love, Dad." Well, Dad, I have not yet acquired all these fine attributes, but I am working on it. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think of you. I sincerely hope that I have made you proud.

Happy Father's Day.

Love, Andy

(Used by permission, A.G. "Andy" Budd, Country Chevrolet, Warrenton, VA)

### Build Me a Son

Build me a son, O Lord,  
who will be strong enough  
to know when he is weak,  
and brave enough to face himself  
when he is afraid;  
one who will be proud and unbending  
in honest defeat,  
and humble and gentle in victory.

Build me a son whose wishbone will not  
be where his backbone should be;  
a son who will know Thee-  
and that  
to know himself is the foundation  
stone of knowledge.

Lead him, I pray,  
not in the path of ease and comfort,  
but under the stress and spur  
of difficulties and challenge.  
Here, let him learn to stand up in the storm;  
here, let him learn compassion  
for those who fall.

Build me a son whose heart will be clear,  
whose goals will be high;  
a son who will master himself  
before he seeks to master other men.

Build me a son who will learn to laugh,  
yet never forget how to weep;  
one who will reach into the future,  
yet never forget the past.  
And after all these things are his, add, I pray,  
enough of a sense of humor,  
so that he may always be serious,  
yet never take himself too seriously.

Give him humility,  
so that he may always remember  
the simplicity of true greatness,  
the open mind of true wisdom,  
the meekness of true strength.  
Then I, his father, will dare to whisper,  
"I have not lived in vain."  
*Douglas MacArthur*



### Fauquier Ministerial Luncheon

All clergy and ministry leaders  
are invited to the SCSM Center

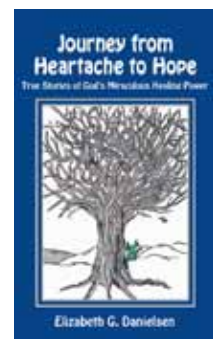
1st Tuesdays, Noon

Editor - Dorothy Slaga  
Associate Editor - Rev. Cheryl Reynolds

## SCSM Honorariums and Memorials

*In Memory of:* Nicholas Daymude, given by John and Debra Daymude, Copper Hill, VA; Bobby Satre, given by Robert and Moira Satre, Jeffersonton, VA; Antonio L. Melendez, given by Liz and Arvid Danielsen, Warrenton, VA; Zachary Howard, given by Natalie Ann Howard, Warrenton, VA; Sgt. Jason A. Shaffer and Jennifer Nicole Shaffer (newborn), given by Roger and Gwen Shaffer, Huntly, VA; Charles B. Leggett, given by Sylvia Leggett, Manassas, VA; Scott Neth, given by Jack and Joyce Neth, Flower Mound, TX; Rob Christiansen, given by John and Ann Marie McCarty, Catlett, VA; Frank May, given by Patrick and Carolyn Doran, Gainesville, VA; Brian Smith, given by Robert and Moira Satre, Jeffersonton, VA; John McCune, given by Patricia McCune, Warrenton, VA; Michael McClintock, given by Marjorie McClintok, Lakeland, FL; Helen I. Harper I. Butters, given by Jerre Denning Boren, Elkin, NC; Michael "Mike" McClintock, given by Janice Mazza, Caldwell, NJ; Mike McClintock and Duane Fayas, given by Arvid and Liz Danielsen, Warrenton, VA; Terry Halsey and Brett Toler, given by Carol Brinegar, Manassas, VA; Mrs. Ruth Wilson, given by Sandy Martin, Culpeper, VA; Edith Reinertsen, given by Helen Danielsen, Roseland, NJ; Elsie Staples and Joyce Staples, given by John and Priscilla Staples, Stephens City, VA.

*In Honor of:* Carol Brinegar and Kaycee Emilienburg, given by Lucila Fletcher, Manassas, VA; Anna Terwilliger, given by Allen and Tammy Terwilliger, Amissville, VA; Ada Shipe's birthday, given by Toni and James Russo, Sumerduck, VA; All you do for so many, given by Sharon and Marvin Strauzer, Sparta, NJ.



\$12

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# Living with Chronic Illness by Ken Reynolds

It was late, and just as I was about to fall asleep, my wife, Cheryl, nudged me and said, “How about you get up early with me tomorrow, and we can exercise together?” I hemmed and hawed a bit but finally gave in. I knew that exercising would help me feel better about myself. Just 2 months earlier I had lost my job. As a worship pastor, losing this job meant that I also lost my place of worship and a school for my kids.

I rolled out of bed the next day and pushed through the regimen. About halfway through, I twisted my elbow down to my opposite knee. I immediately felt something pull between my shoulder blades. I had to stop because of the pain. So much for exercise! I put some ice on it and within a couple days I felt better. Little did I know that this injury would become so severe that it would shake me to my core.

About a year and a half later, this “little injury” took a turn for the worse. The pain became debilitating! I thought, “Surely there will be something the doctors could do to help me.” Ten MRI’s and three EEG’s later, no one could tell me why my pain was so strong. Altogether, it took six years before I had a diagnosis. This past March, a neurologist finally figured it out. He told me that I have Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS).

CRPS is a chronic pain condition that develops in the body after an injury or trauma. It is believed to be caused by damage to, or malfunction of, the peripheral and central nervous systems. It is extremely painful and difficult to manage. According to the McGill Pain Index, pain from CRPS surpasses all other diseases. Doctors do not know all the causes of this syndrome, and they do not have a cure.

A couple months after finding out I had CRPS, I had surgery for a spinal cord stimulator. It was a last ditch effort. I had tried every medicine and treatment there was. The surgery helped some but not enough that I could function like a healthy person. After a lot of prayer and thought, I had to resign from my job as a worship pastor. We are currently in the process of transition as a family. My wife now works full-time, and I will work part-time or as much as I can.

This six year journey has caused me to reflect a lot on who I am and what the future will look like for me. I have so many plans to fulfill as a husband, a dad, and a spiritual leader. How will I accomplish them all with such pain in my body? And what will happen if I can’t do everything I had set out to do in life? How will I be happy, and what will others



Cheryl and Ken Reynolds

think of me? And then there is the big question. Where is God in all of this? I certainly don’t have all the answers, but I have learned some things along the way that help to keep me grounded when my situation seems out of control. I hope they help you as much as they have helped me.

First, God is not disappointed in me. Because of my public position as a pastor, I always had people asking me how I was doing. At times, I could see the disappointment in their eyes when I told them that I was not any better. After all, if God was going to heal anyone, He sure would heal a pastor, right? That makes logical sense since we sacrifice so much for Him. However, I have learned that this kind of thinking is futile. God does not heal someone because of their position or what they do for Him. His purposes are so much larger than what we can comprehend. God does not play favorites. The Bible says, “The rain falls on the just and the unjust.” It also says, “Nothing can separate us from His love.” So, each day I have to remind myself that I am loved by God just as much as I was when I was healthy and strong.

Secondly, God’s silence is not His absence.

I’d love to tell you that I’ve had some great revelations from God during this time. However, the opposite is true. Much of my free time has been used to fight the pain attacking my body. It would be very easy to conclude that God has forgotten about me. This is what our feelings tell us sometimes. I’ve learned that every day I have a choice to trust my feelings or to respond in faith to God. I’ve found that the two are most often diametrically opposed. Our feelings change with the circumstances. Our faith remains rooted in God who never changes. Our feelings cause us to be shortsighted. Our faith is grounded in the eternal. Our feelings want to look for someone to blame. Our faith reminds us that God is still in control. Our feelings tell us God has forgotten us. Our faith declares that His silence is not His absence. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Lastly, God does not see me any differently. This trial has been a constant reminder to me that my identity is not found in what I do for a living. Instead, my identity is anchored in how God sees me. Let’s face it, as guys, we often find our identity in what we do for a living. When two guys meet for the first time, they almost always ask the question, “So, what do you do?” To some degree, we as guys measure each other’s worth by the other’s status or position. Fortunately, this is not how God sees us. God loves us all the same whether we are a CEO of a company or the assistant janitor. As a follower of Christ, my identity is found foremost in what God says about me. When we choose to find our identity in Christ, we can walk through each day with our head held high because we know that, sickness or not, God doesn’t see us any differently.

These are just a few things that have helped me along the way. I pray that they will bring strength to your heart as you walk down your difficult path.

**GIFT CARDS!**  
SCSM would be *thrilled* to receive gift cards for Walmart, gas stations, Amazon, etc.!  
We LOVE gift cards!



It’s another way you can bless this ministry.

Check out Chaplain Liz’s  
**New Blog**  
[www.scsm.tv](http://www.scsm.tv)

**SUPPORT**  
Spiritual Care Support  
Ministries on  
**Amazon SMILE**

# What Do You Anchor to During a Storm?

## Praise and Prayer

### *Praise the Lord*

- For His loving kindness and faithfulness to our ministry.
- For the hope we have in Christ in spite of the challenges we face.
- For the opportunities God gives us to serve Him.
- For those who are interceding for us in prayer.
- For the new SCSM Center that is being built so we can have more room to minister.
- For all our SCSM staff and volunteers who are called by God to care for others.



### *Prayer Needs*

- Pray for our country and all our leaders' hearts to be right with God. Pray that a miraculous change in the spiritual atmosphere of our community will be evident.
- Pray that those who come for support would be willing to change and work towards healing.
- Pray for wisdom and discernment
- Pray for the elderly that have lost hope and purpose.
- Pray for the IPOD generation that they would want to hear from God.
- Pray for those struggling with chronic illness every day.
- Pray for those who are grieving because of personal losses.
- Pray that God would send us Pastoral Care Counselors willing to volunteer here at SCSM.

## Thank You!

Bobby Delach for cleaning the Center; The Orthopedic Center for use of their parking lot; Diane and Jim Fritz for donating coffee; Warrenton Bible Church for funding for our Clergy and Ministry Leaders luncheon each month; the Pastors Luncheon group would like to thank Choice Books of Northern VA for allowing Linda Stoltzfus to be able to make food and serve the community pastors.

by Dr. Karl Benzio

### **Transformational Thought**

Have you ever noticed this natural human phenomenon? As a deadline approaches, we tend to move more quickly. When we get lost, we start driving faster. When we don't know what we are talking about, we begin to talk faster and louder. But rarely does going faster help us address the problem. Lewis Carroll of Alice in Wonderland fame captured this behavior saying, "The faster I go, the behinder I get."

During severe storms, one of the best actions we can take is to drop anchor. An anchor wedges itself deep into the rocks and sand. It protects the vessel and crew from being set dangerously adrift, being tossed back and forth due to the winds and waves ... and possibly crashing into the rocks. In our personal storms and most stressful moments, we need a secure anchor ... not transient feelings, wishes and hopes ... but the deep, secure anchor of God's rock-solid character and promises.

Satan wants us to run blindly toward false, hollow deathtraps masquerading as truth and refuge during the frequent storms that come our way. God's promises, character, instruction, and Word anchor us to Him and equip us to be steady in every storm. We can be victorious in any challenge that Satan brings and God allows (yes, He does allow every trial) so that we grow the mind of Christ within us.

Our problem is that we are suckers for the "My kingdom come, my will be done" mentality, which says we should anchor to ourselves or to the world's system so we can immediately achieve what we want. We often think we have more power than we really do. We think we know all the answers. Or when we see something pretty and shiny we believe it is the answer. So, we chase Starbuck's, the latest self-help fad, nutritional supplements, more money, alcohol, a drug, a pain pill, one last bite, more control, more power or prestige, that significant other who is an answer-to-my-dreams, or even nice things like education, employment, or family. The only reliable place to drop anchor in a storm ... is in Him.

Listen up! Following the Bible will shape your thoughts and actions. Having the ability to believe what the Bible teaches about pain is



one of the most important set of instructions we can ever learn. God provides peace. He doesn't give us more pain than we can endure. He hooks up to our yoke to lighten our burden. He grows us through these trials. And He provides the Great Comforter.

Today, take comfort in knowing that you have a secure place to drop anchor when storms threaten your peace and stability. When you face uncertainty or discomfort ... just STOP and

THINK. What does God promise or say in these kinds of situations? We may not know what the future holds for us. But He does. And we can rest in the knowledge that we are safest when we're anchored to God. Look at the optional anchors you can choose. Be honest with yourself about the safety they offer. If you or a loved one are in an acute storm and need treatment options, call our helpline now 1-844-Life-Change (844-543-3242). We will find you some immediate safety so you can anchor into God in a practical way. Whether you drop anchor in God's love, truth, and instructions or you choose to drift aimlessly or worse yet, drop anchor in the sand truth of your own making, is your decision so choose well.

### **Prayer**

Dear Father God, I thank You for being the God of all hope. You know the desires and secret fears of my heart ... You know when I am in the midst of a terrible storm. I thank You, Father, for all Your promises and Your steadfastness during my storms. Thank You for being my refuge, my rock, my place to drop anchor. When I drop anchor on my own skills, or the world's wishy-washy answers, my life starts to spiral out of control. Today I cast all my hopes and dreams onto You for safekeeping because I trust You. I pray in the name of the one You sent to be my anchor, Jesus Christ; and all God's children say – AMEN!

### **The Truth**

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. Hebrews 6:19

In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. Psalm 33:21

(From Dr. Karl Benzio, *Lighthouse Network's Stepping Stones Daily Devotional, February 15, 2017. www.lighthouse-network.org, used with permission*)

## Our Joy by Cindy Martz

I am the mother of a 30 year old daughter with autism. Her name is Joy. She is nonverbal and cannot read or write. She struggles with anxiety and panic attacks. She is also beautiful, intelligent and many people will say, “You gave her the right name, Joy; she’s always smiling.”

This is a small nugget of our story. Everyone has a story. My story is the hard truth God has been teaching me ever since my third child, Joy, was born. It is about lessons learned. It is about God helping me to have a proper understanding of Him, His Word, and my relationship to Him. The spiritual lessons I’ve learned have transformed me, and isn’t that what Romans 8:28, 29 tell us about God’s plan for our life? His desire is for us to metamorph or change to be a reflection of Him.

Twenty-eight years ago this past June, I took my 18-month-old daughter, Joy, to the pediatric neurologist. The doctor came into the room, had Joy perform a few simple tasks, and then he looked at me and said, “Joy may have severe mental learning problems.”

As I sat on a chair across from the doctor, darkness invaded my being. I felt like Job when he said, “The worst of my fears has come true, what I’ve dreaded most has happened.”

I cried all the way home. It wasn’t a silent cry. It was a noisy, loud, hitting the steering wheel wail.

Twenty-eight years ago, although I was a Christian, my life was a mess. The future seemed dark and bleak. Some of those reading this know what I mean. You are facing some things you never thought you’d have to face.

But my faithful God did exactly what He promised in Romans 8:28. He used what was going on in my life for my good, and He began to teach me some things I needed to learn. The process was long and hard. It didn’t happen overnight. It took years. And trust me, He’s still teaching me today.

I’d like share with you some things I learned from that painful time of my life.

Up until that point in my life, my



view of God was that He would bless those who followed the rules and punished those who didn’t. I felt like God was punishing me, but I didn’t know why.

I shared this with my pastor, and he shocked me when he gently said, “Cindy, God will never punish the Christian. All our sin—past, present, and future—has already been punished on the cross. As Christians, we will never be punished for sin. However, because God is a loving father, He will discipline the Christian who is willfully sinning; but in that case, you will know what you are being disciplined for.”

I prayed, begged, and pleaded with God to touch Joy but nothing changed. Then, I became angry at God. I stopped talking to God. I felt hopeless because who can we turn to if we can’t turn to God?

The foundation of my spiritual life was falling apart, and I didn’t know what to do about it. Then, one night I was reading a book written by Dr. James Dobson called *When God Doesn’t Make Sense*. In that book, Dr. Dobson makes the statement that when God doesn’t make sense, it isn’t God who doesn’t make sense, it is our understanding of God that is skewed. When I read that, I just stopped reading. I got out of bed and started to pace. I mulled over what Dr. Dobson was saying. There is something wrong with my understanding of God. And then I wondered, who do I talk to about

this? Joy was 9 ½ years old. The Holy Spirit prompted me to talk to one of my Christian co-workers. I approached her by saying, “I have a theological problem. Will you study the Bible with me?” With a broad smile she said, “Of course I will. You know there is nothing I like better than studying the Bible.”

One day as we were talking, I said to her, “I love my husband and children. I prayed every day for my baby when I was pregnant, and I continue to pray for her. I have students in school who are pregnant who didn’t pray for their babies, and they have healthy babies. THIS IS NOT FAIR!”

My friend said, “Cindy, imagine that you had given Jill every Barbie doll and related toy she ever asked for. Suppose she had 20 Barbie dolls, the Barbie dollhouse, Barbie car, etc. Then one Christmas, when Jill asked for another Barbie doll, you got her a doll that was not a genuine, brand-name Barbie. How would you feel if she threw a tantrum and said, “I don’t want this doll.”

I said, “Well, I’d think she was a spoiled brat, and I’d be upset with her for acting that way.”

“Cindy,” she said, tears now running down her cheeks, “You are being that child. Until now you have had the perfect life. You have your Ken doll, your little Ken, your little Barbie, your Barbie house and your Barbie car. And, now God has given you something that is not according to your plan, and you are telling Him He has failed you.”

My head went down and tears began to roll down my cheeks.

She continued, “God doesn’t nicely weigh out on a scale who deserves what to make sure Cindy’s life is fair. You are lucky God doesn’t give you what you deserve or you’d go to hell.”

My jaw dropped open, and my eyes got big. I said, “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

I didn’t get it and maybe you don’t either so I’ll try to explain what she was talking about.

(Our Joy, Cont’d on page 7)

Let's visualize me holding two dishes. They are both dirty. One is just a little dirty, but it IS dirty. The other dish is a dirty, filthy mess. However, they are both dirty dishes.

When I stand before a perfect and holy and righteous God who cannot stand sin, it isn't going to matter if I'm a just little dirty or very, very dirty! One sin makes me unacceptable to Him.

Here's the key. I didn't see myself as dirty. I obeyed my parents. When I went to college, I went to Bible studies and not drinking parties. When I married, I was not unequally yoked. When I had children, I took them to church and Sunday School, raising them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Oh sure I sinned, but they were respectable sins. The sins we tolerate in our Christian circles because we all know none of us are perfect.

Although I trusted Jesus to be my Savior when I was six years old, because I had lived a pretty good life, I never really grasped the depth of my sin or how gracious and merciful our God is.

My friend explained to me that because of God's mercy I would not get what I, as a sinner, deserved – eternal separation from God and eternal punishment in the lake of fire. Because of God's grace I would get something I didn't deserve – I would spend eternity in heaven where there would be no more tears, pain, sickness or death, and I would be eternally be in the presence of Jesus, my Savior.

God created a perfect world. He created two perfect people. He gave them one rule. Do not eat from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil or you will die. They flunked the test. And, as soon as Adam and Eve sinned, Genesis 3:15 tells us that God told the Serpent that he would send a Deliverer, born of the woman who would crush Satan's head. Then six verses later, we see the first death in the Bible as God demonstrates to Adam and Eve how

sin must be paid for. He shows that for man to approach a holy God, something innocent must die for the guilty and there must be the shedding of blood. God killed an innocent animal and made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them

This all foreshadowed the coming Savior, who never sinned but shed his blood and died in our place taking the punishment for our sin. The Bible never promises us that after we put our faith and trust in Jesus that our life on this earth is going to be perfect.

Paul was perhaps the greatest missionary who ever lived. In 2 Corinthians 12:7–9, Paul writes, "I was given a thorn in my flesh ... Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, 'My grace is sufficient for you.'"

Paul had healed others. Acts 14 tells us of a time when Paul told a man who had been crippled since birth to "Stand on his feet." No physical therapy was given for those atrophied muscles and yet the man jumped up and began to walk.

But, when Paul prayed for his own healing God did not heal him. Paul, who wrote at least 14 books of the New Testament had a life filled with adversity. In 2 Corinthians 11:24–27, Paul tells us of some of the adversity in his life: five times he received 39 lashes from the Jews, three times he was beaten with rods, he was stoned, shipwrecked and many times he was hungry, thirsty and cold.

I just spent the past year studying the book of Hebrews, and I am reminded what I learned in Hebrews 11, the faith chapter of the Bible. It mentions Abraham, Moses, Samson, David and the prophets.

Hebrews 11 beginning with verse 37 (Message Version), the scriptures tell us "We have stories of those who were stoned, sawed in two, murdered in cold blood; stories of vagrants wandering the earth in animal skins, homeless, friendless, powerless—the world didn't deserve them!—making their way as best they could on the cruel edges of the world. Not one of these people,

even though their lives of faith were exemplary, got their hands on what was promised. God had a better plan."

When I reflect on these verses, I ask myself, where in the world did I get the idea that life is fair and bad things won't happen to good people?

We live in a sin-cursed world. On this earth, life will be messy. For those who have trusted Jesus as Savior, we are forgiven of our sin, and we have the Holy Spirit living in us which is a promise that someday we will receive a glorified body and live for all eternity with Jesus in heaven. And in heaven, we have an inheritance waiting for us. 1 Corinthians 2:9 tells us, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

Keeping an eternal perspective makes all the difference in the world.

Obedience does lead to blessings, but like Laura Story's song, "Blessings," the blessings are not material blessings. The blessings is what He teaches us through the tears. My dear friends, we live in a fallen world. The best is yet to come.

What kind of mess are you dealing with in your life? What are you struggling with?

The hard truth is that God might not fix the broken things in our lives here on earth. But the truth of the Word of God is that when the trials of life come, He will walk the journey with us. He will never leave us. His grace is sufficient. When we are weak, He will give us the strength to do what He's called us to do.

Here's a truth I cling to. God is not only the hero in my story, but also the author! Each page, each chapter, is written by Him! I am so thankful that during the harder chapters of my story, I've learned I can still trust Him.

Dear Lord, You are so good. Help us to see Your hand working even in the midst of things that seem to be messes. May we always remember you will never leave us or forsake us and that you love each of us with an everlasting love. Thank You for all You have done for us. We praise You, worship and adore You. In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.





## Spiritual Care Support Ministries, Inc.

Reaching for a Hand, and Touching a Heart  
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## Dear Chaplain Liz

*Dear Chaplain: Every day of my life I wake up with some kind of physical pain. Throughout the day, I am experiencing pain in some degree. It distracts me at my job and time I spend with family and friends. Sitting anywhere for too long is so uncomfortable. It is really hard not to give up. I just recently prayed to God, asking Him to forgive me of my sins. I recognize that He died on the cross for me. I want Him to be the center of all that I do. I want to learn what it means to "earnestly seek Him." How do I do that when pain is my constant companion, and it is hard to think of anything else? Help!*

I am glad to read that you are a Christian and that you made that commitment to want the Lord to be the center of your life. It is the best decision you will ever make, but it

does not mean that everything in your life will be perfect.

In Psalm 139 it says that God knows everything about us. That means that He knows you are in pain. So, if you have asked for healing and it has not come yet, Jesus spoke to the Apostle Paul and those same words are for you today. "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (1 Cor. 12:9).

Continue to voice your need to God and to others so that they can pray for you and give you words of encouragement. Open your mind and look around you. God will make a way for you to get through those moments of pain. After all, He is the Creator of all our moments.

Do you have a question for Chaplain Liz? Send your question to "Dear Chaplain Liz", SCSM, 76 W. Shirley Ave, Warrenton, VA 20186. All correspondence needs to include your name, address and telephone number to be considered. All correspondence becomes the property of SCSM and receipt of the same constitutes writer's permission to publish any portion of the material in the H&H Newsletter or any other media, at the sole discretion of SCSM. Only first names (or an alias if you so indicate) will be included in the use of the material.

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### SCSM Mission Statement

Providing support, education and a Biblical perspective to those who are ill, dying, grieving and experiencing personal loss, and to those who journey with them.

### SCSM Vision

To establish a local, national and international resource center to provide ministry, training and a retreat for those who are ill, dying, grieving and experiencing personal loss, and to those who journey with them.

**SCSM Values:** God's Word, Prayer, Value Every Human Life, Integrity, Confidentiality, Excellence in Everything We Do.