

An Unexpected Journey

The Addie Lee Silver Story:

Where Faith and Medicine Meet



As told to Linda M. Davidson

With Foreword by Dr. Diane Poythress

Copyright © 2016 by Transformation Bible Ministries (TBM).
All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any way by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the author/TBM except as provided by USA copyright law. This book is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information with regard to the subject matter covered.

Published in the United States of America

ISBN 13: 978-0-9971121-3-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016906005

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved.

An Unexpected Journey

*The Addie Lee Silver Story:
Where Faith and Medicine Meet*

*as told to Linda M. Davidson
with Foreword by Dr. Diane Poythress*

Acknowledgements

Addie would like to acknowledge a few special friends who helped to put her story on paper:

Dr. Diane Poythress, who graciously wrote the Forward, along with those who helped with proofreading and editing:

Becky Wyand
Denise Detweiler
Brenda Proper
Laurel Robinson

and her son, Joseph Lee Silver, for providing the cover sketch.

Addie would also like to extend particular thanks to the following congregations for their prayers, encouragement, visits, meals, childcare, transportation, beautiful flowers, housecleaning, help with moving, and so much more, over the past 23 years:

Chapelgate Presbyterian Church (attended from 1992-2002),
under the leadership of the Rev. Ron and Mrs. Jenny Steel;

Faith Christian Fellowship (attended from 2002-2007),
under the leadership of the Rev. Craig and Mrs. Maria Garriott
and the Rev. Stan and Mrs. Terri Long;

Korean Calvary Presbyterian Church (attended from 2008-2010),
under the leadership of the Rev. and Mrs. James Ro;

Covenant of Grace Presbyterian Church (attended from 2010 -
present)
under the leadership of the Rev. Herb and Mrs. Shelley Ruby
and the Rev. John and Mrs. Pam Aldrich;

and the Walkersville Christian Family School for Homeschooling
Legal/Practical Support
(2002 – 2007), under the leadership of Gary and Sally Cox.

If Addie were to even attempt to give thanks in these pages to all of the lovely friends that have come alongside her and her family, those names would fill an entire volume of its own. She is so grateful to God that, in His great sovereign mercy, He placed so many loving people into the lives of the Silver family, for their good and for His glory! Please know that to everyone who whispered a prayer, prepared a meal, sent a card, shared a conversation, ministered to her children, or in any way encouraged or supported the Silver family in their journey, she is profoundly and eternally grateful. May God richly bless each of you for these demonstrations of mercy.

*“If you are wise and understand God’s ways,
prove it by living an honorable life,
doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom.”*

James 3:13

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book firstly to my Heavenly Father, His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit;

and to my husband, David Silver;

and to my children: Joseph Lee Silver, Daniel Scott Silver, Deborah Ann Silver and Samuel James Silver;

and to all future generations, in the hope that their hearts would be open to knowing God, loving God, and honoring God in their lives.

Addie Lee Silver
April, 2016

FOREWORD

When we moved onto our property over 30 years ago, we discovered a wondrous apple tree. It bore the largest apples I had ever seen. Later, a severe pruning meant it would never bear fruit in the same way. It lost a limb, split down the trunk and began to hollow out, but every spring its blossoms are fragrant and profuse. It reminds me of Addie. “He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields it fruit in season.” (Psalm 1:3)

When I met Addie she was a Westminster student, born in Seoul, Korea, who had already conquered the English language and music. With the same zeal, she sought to know God and His Word. “His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night.” (Psalm 1:2) We became instant friends and remained so after her graduation, praying together and sharing life’s concerns. One day she brought over her new boyfriend, Dave, from another medical school in Philadelphia. Perhaps because I was not family, I felt bold enough to sternly quiz him about his love for Jesus his Savior, and whether he truly loved Addie, no matter what. He confirmed both.

Their wedding was a time of great rejoicing as we watched them delight in each other and the Lord who called them. They sang to each other (as I, in embarrassment, clung to the antique pearls I had rescued off the floor from my baby’s rough handling).

I remember seeing in Addie’s younger sister’s eyes the same expression of abandonment that my younger sister had when I married, and so we prayed together. The boathouse on the Schuylkill River resounded with music and laughter that night. There was so much hope for the potential of this Christian couple invested in the Lord’s work.

God granted a son and we celebrated with the traditional Korean 100-days party. There were other blessings of fruit: another son, a home, a job, church, mission trips, involvement in the Christian Medical and Dental Society, and homeschooling. Addie followed

God's leading in staying home to raise the precious gift of young lives entrusted to them.

Then came the phone calls: first, during her third pregnancy, the diagnosis of a rare autoimmune liver disease. The second call came after the delivery of her fourth child, diagnosing another rare autoimmune disease (this one impacting skin and muscle). Both diseases have a lower than 10-year life expectancy. She might have barely enough time to see the children into their teens. It would require tremendous faith on her part as she raised these children.

She has remained, by God's grace, His prized masterpiece: a fragrant, flowering tree after severe pruning. Together we have laughed, wept, prayed and shared Bible verses. Always, I felt I was the one more blessed by each encounter. I saw the reflection of Jesus being formed in her, sometimes even feeling that I could see Heaven opened and smell the fragrance of Christ when Addie and I were together.

I praise God for my friend – this precious, beloved friend – whom God has blessed me with and whose testimony here, I hope, blesses you.

“For the Lord knows the way of the righteous.” (Psalm 1:6)

-- Dr. Diane Poythress

PREFACE

In the summer of 2012 I began attending Covenant of Grace Presbyterian Church, located in beautiful Reisterstown, Maryland where I often heard stories of a woman named Addie Silver. Addie has been chronically ill for over 20 years with numerous painful and debilitating ailments. What constantly surfaced in conversation and prayer, however, was the faith and joy she displayed in the midst of truly horrible symptoms. Because her trust in Christ Jesus is the bedrock of her life, her confidence stems not from the things of this world, but rather from His loving provision for her. Her friends bear witness to this for, in spite of all her sufferings (Addie would interject: *“Through! Not in spite of!”*), those who know her speak of the constancy and potency of her faith. They eagerly share the impact that her witness to Christ has had on their own struggles. I began to form a picture of her in my mind and to look for her each Sunday, hoping for a chance to meet this dynamic woman.

Each week Addie’s name would be mentioned during intercessory prayer, and I often received voicemail at home requesting more urgent prayer intervention, as she was at times alarmingly near death. Although there was a Sunday when Addie’s health improved enough to allow her to be present at the morning service, I was not in attendance that day and so continued to wonder about this amazing woman. Something had been planted in my heart and was beginning to take root. It was more than a simple tug of compassion. While I certainly had a strong desire for Addie’s healing, there was something else that I could not quite put my finger on. I had never even laid eyes on this woman; what was it about her story that called to me?

One day as I was praying for Addie and her family, understanding finally dawned: it was so simple! *A person’s life is more than their diagnosis.* Of course! Who of us, honestly, would want the story of their life to be summed up solely by affliction or context? Certainly Amy Carmichael’s life story, marked as it is with a multitude of challenges, is nonetheless a story filled with triumph. Likewise the biographies of Fanny Crosby, Corrie Ten Boom, Joni Eareckson Tada and Elisabeth Elliott are so full of joy that the reader cannot help but come away filled with hope, rather than despair. I

now found myself wanting to learn Addie's whole story, beginning with her family history and moving on through her childhood to the present day. What persuaded her family to migrate to America? How did she meet her husband? How did they fall in love? When did her children arrive, and what personality traits marked each one? I wanted to know the circumstances that God had specifically used to shape her character, and so I began to pray for something to move in Addie's heart, even as I petitioned Him to speak clearly into mine.

In the meantime I had come to know and love one of Addie's dearest caretakers, Denise Detweiler. Once or twice each week she would go to the Silver home and lovingly do whatever was needed for Addie and her family. Denise is a gentle and tender-hearted woman with a great sense of humor that somehow blends perfectly with her compassion. (Someone needs to write a book about Denise.) Each week over Sunday brunch she would share with several of her close friends an update on Addie's condition. Occasionally we would bow our heads together there in the Reisterstown Family Diner and pray for Addie, Dave and their four children. Often the reports from Denise were so grim that I feared I would never have the opportunity to meet Addie this side of Heaven.

Without saying much about it to anyone, for about a year I continually prayed that God would open a door for me to find out more of Addie's story. Finally the time felt right for me to ask Denise, who is fiercely protective of Addie, if she would consider asking Addie if I could meet her. She cocked her head to one side, looking thoughtful. "*Why do you want to meet her?*" she asked me. I told her that I had been praying for a long time about the possibility of meeting Addie and of writing her story, and shared why I felt it was important. Denise agreed to bring the suggestion to Addie.

Our amazing God is ... well ... so *amazing*!! Imagine how I felt when I learned that He had been speaking into Addie's heart, just as He was speaking into mine. The Sunday after I made my request known to Denise, she shared that Addie had been praying for *about a year* for someone to come forward to help her share her story! I still get chills when I remember that moment. How incredible to think that the God who spoke the universe into existence would deal so

personally and tenderly with Addie and me individually, and then bring us together in His perfect timing.

Denise and Addie had agreed that the following Saturday morning would be a good time for us to meet. I could hardly wait. And so I came face-to-face with Addie Lee Silver on a warm and rainy Saturday morning in June of 2015. She is a tiny, bright-eyed woman, and although I was initially nervous about our meeting, her warm and welcoming nature banished any strangeness between us. She simply took my hand in both of hers and welcomed me into her lovely home.

It was immediately obvious to me that this petite woman was as full of life as anyone I have ever met.

Walking with some difficulty (with Denise clucking along behind her, gently scolding her for not using her walker), Addie began to relate to me the details of her various diseases with the clarity and honesty of a medical doctor, which indeed she is. (Addie graduated from medical school one week before giving birth to her first child, Joseph.)

I confess to being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of her afflictions, as she described with brutal honesty both the severity of her pain and the constant challenge of her disabilities. It is important to note, however, that these representations in no way portray the true crux of Addie's story. If I've told her story with any degree of accuracy, these horrid and myriad symptoms are completely eclipsed by her strong heart, shaped by her utter confidence in the Lord's presence in and will for her life.

Although her diseases have greatly altered her, let me be clear on this: Addie's spirit is not broken, for the Lord has restored and revived it time and time again. It is true that her body is plagued with a dizzying variety of painful symptoms. It is equally true that her emotions can roller coaster from moment to moment, syncing with her level of pain and the limitations that pain has introduced into her life. In the face of this, what I so long for you to learn of Addie far exceeds the brutal challenges she faces daily. While she is often weak

and overwhelmed with pain, Addie's identity is found not *along* the harsh lines of medical reality, but *between* them. In the same way that dancers move between the lines dictated by a choreographer, Addie's essence swoops and soars all over the ugly roadmap of her pain.

Addie and her husband David reminded me that God's view of "brokenness" is radically different from that of the world's. From a biblical perspective, brokenness is a desirable thing, seen as an: "...ongoing and constant way of life. It is the shattering of my self-will and the absolute surrender of my will to the will of God, so that the Spirit of the Lord can be released through me." (Nancy Lee DeMoss) And the Psalmist cries out to us, over thousands of years: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." (Psalm 51:17) In this context, Addie rejoices in her brokenness, seeing how her Lord is continually, faithfully (albeit often painfully) shaping her into His own image.

It would not be practical to print all of Addie's journal entries, but oh! What a blessing it was to read over them. In their pages I witnessed how Scripture has powerfully broken through her discouragement and fear. I have cried over written testimonials of friends whose faith has been made stronger – more real – because of Addie's witness. My own heart has shifted painfully, struggling to comprehend the borders of her life. These journals reflect a faith "full grown," and not the naïve hopefulness of an untried one. Having lived through genuine pain, loneliness and despair, her writings do not shy away from such challenges. Instead, her spirit as portrayed in her journals reminds me that there is so much more to life than what we touch, possess, enjoy or suffer. I am crushed; I am uplifted.

Addie and I hope that her story will encourage its readers in their own personal realities. Perhaps it will prompt tears; perhaps you will count your blessings, thinking: "*There but for the grace of God go I....*" I would be surprised if you do not, at least once in your reading, scratch your head and wonder how anyone could survive such suffering. She has been brought low physically, emotionally and spiritually time after time, and she makes no attempt to minimize the harsh reality of her existence with platitudes or false cheer. Addie is

real. Addie is honest. Addie wants you to know who she is and what her day-to-day life consists of. You will quickly learn, however (as I did at our very first meeting), that she has not allowed these monstrous and multiple symptoms to define her.

While every contact with Addie was a privilege, there was one incident in particular that moved me tremendously. Addie and I had each picked two people to review her story with an impartial eye. My request was as follows: “Please be brutal. I need you to point out grammatical and factual errors, anything that doesn’t read correctly, any awkward transitions,” etc.

Addie asked only one thing of her reviewers. “Please point out anything that would detract from the glory of God.”

Humiliation hit me like a thunderclap. I suddenly remembered with great clarity the times in my own life where I had allowed suffering to ferment into bitter disappointment. Not only was I full of self-pity, but I was quick to share my misery with anyone within earshot. In Addie’s life, her response to enormous suffering has been, in large part, to ask the Holy Spirit to mold her more and more into the image of Christ. Her family and friends can attest to the fact that He has been granting that request for over 20 years.

May the Lord be honored in these pages. May you be both strengthened and softened as you meet Addie there. May you find Christ to be *your* all-in-all, as she daily discovers Him to be hers. Like my sister Addie, may you hunger to know Him more, love Him better, and become more like Him – through every experience in your past, present and future.

In His name, and for His glory –

-- *Linda Davidson*

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 1: Korea | 1 |
| Chapter 2: Roots and Wings | 5 |
| Chapter 3: Super Sublings | 15 |
| Chapter 4: The Gift of Music..... | 19 |
| Chapter 5: Coming to America..... | 25 |
| Chapter 6: A New Beginning..... | 29 |
| Chapter 7: Detours | 37 |
| Chapter 8: A Heart Divided | 45 |
| Chapter 9: The Real Thing..... | 53 |
| Chapter 10: The Two Shall Become One | 57 |
| Chapter 11: Open My Eyes, That I May See | 65 |
| Chapter 12: All In The Family..... | 71 |
| Chapter 13: Raise ‘em Up..... | 85 |
| Chapter 14: All the Children of the World | 91 |
| Chapter 15: Diagnosis..... | 97 |
| Chapter 16: Healing Hands..... | 105 |
| Chapter 17: Surprise! Surprise! | 111 |
| Chapter 18: The Valley of the Shadow..... | 113 |
| Chapter 19: Close Calls | 119 |
| Chapter 20: A Poem for Addie | 123 |
| Chapter 21: Party! Party! | 125 |
| Chapter 22: Hospice: A Time to Die?..... | 139 |
| Chapter 23: Saints Along the Road..... | 145 |
| Chapter 24: My David | 159 |
| Chapter 25: A Word from David Silver..... | 161 |
| Chapter 26: From the Pastors’ Desks..... | 165 |
| Chapter 27: Turning for Home | 171 |
| Chapter 28: And the moral of the story is | 173 |
| Chapter 29: Lessons Hard Learned..... | 177 |

Chapter 1

Korea

*“This is the story of a people which was scattered over all the world
and yet remained a single family;
a nation which time and time again was doomed for destruction
and yet, out of ruins, rose to a new life.”*
-- Abba Kovner

Royal Blood

Korea has over 5,000 years' worth of a rich cultural history. Over time, it was divided into four or five different kingdoms with different rulers. One of the kingdoms was known as the Joseon dynasty. Addie's father and his siblings, the eighteenth generation of the royal family of Yi, are descendants related to the Joseon dynasty.

The leader of this dynasty, Yi Sae Jong, hired language scholars and directed them to create one national language for all Koreans to speak. Until that time, everyone in the land spoke Chinese, a complicated and symbolic language with many different dialects, made even more difficult by the fact that it has no consonants or vowels. The King instructed these scholars to make the new language simple enough for everyone to speak and write. This is how the consonant and vowel system, “Hangul,¹” came to be.

Diaspora

In the ancient Greek language, the word “Diaspora” (a scattering or sowing of seeds) refers to any people or ethnic population forced or induced to leave their traditional homeland, as well as the ensuing developments in their culture. The nation of Korea experienced this phenomenon at the end of World War II in 1945 as it was divided by the United States and the Soviet Union,

¹ The Korean alphabet, known as Hangul in South Korea, is the alphabet that has been used to write the Korean language since the 15th century. It was created during the Joseon Dynasty in 1443, and is now the official script of both South Korea and North Korea.

with the north occupied by the Soviets and the south by the Americans. Negotiations on reunification failed, and in 1948 two separate governments were formed: the Republic of Korea in the South, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the North. These conflicting claims of sovereignty led to the Korean War (1950 – 1953). At the war's outbreak both of Addie's parents, along with their extended families, lived in South Korea, very close to the dividing border's militarized zone.

Addie's mother's family consisted of Addie's maternal grandfather, grandmother and their three daughters. At 13 years of age, Addie's mother (Mae Cha Shin) was the youngest. During this turbulent time, communist soldiers targeted individuals who were well-respected and/or educated. Addie's grandfather was singled out and murdered simply for refusing to join the communist movement. Her grandmother gathered her remaining family and fled, on foot, further south. They were not alone as they walked away from the militarized zone; crowds of their fellow countrymen moved with them, all seeking escape from tyranny.

Travelling toward their new home, they were continually threatened by North Korean soldiers. Sadly, the middle sister became separated from her family in the crowds of displaced Koreans and was never found, nor did they ever receive any news of her. The oldest sister died when she was only in her 50's, and Addie's grandmother died from lung disease in 1994, after following Addie's parents to America.

Addie's father's family, as well, experienced firsthand the horrors of war. The communist soldiers of North Korea also targeted Addie's paternal grandfather for the "crime" of being an educated and well-respected community leader who decried communist rule. Choosing a day when Addie's father was not at home, soldiers ambushed his family. Her grandfather was hiding in a large ceramic urn such as those commonly used for fermenting cabbage underground (a delicacy known as "kimchi"). Believing the soldiers had left his home, he poked his head out of the urn to look around. Unfortunately, the soldiers were still in the home; upon hearing his movements, they found him and executed him on the spot. One of her

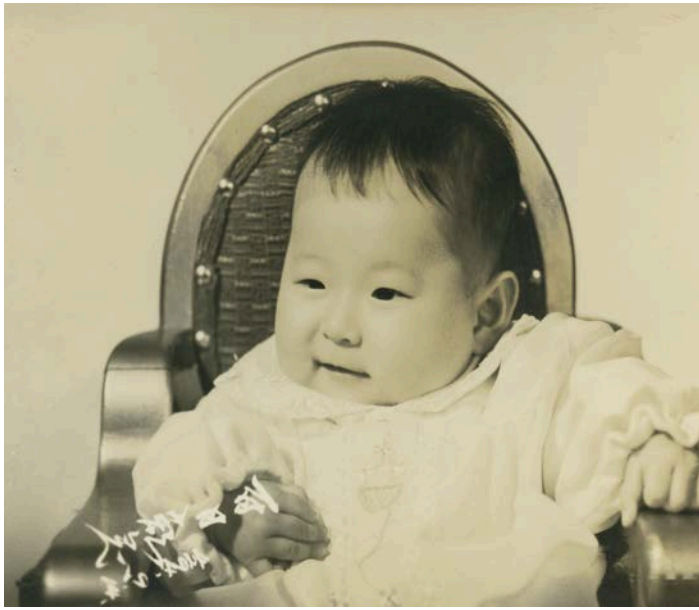
father's brothers was hiding under the home's raised floor and very likely witnessed this horrific event.

1961 Coup

The war between South and North Korea ended in 1953, but 1961 again saw great turbulence in South Korea as it was marked by a coup. On May 16, 1961, Park Chung-hee and his allies, forming the "Military Revolutionary Committee," rendered powerless the democratically elected government and ended the Second Republic, installing a reformist military: the "Supreme Council for National Reconstruction." This Council was instrumental in bringing to power a new developmentalist elite, laying the foundations for the rapid industrialization of South Korea.



One year old



Addie Lee at 100 days old in Seoul, Korea



e

One year old

Chapter 2

Roots and Wings

“There is no doubt that it is around the family and home that all of the greatest virtues, the most dominating virtues of humans, are created, strengthened and maintained.”

-- Winston Churchill

A New Generation

A few short weeks after the coup, on June 7, 1961, little Addie Lee entered the world, bringing great joy to her parents as their firstborn.

Elsewhere in the world that same year, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was inaugurated as the youngest U.S. President ever elected; Nelson Mandela was acquitted of treason; Roger Maris hit 61 home runs; Russian ballet dancer Rudolph Nureyev defected to the West; construction began on the Berlin wall; the Beatles met and signed their future manager, Brian Epstein; To Kill A Mockingbird, by Harper Lee, won the Pulitzer for Literature; and in Seoul, South Korea, 36 Unification Church couples wed in a large single ceremony.

Two years later, in 1963, Addie’s brother Patrick would arrive, and 14 years after Addie’s birth, her little sister Sandra would be born in 1975.

When Addie was just six months of age, she was being cared for by her mother’s sister and family in order to give her parents a month-long break. During that time, Addie fell ill and had to be hospitalized due to severe dehydration. The doctor told Addie’s parents that they would need to keep a close eye on her as she was growing.

The family had little money for the first year or so of Addie’s life, and so they lived very humbly. For a short while they even lived in a house made mostly of tin, including the roof. It was unbearably cold in the winter and insufferably hot in the summer. As an infant,

Addie cried so long and hard from the heat that her father, Joseph, was compelled to walk with her for hours in an attempt to calm her. After a year or so in the little tin house, they were able to move. The Lees were considered lower middle class in Seoul for the first few years of Addie's life.

My Mom

My mother, whose baptized name was "Rosa," was born Mae Cha Shin in South Korea, very near the dividing north/south border, on October 4, 1937.

I always saw my Mother as a strong and domineering personality, and as a child I remember feeling a bit intimidated by her. In reality she is not like that at all. I am much closer to her now. Intelligent and industrious, she is always eager to learn something new, constantly challenging herself and her intellect.

Mom took many different classes while we were growing up. Cooking class, for example, encouraged her to experiment with all kinds of different foods. Spaghetti was new to us: we called it "Italian noodles." Salad (which we called "salada") was not traditional Korean fare, either. Then she introduced us to pancakes, which we called "hotcakes." She made tiny ones, topping them with her own home-made syrup. She made her own mayonnaise, too, and iced beautiful cakes with mashed potatoes! I remember all of her cooking as being both exciting and delicious.

When she began baking her own bread, she put many different colors of dye in it. We had pink bread, and light blue bread, and she would share loaves with all of her friends. It was yummy, and everyone enjoyed being on the receiving end of her generous creativity.

Mom also went to sewing school and learned to make pajamas for all of us. This was a big part of who she was, and still is: she just loves to learn new things. Later, using many different media (including chalk and paint), she drew pictures of herself and all of her family members. She learned this skill after coming to America and taking a class in Columbia, Maryland. She also took singing lessons. I

believe I inherited my drive to excel from my amazing mother, who took advantage of almost every opportunity that came her way. She never let a chance to improve the quality of life for her loved ones pass her by.

As just one example of her sense of adventure, she joined a team of nurses sent to Germany for two years when my brother and I were very young. She returned after just one year, though, because she missed her family. We missed her, too!

When I was five and my brother Patrick was three, our mother went back to work as a nurse. Since we lived right next door to her father's older brother, there was always family to look after us. We eventually hired a young girl (probably between 14 and 17 years of age) to come and live with us as a domestic servant. This was very common in Korea at that time. For a small salary, a young servant girl would cook and clean and care for the children in the home.

After coming to America, Mom tried so hard to learn English, studying at a college in Baltimore as she sought a basic American education. Although she already had a nursing degree, she eventually ended up working in a medical clinic as an audio technician.

As I got older, Mom and I grew closer, opening our hearts to each other. I began to appreciate the womanly side of her, along with her wise heart and true friendship towards me. She is funny, too; we laughed together quite a bit. Mom doesn't hesitate to share her convictions, and I knew she always tried to give me the best advice regarding the life decisions I would have to begin making as I grew from a girl into a woman. I am so grateful for the freedom that both of my parents gave me to make my own choices.

Needless to say, she is extremely concerned about my health, as she is about my dad's. The desperation of my situation has caused her to turn to God and put her trust in Him. She has always provided extravagantly for any need that I have. God's faithfulness and love have been shown to me so clearly through my mom's loving example to me and to my family.

My Dad

My father's Korean name is Young Jae Yi. He changed his name to Joseph Lee in order to make it easier to pronounce when we came to America. All of the Lees have baptismal names; my father's was Joseph. He was born on January 14, 1931 in an area near the Militarized Zone between North and South Korea.

My father fought in the Korean War in 1950 and was shot in the leg. He still has the metal rod in his leg from the subsequent surgery.

Joseph was the second to the youngest of four children, consisting of three boys and one girl. Of the four siblings, my father's personality most resembled that of his mother, who was mild-mannered, kind and gentle. He was planning to pursue his education after the war and was accepted into college, but his younger brother had the same dream and there was only enough money for one son to go. Joseph gave up his own hopes in order for his brother to be able to attend. In addition, at just 21 years old he secured a job at the American Embassy in Seoul and helped to pay for his brother's education. He is just that kind of person; he finds great joy in helping others. I have always been impressed by the unselfish, sacrificial love that my father displays in his daily life. Even today, my dad continually puts the needs of others above his own. His desire is always to see that everyone has what they need. Whenever we buy him a gift, he is so happy that someone thought of him! His whole face lights up with gratitude and joy. Dad never takes anything for granted.

After his brother graduated from college, Dad stayed on at the American Embassy and only recently retired in 2016, at the age of 84.

When my brother and I were young, my father's work often involved travelling to other countries. He would always bring home a very special gift for Mom whenever he travelled. This made her so happy, and set a wonderful example for his children. I guess gift giving is his "love language." I remember one occasion in particular when I was about seven years old. Dad had travelled at Christmas time to Okinawa, an island off the coast of Japan. We did not see him for four or five days but were expecting him home for Christmas, and I

remember trying to stay up very late as I waited for him to walk through the door. I fell asleep and woke up to the soft sounds of gifts being wrapped in paper, and I knew Dad was home! I was so happy in the knowledge that we would be together as a family for the Christmas holiday.

In Korea, sweets and desserts are the exception, rather than the rule. Fathers on their way home for work, however, often bring just a little “treat” in their pocket for their children: a piece of candy, or a cookie. It doesn’t happen every day; it is a special occasion to have sweets. My Dad’s pockets often held something special for my brother and me.

When I was just a baby, my Dad loved to take me out in my stroller when he returned home from work. He would push the stroller at top speed, all around our little neighborhood. I would scream with glee. This was very unusual behavior for Korean men at that time. But how sweet! He often took me to the park. I just remember always feeling so loved.

In the heart of downtown Seoul there stands an enormous and beautiful palace. When my brother Patrick and I were very young, my father often took us to visit it. We both felt very special when we learned from our Dad they we were, indeed, part of this royal line.

Especially during the time that Mom was in Germany for a year, Dad would take my brother and I to the palace in downtown Seoul and we would just have a nice outing, or go to the movies. I remember seeing “Peter Pan,” as well as “The Sound of Music,” in the theatre. I was probably about eight years old at the time.

He often took my brother and me out to eat or to an amusement park. Almost every weekend, he took us somewhere special. On one occasion he brought lunch for just my brother and me, saying that he was not hungry. It was not until we were grown that we discovered that he did not have enough money on that particular day to feed all three of us, and so he went without. He just smiled and watched us eat.

My father is an exceptional man. I always felt very secure with him and was comfortable talking with him about anything.

When Dad Met Mom

While working at the American Embassy my Dad met his future bride, who was pursuing her nursing degree in Seoul at that time. One of my mom's good friends (who turned out to be one of my dad's distant relatives) introduced them to one another.

On one occasion, Mom became very sick while working at the hospital. Because the home she was staying in was too far for her to travel while feeling so ill, she went to my dad's older sister's house. She told me: "When I finally made it to the blue-colored door and knocked (she had never been there before), out came your dad's younger brother, who looked just like your dad! Then I knew I had come to the right house." After having this thought, she passed out.

She woke up some time later, and through blurred vision saw the doctor, my dad and his sister, along with a few others. They took such good care of her. She remained for three days, and Mom said she realized right then and there that she must have been meant to marry Dad.

They were married on April 23, 1960. Just one and one-half years later, I was born. My mother stayed home with me until I was five years old and my younger brother Patrick (born in 1963) was three.

I'm so glad my mom recovered from that illness! Throughout my life, my parents have both given all of themselves, and with such loving hearts. All through my childhood and various illnesses, they have been there for me. How grateful I am for them.

Long-Distance Love

I was in the fourth or fifth grade when my mother joined a team of nurses sent to Germany, and our grandmother, whom we called "Halmuni" (this is the Korean word for Grandma), came to live with us and care for us. While she was in Germany, Mom and Dad wrote

to one another regularly. I walked into their bedroom once and saw one of Mom's letters to Dad. Curious, I took a peek and saw that she had addressed it to her "Dearest Husband." I peeked, then, at Dad's unfinished letter to Mom, and saw that it was also tender and sweet. I remember being overwhelmed in that moment with the awareness of their love for one another.

In all my life, I only once saw them show physical affection to one another. Dad ran across the room and gave Mom a little "peck." Just that one time – and I felt so awkward! To this day, because of our Korean culture, physical displays of affection embarrass me. In Korea now, 40-plus years later, things have westernized. I have even heard that Korean soap operas have scenes that show physical affection. I can't even deal with kissing scenes! I'm just not used to that ... that stuff is private!

Although they occasionally quarreled, their love for one another was very evident, and of course they always made up. It never even crossed my mind that my parents would divorce. At that time the divorce rate was nowhere near what it is now, and in the Korean culture it was practically non-existent.

Happy Times in Seoul

Addie's father's sister and brothers also had children. While they were all still living in Seoul, they would gather together five or six times a year to enjoy a meal and some conversation, taking turns in their different homes. There was always a time for the celebration of music, and those who could sing or play instruments were invited to perform for the group. Addie recalls these gatherings as happy, loving times with her family.

One evening when she was about eight years old, the extended family was singing songs in English. All by herself, little Addie got up and proudly announced that she, too, could sing in English. She remembers singing "Do Re Mi" from "The Sound of Music," and bursting with pride over this achievement. These family times fostered tremendous closeness between them all.

Addie's mother's oldest sister, Young Hee, had a home near the beach in Pusan. Along with her brother, Addie would visit this beloved aunt for a month at a time. While they were there, she and her brother would hike with their four cousins, all of whom were boys. Her aunt was married to a Buddhist, and Addie remembers visiting the Buddhist temple. Her uncle would pay respect to some of the monks while Addie and the other children played. Badminton was a favorite game of theirs. Playing different games with her brother and cousins and spending time together on the beach was a great escape from the city where Addie and her family lived.

New Years' Celebration in Seoul

Seollal, the Lunar New Year in Korea, is an important family holiday. The three-day celebration is used by many to return to their hometown to visit their parents and other relatives, where they perform an ancestral ritual called *charye*. Many Koreans dress up in colorful traditional clothing called *hanbok*. This important holiday is a time to show respect to ancestors, and also an opportunity to catch up with distant family members who travel across the world to spend this time with their family. Tens of millions of people travel either by car, bus, train or plane to their hometowns in order to celebrate the Lunar New Year with relatives. There is a mad rush to book reservations before they all sell out. Meanwhile, traveling by car during the holiday can take two to four times the normal travel time due to heavy holiday traffic.

Gifts are usually given to family members, and new clothes are worn during *Seollal*. Traditional food is prepared for the family members coming to visit for the holiday. Another custom observed is the lighting of a "moon house" built out of burnable firewood and branches. This symbolizes the warding off of bad/evil spirits for the New Year. Many also choose to add their written wishes for the New Year to the moon house bonfire.

It was the custom of the Lee family living in South Korea to wear a costume on New Years' Day. Addie's family would go to her father's oldest brother's house each year and have "Duck Gook." "Duck" means "rice cake," and "gook" means "soup." The rice cake

in the soup was made to look like thin, oval-shaped pasta, and served in a beef broth with dumplings and seaweed. All of the children would bow to the floor and say: “*We wish you a great blessing for the New Year,*” upon which the adults would give the children money.

Before I Knew Him: An Early Sense of God’s Presence

When I was about 12 years old and still living in South Korea, I woke in the middle of the night experiencing nausea and pain in my lower abdomen. My mom was working as a nurse in the emergency room of the nearby hospital that evening. I heard Dad talking to her on the phone and the next thing I knew, he had called a cab and we were on our way to the emergency room. I was so glad Mom was there; I remember how calm she was. She drew some blood from my arm and watched me closely while the tests were run. I think the other nurses, doctors and staff treated me with extra kindness because I was the daughter of one of the staff.

About five hours later, I was on the operating table. After the surgery, Mom told me that when they removed my appendix, it looked as though it were ready to burst at any moment. She said that God had protected me from peritonitis, a condition where the abdominal lining becomes inflamed from a ruptured appendix. This condition is quite dangerous and can be fatal if not treated immediately. Although I had believed in God ever since I could remember, that night was the first time that I remember being truly aware of His presence in my life.

While I was still in the hospital and recuperating from the surgery, Mom told me that my body was healing at a much faster rate than usual. She said: “God must have really helped you.” At that moment, tears began to flow from my eyes. I believe that was probably the first time in my life that I gave sincere thanks to God. I sensed His presence right there with me in that hospital room.

Looking back, I know God has always been with me, and that He planned my life long before I was even conceived. I am humbled by the fact that He initiated our relationship by revealing Himself to me.

I grew up in a very devout Catholic home. My father's family lineage was Catholic for at least 100 years before his birth. I believe some of his ancestors were even martyred for their faith. I received my 1st Communion and attended confirmation classes along with all of the other "good" Catholic girls. I was always very proud to be a member of the Catholic Church, which did give me something of a biblical foundation. At one point I even considered becoming a nun and training as a medical doctor or an engineer under the Catholic Church.

Little did I know that God already had a plan in place for my life ...

Chapter 3

Super Siblings

*“To the outside world, we all grow old.
But not to brothers and sisters.
We know each other as we always were.”*
-- Clara Ortega

My Brother, Patrick Lee (Chong Hwan Yi) and Sister-in-Law, Jenny Lee

I have been blessed to have a brother just two years younger than me. Pat, whose baptismal name was chosen after St. Patrick, has always been a loving brother. After we both became Christians, that bond grew even stronger. He has always showed genuine concern for me. The more he and I have matured in our faith and in our understanding of Jesus' call on our lives to be His disciples and share the Gospel, the tighter that connection has grown.

Pat met his wife, Jenny, at a Korean Bible study. She was studying pharmacy at the time, while Pat was studying dentistry. She quickly became a part of the intercessory prayer team for all of our trials. On those occasions when we had a specific need for child care for one of our children, they truly invested themselves, pouring all of their love, care and godly discipleship into the lives of our children. Dave and I will always be so grateful for God's way of surrounding us with the loving care of this brother and sister-in-law who came alongside us, sharing our burdens.

God has incredibly blessed and emboldened Pat and Jenny to take the Gospel to foreigners, both here and overseas. Pat's dental skills have opened many doors that might otherwise have remained closed. The Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been shared by Pat and Jenny as they have actively reached out to foreigners through Community Bible Study.

As ever, God is at work in all of us. I thank Him so much for giving me such a loving brother and sister-in-law.

God has blessed Patrick and Jenny with two wonderful children: at this writing Christian is 21 years old, and Juliana is 19. Both attend the University of Maryland's College Park campus. Jenny continues to use her pharmaceutical degree in her part-time work.



Pat and Jenny becoming engaged



Juliana, Jenny, Pat and Christian

My Sister, Sandra Lee Cho (Chong Min Yi), and Brother-in-Law, Sam Cho

This precious sister is 14 years younger than me. She was born on May 21, 1975, the year that my family came to America. Initially, my aunt and her family (my mom's older sister, Young Hee), along with my maternal grandmother, remained in Korea and cared for Sandra while we were settling into our new life here in the United States. My parents returned to Korea several times to see her and when Sandra turned eight, she and Grandmother joined us in our new home. I remember being so happy that our family was finally reunited.

I always loved having a baby sister. She joined David and me for ice cream at Friendly's on our first "date." We tried to make her feel comfortable, as she was going through a huge and very difficult cross-cultural transition. We were so proud of how well she handled all of it. She has always been very smart and artistic, along with having a sweet and kind nature. After David and I were married, my sister stayed with us during her last year of college.

Sandra met and married a wonderful man named Sam Cho, who is an Assistant Professor at Wake Forest University in North Carolina. Sandra is a math teacher in a high school in that same area. Both Sandra and Sam have been wonderful to my children.

Always precious and very loving towards me, I pray the Lord will draw them closer to Himself, revealing to them His tender lovingkindness. I also pray He will fulfill all of His purposes in their lives, for their good and for His glory.



Sandra and Sam's wedding

Chapter 4

The Gift of Music

*“Hard work will take you to the top;
talent will only take you to the door.”*
-- Unknown

Discovering Her Gift

During Addie’s years in South Korea’s public schools, the students were required to clean their classrooms. This included sweeping, mopping, waxing and shining the floors, cleaning the windows and the blackboards, and dusting and wiping down surfaces, etc. Most of the children did not mind this. Once she arrived home in the afternoon there was much homework to be done after dinner, and so it was often close to midnight by the time Addie went to bed.

Playing the piano was very popular among the young children of South Korea, and Addie began to play in 1969, when she was eight years old. When she was about 12 years old, her parents purchased a piano for her. The only time available for her to take lessons at that time was from 5:30 – 6:30 a.m. She would then eat breakfast and leave for her one-half mile walk to school at 7:30 a.m. Afterwards, she would walk home from school, arriving around 4:30 p.m. Since this left her no time to practice the piano, she would get up at 4 a.m. (sometimes even earlier) to practice, using the mute pedal so that she would not awaken the rest of the household.

During summer breaks she would practice much more, often between four and six hours per day. Her cousin once asked her why she practiced during normal sleeping hours. “*Because,*” she answered, “*while other pianists are sleeping, I am practicing so that I can become even better than they are!*” It seemed a natural choice to Addie, since her goal was to become a concert pianist and travel the world. How could she even think of skipping practice? At twelve years old, she was already a self-starter, eager to excel and full of confidence.

After the Lee family moved to the United States in 1975, Addie's parents were no longer able to afford a piano or lessons for her. She would listen to her favorite classical piano pieces on cassette tapes, sometimes with tears running down her face because she missed playing the piano so very much.

Once they had settled in the U.S., Addie began attending Martin Luther King Junior High School in Beltsville, Maryland as a 9th grader. There, her kindly school principal allowed her to practice in the music room at school, and to play on the stage in the cafeteria while the other children ate their lunch. The students voted Addie "Most Talented" at the end of her ninth grade year.

Although she had received enough training in South Korea to be able to read music and play, once the family had moved to America Addie continued to improve on her skills by teaching herself. Eventually Addie's loving parents found a way to buy her a piano. That same piano, now 40 years old, still occupies a place of honor in her living room.²

In America now, during my high school years, I continued to practice the piano diligently and improved without formal instruction. I wanted to be able to play the challenging and beautiful classical pieces (Chopin's Fantaisie Impromptu Opus 66, Beethoven's Pathetique Opus 13, and Chopin's Polonaise Opus 40 No. 1, among others). When playing these pieces, my heart would overflow: I felt as though I were born to this. Obviously it was intended by God, for

² Years later, in medical school, Addie learned that growth hormones are secreted during the sleep cycle. Because of her ambitious and competitive nature, she drove herself very hard during her youth. She wonders, looking back, if her lack of sleep affected her physical growth and stamina. Although her parents did not put an unreasonable amount of pressure on her, there was always the expectation that she would strive for excellence in order to reach her goals. After almost 36 years of God's work of sanctification, and over 21 years of illness, she believes she may have finally mellowed out a bit (although she still has very high expectations for herself).

when He created me with this gift it was a part of His plan, just as it is a large part of who I am as His child.

I was very involved in various music programs in high school. I sang with and accompanied the school choir, played in the jazz band, accompanied the school's production of the musical "Fiddler on the Roof," accompanied and musically directed "Good News" and played classical piano pieces in the school talent show. It was so much fun. What a great gift from God! I did not know Jesus personally during those years, and so I was not as thankful as I should have been, but I did feel a very special sense of pride in my musical ability. Later I would come to understand that the glory was all His.

During my college years I played the harpsichord in the orchestra for one semester. While attending Westminster Theological Seminary, I worked part-time as a youth minister in two different Korean Churches. In one small congregation, I was able to work with children from the age of two through 13, all in one class! I played the piano while we all sang, and had the privilege of teaching the Bible to them. It was a wonderful experience. The children and I really enjoyed one another.

During my years in medical school I hardly had time to play, but after getting married and beginning our family I really wanted our children to develop a love for music. I taught them some piano, and Dave taught them to play the guitar. Whenever I sat down at the piano and started to play, the children would gather around me and try to play along.

I am also very thankful that God gifted Dave with the abilities to play the guitar and sing. He also composes music, and has written many beautiful songs. I had wanted to marry a man with both musical appreciation and talent, and God graciously answered that prayer. I feel so fulfilled with Dave. Thank You, Lord!

Our first son, Joseph, picked up piano and guitar easily and occasionally teaches himself to play different pieces.

Daniel, our second son, took a great interest in music and was playing Mozart's Ronda Alla Turca Sonata at age seven! At age 13 he began to study jazz piano. After that he took some lessons from a professor at Peabody Institute, in order to prepare for an audition for the Baltimore School of the Arts in Baltimore City. We were so thrilled when he was accepted!! After a few weeks, though, he decided not to continue due to his interest in different styles of music. He is 23 years old at this writing and still enjoys music, occasionally playing the piano. I pray that God will continue to direct his path.

Deborah, our third child, developed an early love for singing and playing the guitar. As a young teen, she participated in Towson High School's production of "Annie," and various school and church talent shows, along with performing special music during worship. As she is attending the University of Maryland in Baltimore County and studying physics, she thoroughly enjoys singing with "Stellato," a womens' acapella singing group.

Our youngest, Samuel, sings as well as plays the piano, guitar and cello. When Samuel is at home, there is usually some form of music playing. Debbie and Sam often sing duets when they are home together, interspersed with frequent bouts of laughter.

In 2011 Debbie begged me to accompany her on the piano, as well as singing the first verse of her selected song ("Press On," by Selah) as a solo. I sang the alto for the remainder of the song, and Debbie took the lead. I played with difficulty; I knew that I was not playing as well as I used to. It was humbling. I told Debbie, though, that I was doing it for her, and for God. Yes – I took one more step towards the death of my perfectionism! We performed in our church's talent show, and then again during the worship hour. I have a video of that performance that really warms my heart when I watch us singing together. It is a precious memory for our family.

The last time that I felt I played normally was in 2009, when I taught myself to play "Clair de Lune" by Debussy. Now it is hard to believe I was able to play any piece of music! Dermatomyositis has completely reshaped my arms and hands as contractures have developed, and I am unable to move my fingers or flatten my hands.

In addition, my muscles are so weak that I literally cannot press down and move my fingers. Even sitting on a piano bench is difficult and dangerous, because I can lose my balance and fall so easily.

When I listen to a great piece of piano music, well played, my heart is still filled with eagerness and a passion to play. That response to beautiful music has never faded, and I look forward to playing in Heaven. Yes! I thank God that He gave me the ability to play, even if it was temporary. I believe He will return that gift to me in an unimaginable capacity one day.

Music has greatly enriched my life and the lives of my family. Even as I grieve the loss of this particular ability, I am so thankful that God revealed this part of His character to me. It is only the physical act of playing that I miss, as I still hear such beautiful music in my head, all day long.

Beyond playing the piano, there are so many normal, everyday abilities and activities that I miss: showering, bathing, changing clothes, sitting on the floor, eating normal meals, even making my own bed! Once upon a time I loved playing racket ball, running, swimming, performing aerobics, going up and down the stairs, and simply taking a walk. Now I would rejoice at simply being able to pick things up off of the floor!

I would emphasize, however, that in many strange and mysterious ways I am experiencing a little bit of what the Apostle Paul describes: “I consider everything a loss compared to the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, for whom I suffer, and the joy that I gain in Christ. (Philippians 3:18) Jesus fills us with more and more of Himself, even as we are being emptied as He was, for us: “Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.” (Philippians 2:7) We are so full of ourselves, however, that the process of being emptied in order to be filled with Christ is one of the most challenging (and satisfying) acts that we will ever experience. Wow!

If someone tells you that the process of becoming like Christ is easy – that it’s a piece of cake – they have no idea what they are talking

about. There is a cost to being Christ's disciple and following Him: it will require all of you. "Then, calling the crowd to join His disciples, He said, 'If any of you wants to be My follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow Me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.'" (Mark 8:34, 35)

The eternal glorious destiny that awaits us is unimaginable. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him." (I Corinthians 2:9) And the wait will be totally worth it. "For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!" (II Corinthians 4:17)



First piano contest in South Korea (1970)

Chapter 5

Coming to America

*“They decided to let immigrants in
and I am an immigrant.
They gave us a chance to participate in this country’s life ...
and I took it.”*
-- Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Baptismal Name

When Addie was still in South Korea her family attended a Catholic church. Following in that tradition, all of the family members received baptismal names after the saints. Addie’s father was known as Joseph and her mother was Rosa; Addie was Perpetua and her younger brother was named Patrick. In her Korean home, church and community, Addie was known as Perpetua.

Perpetua was a saint who was martyred sometime around 203 A.D. under the Roman Emperor Geta, who history identifies as one of the most brutal of emperors. At the time of her death, Perpetua was the mother of a nursing infant. The rest of her family were very prominent citizens of Rome, and begged her to recant. *“All you have to do is light this incense to one of the Roman idols, and you will live! Please, for your baby’s sake, for our sake, don’t do this.”* But she was resolute, even in the face of death. She would not dishonor Christ even if it cost her very life.

Perpetua had a servant who was eight months pregnant. She, her servant and her servant’s husband were all Christians. Imprisoned together, they clung to their faith and to each other. Her servant gave birth before the time came for them to be thrown into the colosseum with the wild animals, all for the entertainment of the Emperor Geta and the bloodthirsty citizens of Rome.

Hungry beasts were released: bears, wild boars, leopards, and lions. Occasionally the Romans would tie the martyrs to a pole in the center of the arena so that they could not run away, but Perpetua was put into a little net and securely tied to a leopard, who then drug her

around the arena. She escaped being devoured and a soldier was ordered to execute her by the sword. He was young and inexperienced and could not make the fatal wound on her clavicle, so Perpetua took the sword and inflicted it herself. Written records of that time state that Perpetua spoke of a vision she received from God, while still imprisoned, wherein He revealed to her that He would keep His promise and that she would soon be united with her Savior in glory.

A New Name for a New Life

Addie's name in the Korean language was "Yi Choung Mi." (Koreans place last names first.) When she came to America she did not want to use her Korean name, since the citizens of her new country would find it difficult to pronounce.

Years before they immigrated to America, Addie and her mom would indulge in one of their favorite pastimes: that of watching old black-and-white classic American movies, dubbed in Korean. One evening they watched a movie called "Lonely Christmas." There was a girl in the story named Addie. Little Perpetua enjoyed the movie and thought that the title character reminded her of herself: ambitious and strong-willed. She remembers thinking: "If I ever go to America, I'll call myself 'Addie.'"

The name "Addie" comes from one of three sources: (1) Adelaide, (2) Adeline, or (3) Adelina. She liked "Adelaide," and was delighted to learn that it meant "Noble." "Choung" means "royal court," and "Mi" means "beauty." Five years after immigrating, little Perpetua became an American citizen and claimed the name "Adelaide Perpetua Lee." The name held meaning and hope for her new life in America.



Addie at 11 years old



19 year old Addie with other researchers at U of MD, College Park Chemistry Lab



Grandma, Sandra and Addie at Westminster Theological Seminary, 1984



Graduating from High Point High School, 1979



In her dorm at Lafayette College

Chapter 6

A New Beginning

“Being a Christian is more than just an instantaneous conversion; it is a daily process whereby you grow to be more and more like Christ”

-- Billy Graham

College-Bound

In 1979, Addie turned 18 years old and began attending Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. Lafayette lies on the border between Pennsylvania and New Jersey. She chose this school partially because she did not want to attend a big one. In addition, they had an engineering department; Addie wanted one of her majors to be in chemical engineering. Lafayette also offered a large number of scholarships and grants. All of the pieces seemed to fall into place: between the size of the school, the financial helps and the programs offered, Lafayette seemed a perfect fit.

Growing up in a Catholic home, Addie had a basic knowledge of God and His Son, Jesus, whom she believed were real. She did not, however, have any idea of a personal knowledge of, and relationship with, God. Neither had she ever truly heard the Gospel and the salvation it offered in its purest form. Little did she suspect, as she crossed the threshold from high school into young adulthood, the momentous change that was about to take place in her life.

After her first week of freshman classes, Addie really wanted to do something fun. She was not necessarily looking for a party, but she did want to experience life as a young co-ed, along with her peers. She approached her Resident Advisor (who was a Christian, although Addie did not know that at the time) and asked for her advice. Her advisor told her of an on-campus group, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (“IV”).³ She assured her that the students involved were

³ InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA is a campus ministry that establishes and advances witnessing communities of students and faculty, ministering to students and faculty through small group Bible studies, large gatherings on campus, leadership, training, and discipleship.

really friendly, and that she thought Addie might enjoy it. To Addie, this did not sound appealing, but she decided to give it a try.

Arriving just a bit late, she found the meeting in full swing. The students that she found there were from all different ages, school levels and personal backgrounds. They were singing and praising God when she walked in, and to Addie it sounded as if they really *knew* God; that God was really there in the meeting with them. This was a type of worship that she had never experienced. It appeared to be coming straight from their hearts. There was sincerity there. Although her mind was filled with questions, she felt as John Wesley must have when he wrote: “*I felt my heart strangely warmed.*”⁴

A week later, Addie went to meet with her Resident Advisor. As she waited outside of her room she met another student named Anne Reinhold, hanging out in the hall. Addie thinks that Anne was a junior at that time. She and Addie introduced themselves to one another and, after chatting for a bit, the two of them decided to take a walk. They walked and talked for two hours, and Anne shared the Gospel with her in a beautiful and meaningful way. Addie wept through the entire conversation. She was overwhelmed as she heard for the first time in her life the beautiful message of Christ’s loving sacrifice for her. It was such a tender and personal introduction to God’s love. She had never before heard that God desired a personal relationship with her, and that He had a plan for her life.

As they finished their walk, Anne asked Addie if she would like to know Christ personally – to become a Christian. Her response was immediate, enthusiastic and sincere: “*Of course!*” They prayed together and Addie asked the Lord to come into her heart. She wanted to know Him personally as her Savior and Lord.

Anne gave Addie a little New Testament, writing in the front of it the date of September 28, 1979. Addie went to her room and opened the Bible, discovering to her delight that it spoke personally to her in “*truly living words.*” She joined the IV fellowship and thanked God that, right at the beginning of her freshman year of college, He

⁴ [The Journal of John Wesley](#), Christian Classics Ethereal Library

had revealed Himself to her and saved her. She wondered where she would have ended up that weekend if He had not prevented her from pursuing some other form of entertainment. She was so vulnerable and naïve. She could have easily been pulled in any direction, but God had both guided and restrained her, claiming her for His own and setting her among fellow Christian students, many of whom would become dear friends.

Through IV she was immediately involved in a Bible study, where she was fed and nurtured. Addie's heart was becoming that "fertile ground" (Matthew 13) that the seed of the Gospel was scattered upon; its roots were fed and watered and grew down deep into her heart.

Academic Anxiety

As Addie's first engineering exam approached, she became extremely anxious and felt as if she were not going to do well. She did not think she had a good grasp of the material and was beginning to feel desperate. The night before the exam she called Anne Reinhold and confided her fears. Anne spoke to Addie through God's Word, quoting Scripture to her: "*Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with My victorious right hand.*" (Isaiah 41:10) This conversation took place near midnight, while she was trying to get in a few more hours of studying and was feeling overwhelmed with pre-exam stress.

Addie took a shower to clear her head. As she was standing in the shower stall with her head bowed and water dripping down, she had a strong sense of Christ's presence: He was bowing down over her, almost as if she were standing at the foot of the cross. She trembled; He was very real to her, and it shook her to the core. Addie went back to her dorm room with a clear, untroubled mind and continued her studies in complete peace. In good spirits, she took her exam the next morning and God helped her to do well on it.

Addie never forgot her sense of desperation and the way that God had responded to her: He had immediately shown her how great

her need of Him was, and how very near He was to her. This marked the beginning of her understanding of what it really meant to depend on God, and not herself. It was a beautiful lesson of God's nearness, compassion and provision, and would remain tremendously relevant to her in the years to come.

Army Camp

In the summer of 1980, after her freshman year, Addie was feeling disgruntled with the lack of discipline in her life. She signed up for a one-month stint with the ROTC Non-Committal Army Basic Camp Training Center located in Ft. Knox. With her parents' permission, she flew by herself to Kentucky and was met by a recruiter.

Because of her competitive nature, she fully expected to shine at every new skill she acquired. At Ft. Knox she fired a hand gun for the first time in her life. Determined to consistently hit the bulls-eye, she excelled at first but then her aim began to waiver. In her frustration, she surprised herself by muttering the word "*damn*" several times under her breath. This was not a word that had ever been a part of her vocabulary.

A fellow cadet, particularly known among the others for his foul mouth, mocked her, saying: "*Cadet Lee – stop cursing!!*" Addie was immediately humbled, feeling rebuked by God through this profane young man. Although it may have seemed a minor offense to some observers, this was a pivotal moment in her young life as a Christian. God was confronting her with her own ugly temper and unclean mouth; there could be no escaping the fact that she was a sinner.

Addie had been a Christian for about one year at this time.

Research and Reason

Addie remained at Lafayette for five years, graduating with two degrees: a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. Although she found engineering to be less than exciting, she discovered an unexpected love for chemistry and so pursued her Bachelor of Science in that field. It was an awful lot of science but she found that she also enjoyed Liberal Arts, and so added a second major in Philosophy. Each one was a break from the other. She came to realize that they were actually complimentary, combining research and reason. Each sought to prove fabricated statements through theories and the gathering of evidence. She was developing skills in logic, and she loved what she was learning about the process of problem solving.

Because she had such a strong desire to learn how the world worked and thought, these studies fed and excited her mind. If she had not been a Christian, Addie feels that the pursuit of these two vastly different degrees might have led to disillusionment and perhaps even depression. Her bedrock of faith in Christ, however, enabled her to explore and appreciate what people thought, why they thought it, and how it influenced their world views.

Go Ye, Therefore ...

After her third year at Lafayette, Addie went to Ireland with an organization known as “Global Outreach Mission.” She embarked on it without knowing anyone on her team. The training was held in Canada, and then off she went to southern Ireland. She recalls it being a wonderful experience as she spoke with people on the streets, in coffee houses and other venues. She was in Ireland for six weeks, playing the piano for worship and learning how to bear witness to her faith.

When she returned to Lafayette, the school newspaper interviewed her about her experience in Ireland. After reading the article, one of her professors remarked to Addie’s friend (who was a young and struggling Christian at the time): “*How could she be so stupid as to agree with this Christianity stuff?*” This was a rude

awakening for her. She was sure her professor now held the belief that she was not an intelligent individual, and that he would probably assign her a low grade in his class as a result. Thankfully he did not, but his comments did cause her to mull over some things that she had not previously considered. She began to count the cost of what she was going to have to face as a disciple of Christ. There would be many people who would look down on her for her faith, perhaps even suspecting her of having a low intellect. Addie had long struggled with pride and she really hated the thought of anyone believing she was unintelligent. She remembered, though, what the Bible taught: *“The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God.”* (I Corinthians 1:18) She remembered, too, that it was Jesus they were rejecting, not her. *“If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.”* (John 15:18)

During this time, Addie was attending an Orthodox Presbyterian Church (the “OPC”) in Easton, Pennsylvania, near Lafayette College, and was preparing to become a member of that congregation there. Addie’s OPC pastor, Jack Kineer, was wonderful. She attended a Catholic church at the same time, as an outreach. The OPC church fed her, and the Catholic church gave her opportunities to practice her evangelism.

The IV group remained a huge blessing to Addie. One of the staff, Nonie Bell, became a great friend to her. A few years later Nonie became one of Addie’s bridesmaids, and they still keep in touch today. As a leader, Nonie in particular was well trained and gifted at modelling for the students the study of Scripture, along with personal and corporate worship and fellowship. All of this fostered Addie’s growth in Christ.

As she looks back on her first IV meeting, she remembers thinking how unusual the students’ faith was. She was drawn to it, wondering what made their worship so different from what she had experienced. God had awakened a desire in her to learn about Him through the genuineness of the students’ praises and prayers.

She remained very involved with the IV group, attending retreats and executive camps and working on summer outreach projects. Consequently the first five years of her Christian life were marked by rapid growth in Christ, and she was well prepared for the next step. God would use the next few years to reveal the sin of pride in her life.



Missionary Training Institute, summer of 1985,
in South Korea



Addie teaching in South Korea,
summer of 1985 missions trip



Children from Korean Church where Addie was Youth Director, 1985



Students from Missionary Training Institute
in South Korea, summer of 1985



In Ireland with Irish Lads and fellow missionaries, summer of 1982

Chapter 7

Detours

“Sometimes God takes us through detours. He doesn’t always lead us the easiest way or the way we expect, but He leads us in the way that will grow us and prepare us for the blessing He has in store.”
-- Unknown

Who Wants to be a Doctor?

I was never interested in science when I was growing up in Korea. All I wanted was to become a concert pianist and travel the world.

When I came to America I was 14 years old. I was experiencing a lot of adjustments. Some were fun and exciting (food, personal appearance and clothing styles), while others were very challenging (learning a new language, and my first exposure to racism).

Overall, school was enjoyable. My chemistry teacher was not only engaging and encouraging, but she made a previously uninteresting subject fascinating. I found myself actually liking it! I even went that summer to “Science Camp” at Wesleyan College in West Virginia, where I learned about the science of coal. This teacher opened my eyes to opportunities that included research at the University of Maryland at College Park. There I studied the atmosphere of Jupiter, and my project was entered at the county Science Fair. I was thrilled when it won second place for my high school!

I surprised even myself when I won a minor competition in my biology class concerning cell replication. Looking back, I can see that God was beginning to open my eyes to the wonders of creation, and I began to ponder how I was made.

Because of all of these experiences I decided to pursue the prestigious career of a medical doctor, which would have the added bonus of bringing honor and a sense of pride to my parents.

At 16, I was still a practicing Catholic. I actually considered becoming a Nun with an M.D., and using that degree on the mission field. This desire was influenced by my viewing of the movie "A Nun's Story," starring Audrey Hepburn. I cried with all my heart as I realized what a tremendous sacrifice this type of calling requires, giving up a life of comfort in order to be poured out in service. What a truly selfless act, risking everything to teach the world about God!

When I became a genuine believer in Jesus Christ, I sincerely believed that I would someday become a medical missionary. Because of this, I chose to study premed, with a double major in chemistry and philosophy. I was so excited at the prospect of serving God as a doctor and caring for physical needs, while sharing the Gospel.

After graduating from Lafayette's premed program, Addie wanted to pursue her goal of becoming a doctor and a medical missionary. It seemed the perfect way to reach the world for Christ, and now she felt fully equipped to do so. Brimming with ambition, and encouraged by hearing of so many others that God had called to serve Him in this way, she began to apply to medical schools. She was so sure of her calling! Her dual degrees in chemistry and philosophy would uniquely equip her to work in the mission field, where she would be called on to make medical decisions and to deal with death and mourning in many different cultures. Addie felt up to the challenge.

To her shock and dismay, she was turned down by every single medical school that she applied to. Crushed, she began to question her goals. What would God have her do now? Her pastor surprised her by suggesting that she attend seminary, believing that this would help build on the strong spiritual foundation that had already been laid. He further believed that the principals and concepts she would learn in seminary would benefit her in whatever field God would call her to.

After crying out to God and searching the Scriptures, and with her pastor's encouragement, Addie decided that seminary was, in fact,

the best choice. In 1984 she enrolled in Westminster Theological Seminary (“WTS”) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the same seminary that one of her dearest pastors and friends, Herb Ruby, would later attend.

Westminster Theological Seminary

In His great wisdom, God planned for Addie to attend seminary before she would go on to medical school. How grateful she is, looking back, that His perfect will trumped her best intentions and loftiest goals! The idea of attending seminary had never crossed her mind, but suddenly it made perfect sense. A solid biblical foundation would help her to see life from a godly perspective, not simply governed by world events and her own understanding of them. This would be especially helpful regarding her exposure to the field of medicine.

At WTS, Addie felt truly privileged to sit under professors who loved God and taught His word diligently, and with passion: Dr. Sinclair Ferguson (who was also very caring and attentive to her situation, giving sage advice), along with Dr. Tim Keller, Dr. Richard Gaffin, Dr. Dave Powlison, Dr. Bruce Waltke, Dr. Ed Welch, Mr. Al Groves, Dr. Vern Poythress, Dr. Harvie Conn, Dr. Jack Miller, Dr. Ed Clowney, Dr. Jay Adams, and Dr. John Frame are just a few of the excellent teachers and friends the Lord blessed her with during her time at Westminster.

Dr. Vern Poythress’ wife, Diane, was pursuing her own doctoral degree at this time. She quickly became one of Addie’s dearest friends and a cherished mentor. Through visits and letters, they have remained close for over 31 years.

The first day that she stepped through the doors at WTS, she felt right at home. She got a job as an assistant cook to help pay her tuition and was delighted to find that she really enjoyed that work, too.

Each day, Addie experienced more and more of the grace of God, learning to rely solely on her Savior. This was a difficult lesson

for someone who had always been very hard on herself, both personally and professionally. Growing up, she had typically pressured herself to not only succeed, but to excel. Now she was beginning to learn a tremendously helpful lesson, that of full reliance upon her Savior.

One of the greatest experiences of God's grace occurred while Addie was studying in the library one evening during her first year at WTS. She suddenly became extremely burdened for her brother Pat's salvation. She had been praying for him and the rest of her family for five years, but on this particular night she was weeping like a child and feeling desperate regarding her brother's eternal destination. The next day she received a card in the mail from Pat, who was in his first year at the Maryland School of Dentistry and from whom it was very rare to receive a letter. He wrote of how he had met some other Korean graduate students who had shared the Gospel with Him. Because of their witness and their loving example, Pat had put his faith in Christ. In his letter to her, he had enclosed a tiny miniature white Bible with some verses from the Gospel of John highlighted for her. She cried again, this time from joy and thankfulness. In His great mercy and lovingkindness, God had answered her prayers for her dear brother's salvation *even before* her tears had flowed on his behalf the evening before.

Back Across the Sea

At the end of her first year in the two-year master's program, an opportunity arose for Addie to accompany a few other students to the Missionary Training Institute ("MTI") near Seoul, South Korea. Almost ten years had passed since she and her family had immigrated to America. She was now 24 years old. She looked back on how God had brought her to America at the age of 14, saved her at 18, and was now leading her back to the land of her birth. How wonderful to be used by Him as a Christian! Now a daughter of the King and a follower of Christ, she was thrilled to be His servant, helping Korean Christians who were training to be missionaries all over the world. She was struck by the knowledge that God's purposes will, indeed, never be thwarted; He works His perfect will for all of His children.

“I know that You can do anything, and no one can stop You.” (Job 42:2)

While there, Addie had an opportunity to travel to a small island below the southern peninsula of Korea, where there was a small Christian prayer ministry.

On a nearby mountain were tiny shacks, only about six feet by six feet. Inside the shack assigned to me, I found a mat, a pillow, a blanket, a pitcher of water and a cup. This was a place for fasting, prayer and Bible reading. I stayed there for 24 hours and left feeling as though my burdens had been lifted and my spirit cleansed. I was so grateful for this precious time of drawing closer to God.

Toward the end of my stay in Korea, I had a chance to visit with relatives I had not seen for ten years. It was wonderful to see them. God gave me opportunities to share the Gospel as they inquired as to why I had returned to Korea that summer. I was even able to track down my best friend from middle school, surprising the girl and her family! Her name was Yoo Kyong, and I was glad that the girl and her family had never moved. We relived sweet memories of the time in our lives when we had been inseparable.

Thirty years later (at this writing), that summer in Korea seems like a dream. I had always had a longing to return to Korea with Dave and the children, but the combination of a busy life and my illnesses prevented it. Still, I hope that someday my family will be able to visit the country of my birth – even if I am not able to be with them.

Interestingly, while I was in Korea with MTI, David Silver was in New Mexico, sharing the Gospel with Navajo Indians. Our mutual friend Jim MacMillan, from my time at Lafayette and Dave’s time in medical school, was sent to Papua, New Guinea, a large island in the Southwest Pacific. All three of us were commissioned as young people by Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia to share our faith that summer on foreign mission fields.

Mirror, Mirror

One of Addie's current pastors, Dr. Herbert E. Ruby, IV, welcomes new members into the church by saying: *"Before you can know and appreciate the Good News, you have to understand the bad news: We are all sinners who have fallen short of the glory of God."* (Romans 3:23) The most powerful knowledge that God revealed to Addie during her college years was the ugliness of her own sin, particularly that of pride. She had grown up always being the best and bragging about her accomplishments. Now God was determined to pull out a few weeds that had taken root in her heart: He would test her loyalties and priorities, causing her to confront the lack of purity in her thought life.

She had been learning, little by little, how great her need of Him was. The next two years would grow her faith with maturity and vision as she faced some challenging choices.



Addie waiting for her name to be called on Graduation Day,
At the Medical College of Pennsylvania, 1990

Graduation from
Medical College
of Pennsylvania
1990

(Right) Dave's
Mom, Addie,
and Addie's
Mom

(Below) Sandra
and Addie



Chapter 8

A Heart Divided

*“Infatuation is not quite the same thing as love;
it is more like love’s shady second cousin
who’s always borrowing money
and can’t hold down a job.”*
-- Elizabeth Gilbert

The Dating Game

Until she was 23 years old and enrolled in seminary, Addie had never dated. There she met a handsome young American who was pursuing his doctorate in ministry. He was acting as the youth pastor for a Korean church in the Philadelphia area. He and Addie were just friends for about a year, but as the relationship progressed they became attracted to one another. She had never had a boyfriend and so she thought to herself: *“This is it! This is the guy I am going to marry. I’ll give up medical school and become a pastor’s wife.”* Young and naïve, what she was experiencing was more of an infatuation than a truly loving and God-honoring relationship. As a result, the romance fed her insecurities more than it helped her to rely on God. She found herself becoming jealous of any attractive woman that caught his eye, and with each comparison she became more and more insecure. Instead of driving her to Christ, these emotions led her to look in other directions. She began experimenting with makeup and found herself often worrying about her hair, clothing and overall appearance.

Having never experienced such a strong physical attraction, she was now face-to-face with temptations that were new to her. Their relationship continued, despite the stress of knowing that it was not God-honoring. Although she truly desired to honor Christ in every area of her life, the pull of sin was challenging.

Looking back, Addie says:

I had not yet learned to rely on God's strength rather than my own to resist temptation. My pride elevated my own perception of the level of spiritual maturity that I thought I should have had, whipping my conscience.

The truth of the matter is that I was weak and insecure, struggling to be accepted and loved. I had hoped that this young man would make a marriage commitment to me. That's where I was almost 30 years ago. Am I stronger now? Yes and no. Hopefully, I grew wiser and more sensitive to the fact that as long as I am here on earth, I am not immune to any sin. The truth is also that it is simply by the grace of God, out of a healthy fear of Him and love for Him, that I can overcome any temptation to sin by relying upon His strength.

King David fell just like any human being can, for a number of reasons that are common to all of us. He was convicted and became truly repentant when Nathan the prophet confronted Him. Scripture tells us he was forgiven, but his dishonesty, adultery and murder led to terribly destructive events in his own family. (Psalm 51)

Jesus, however, came precisely not because of just some terrible sin that needed to be atoned for, but because our spiritually dead nature had to be redeemed – in its totality.

Most people, Christians and non-Christians alike, think of sin in a narrow, shallow and unbiblical way. Before I came to know Christ, I used to think that the breaking of the Ten Commandments were the only sins that mankind committed. But sin involves every fiber of our human nature: thoughts, motives and intents of the heart, the spoken word, our actions, even our imaginations – which means that we all sin all of the time! Without the grace and mercy of God, we are burnt toast! But Jesus accomplished our forgiveness when He died on the cross, taking upon Himself all of our sin, and being punished in our place. His death and resurrection made a way for us to be completely forgiven: our past, present and future trespasses against the Law of God wiped clean. "But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness."

(I John 1:9) Because of His grace our shame, our guilt and God's punishment "passes over" us.

There are consequences, though, for the choices that we make.

One More Time

The completion of her two years at seminary led to a whole other set of important questions. What did the Lord have in store for her future? Should she still pursue medicine? This was the last year that her medical college admission score would be valid for application to medical schools. She was sure of one thing: she did not want to re-take that grueling admission test. The very thought horrified her. After much prayer, she realized that following a plan to become a medical doctor was the path that gave her the most peace.

Once again she began the process of applying to medical schools. This time she was accepted into two: The Medical College of Pennsylvania ("MCP")⁵, and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine ("PCOM")⁶ where her friend Jim MacMillan, was a student. Of the two schools, Addie was surprised and pleased to discover that MCP had such a laid-back environment. Unlike other medical schools, its atmosphere was not competitive. The student population came from greatly varying backgrounds; some were even actors by trade. Addie had found her niche at MCP.

Her relationship with her boyfriend continued. Despite the stress of being in such an unsettling attachment, she found herself clinging to it.

Onward and Upward

In medical school, the first two years are devoted to intense academic studies and the next two are devoted to clinicals. During her first year Addie felt pretty smart – right up until her first bio-

⁵ "MCP," originally known as the "Woman's' Medical College," was the first women's medical school in the world.

⁶ For more than a century, "PCOM" has trained highly competent, caring physicians, health practitioners and behavioral scientists.

chemistry exam. To her dismay, she received a failing grade of 48. She was shocked and disappointed; in all of her life she had never received such a low score. There was no denying her need of God's help; she would not make it through medical school without fully relying on Him. This not-so-gentle reminder that she had been depending on herself and her own abilities led her to think very seriously about the fact that her life was not under her own control. She confessed in her heart that she had no knowledge of the future: she could fall victim to cancer, have a terrible accident, lose her memory or even her intellect. Truly humbled, she began to tearfully pray and seek God's help before each and every exam, acknowledging her absolute dependence upon His grace. Over the next four years she witnessed His faithfulness repeatedly as she studied, learned and excelled in school. God continued to teach Addie to rely only on Him for everything, and she was grateful for having received what she now considers a "must-learn" lesson for all Christians.

Stepping Out

During the spring of her first year of medical studies, Addie became involved with the Christian Medical Society and found herself in a leadership role involving regular Bible study and fellowship. There was an upcoming retreat located on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay, where she knew there would be medical students from many different schools; in particular, the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland Medical Schools. She decided to attend.

Before leaving for the retreat, Addie prayed: "*Lord, I'm tired of this relationship, but I'm not going to attend this retreat to look for another one. I'm going to go because I need to go.*" So she went, and on that Friday evening during a prayer session, holding a little candle, she saw a young man come in to the meeting. It was David Silver.

She recognized Dave on sight from her home church, Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, where Dr. James Boice was the senior pastor. She knew that they had a friend in common, Jim MacMillan, who had attended Lafayette College with Addie and then

had come to know Dave when they attended the same medical college. Addie and Jim were in the process of joining Tenth Presbyterian Church; Jim had greeted Addie warmly when he saw her in that class, and she had been glad to see a familiar face there. As the two of them chatted before the class, Jim had introduced her to Dave, who was also in the Communicant's class. She had greeted him shyly; at the time she was still dating her boyfriend, and so told herself that she was not interested in Dave.

Now, as Dave entered the room where they were praying on the retreat, he flashed her a smile. She thought: "*Oh! Dave is here,*" and felt a little glad, although she was not quite sure why. It made her happy, though, just to see him there. The group finished praying, and Dave told her later that he also recognized her from church and thought: "*Oh! Addie Lee is here! What is she doing here? I thought she was in seminary. Oh – that's right, she graduated and now she is attending medical school.*" Later that night they spoke, catching up on their lives and praying for a mutual friend. Dave got out his guitar and asked Addie if he could sing a few of his own compositions for her. Without any shyness, he sang to her about the meaning of life in Christ. Addie felt as though she was looking through a little window into Dave's heart. She was impressed that he seemed "*...really sold out for Jesus.*" They talked for a while and discovered that they enjoyed spending time together.

The next morning, during a quiet time of reading and prayer on the beach she looked up and saw Dave sitting up on the cliffs overlooking the bay, having a quiet time of his own. She remembers thinking: "*I hope he notices me.*" Later Dave told her that he hoped she saw him, too. As the retreat came to an end, Dave remembers thinking that he should probably keep in touch with Addie, as she was the only other leader attending from the Philadelphia area.

In the months that followed, Addie found herself missing Dave a little bit. Well, to be honest ... maybe more than a little bit! She wondered what he was doing and finally wrote him a letter. He was on a clinical rotation, and he was thinking about her, too, but neither of them were aware of the other's thoughts. Dave called her before he even received her letter, and so they began to stay in touch.

When Addie's 12-year old sister Sandra wanted to come up for a visit, Addie called Dave and told him her sister was coming to stay with her for a few days. Would he like to come and meet Sandra? He not only came, but he brought his roommate along. Addie remembered then that Dave was in Navigators⁷, a Christian organization that encourages young people to date in groups. They all went to Friendly's in Philadelphia. This was their first "date," although at the time neither of them thought of it in those terms.

At one point in the evening, Dave leaned over to Sandra and said, "*Sandra, you're kind of cute!! You know, like your sister!*" Addie thought: "*Well, either he is joking or just being very blunt, but maybe he likes me and this is how he is telling me!*" Either way, she liked it.

Addie and her boyfriend had been steadily dating for two years at this point in time. He confessed that he had hesitated to propose to her because of a fear of commitment, even though they often spoke of love and marriage. After spending time with Dave at Friendly's, and as the two of them began to stay in touch through phone calls, she decided it was probably time for her to mention him to her boyfriend.

Immediately following the retreat, she had told her boyfriend that she had met a nice guy there. Now Dave's name began to crop up more often in their conversation, and the young man developed a sense of urgency about their own situation. He questioned Addie about "*...being out late, running around, and carousing with this guy Dave.*" She laughed and told him that they were just talking and getting to know each other. Now her boyfriend became measurably more attentive, sending flowers for the first time in their relationship, and showing up unexpectedly that August at the home where she was living with a Christian family. Down on one knee, he startled her with a proposal: "*Marry me!*" He had been offered a pastorate in Texas.

⁷ Navigators is a ministry marked foremost by its mission to love and serve Christ through discipleship – a call to discover life to the fullest.

Addie hesitated, naturally comparing the two young men in her mind. She had been feeling uncomfortable with her boyfriend for a while. His fear of commitment (until this unexpected proposal), combined with the fact that her own insecurities seemed magnified when they were together, gave her pause. Being with Dave, on the other hand, was so comfortable. She had never felt as though she or Dave were trying to impress each other; she was free to be herself with him, as he certainly was with her. The relationship that was developing between them seemed to be without pretense.

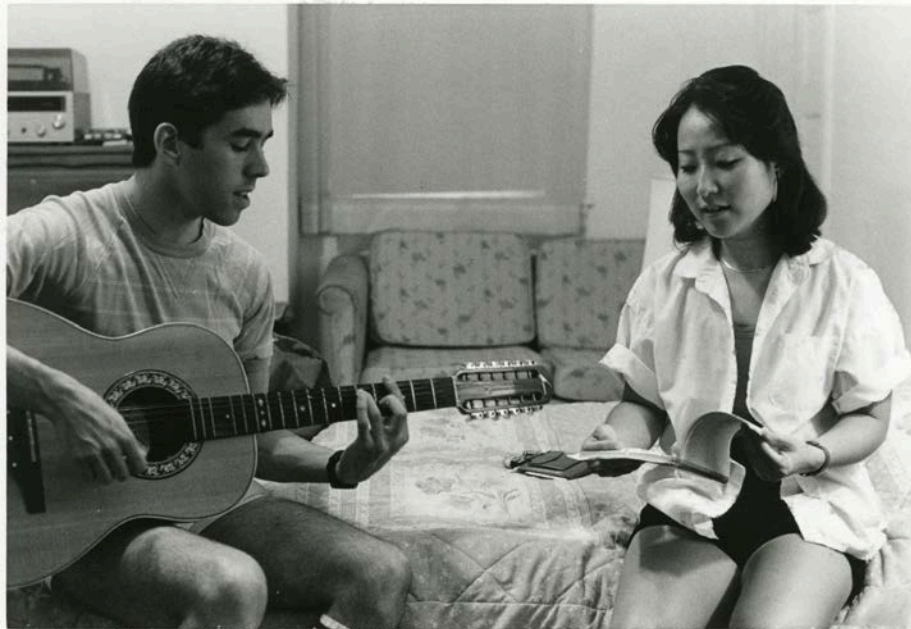
Before she could give her boyfriend an answer, though, Addie wanted to know exactly where Dave stood in this relationship. One night, soon after receiving the proposal, she drove to Dave's house late in the evening – around 11:00 p.m. “*Yeah,*” she said, smiling at me: “*I did! I knocked on the door, and then I noticed that his car was not there. ‘Lord! Where is Dave?’*”

And then suddenly, there he was. He had been visiting his mother in New Jersey and had just returned. “*Hmm,*” he thought. “*There’s Addie. What is she doing here so late at night, knocking on my door?*” Dave would later teasingly relate that Addie pursued him, but in reality he knew that her pragmatic personality simply needed to know where they stood with each other. He commented that she looked troubled, and asked what was going on. Addie asked him to sit down. They needed to have a serious talk.

“*Well, Dave,*” she began. “*I have this friend that I’ve been dating on and off. I haven’t been sure how I feel about him, and now he has given me an ultimatum. I need to make a decision, and it will help me to know where you stand. I am attracted to you. Tell me ... where are you in this relationship?*” Dave shrugged and grinned. “*Well,*” he said wisely, “*I’m attracted to you, too. But you really need to make this decision without me being a factor.*” They decided that they each needed to think about what they were looking for in a mate. Addie was encouraged to hear that Dave was, indeed, attracted to her.

Now, calmly and logically weighing things in her mind, she determined to finish things with the other young man. He cried as

they parted, but Addie was comfortable with her decision and felt only relief.



1987 while dating David

Chapter 9

The Real Thing

*“Falling in love in a Christian way is to say:
‘I am excited about your future and I want to be a part of getting you
there.*

*I’m signing up for the journey with you.
Would you sign up for the journey to my true self with me?
It’s going to be hard but I want to get there.’”*

-- Timothy Keller

Let’s Get Serious

Prior to meeting Addie, David had developed a close friendship with a Christian woman whom he considered dating, but it did not work out. Now he did not want to commit to dating anyone at all until the right person came along. Was Addie that person? He suggested they take some time to fast and pray separately, asking God for wisdom regarding their friendship. Dave went to a park in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania and found a quiet setting in which to pray. He felt like God was telling him: *“Take off your shoes. You are on holy ground.”* He removed his shoes and sat down, where he felt the Lord clearly say to him: *“She is the one.”*

Addie, too, was looking for an answer from God independent of Dave’s search, and she definitely: *“...felt that God was giving His approval for our pursuit of this relationship. We found each other again and made a decision: ‘We are going to get married. We are not just dating; we have a plan.’ In spite of not knowing the future, we were happy.”*

During that time Addie was studying Psalm 112, a chapter that opens with: *“How joyful are those who fear the Lord, and their delight is in obeying His commands. Their children will be successful everywhere; an entire generation of godly people will be blessed.”* (Psalm 112:1, 2) Upon reading this passage, Addie says: *“I was shaken up and trembling, thinking to myself: Our children will be successful everywhere and an entire generation of godly people will*

be blessed through them.” When she read that, her heart rejoiced! This is why she and Dave were going to be married: they wanted to have children and give them back to God, who would use them to bless the world. When she and Dave found that, unbeknownst to each other, they had been studying the same exact passage, that discovery delighted them and brought them even closer.

Because she had delayed medical school for two years in order to attend seminary, Dave was two years ahead of Addie. He was very busy with his clinical rotations, yet they still found time to talk for a bit almost every day. Addie recalls them agreeing on a plan: *“Let’s not play games here. If it is not of God, we are not going to date.”* After their first date in July, they went with his roommate to a Creation⁸ concert. From there on, they grew very close very quickly, and by the time September rolled around they were unofficially engaged.

Put a Ring on It!

In the weeks following their decision, Dave felt he was being unfair to Addie, keeping her in suspense as to when he would officially propose. He told her: *“I know this must be hard on you; I promise you it’s going to happen soon.”* A little later on, he told her he needed her advice on something important. *“When you need to purchase something, and you just don’t have the kind of money that you would like to spend on it, would you recommend borrowing the money or just buying what you can afford?”* Addie told him emphatically: *“Definitely don’t borrow any money! Don’t spend what you don’t have!”*

Little did she know that Dave was asking her advice on how much he should spend on her engagement ring. Looking back, she was glad he did not go into debt to buy a larger, more expensive ring. His bills for medical school were already huge, with enormous loans to be repaid. Since he did not want to get any further into debt, he

⁸ Creation Festival is a four-day long Christian-based festival, where thousands of believers come together to worship God through music and teaching.

bought Addie a modest but beautiful diamond ring. She still has it, although she cannot wear it because her fingers are so swollen.

The couple have followed Addie's excellent financial advice all of their married lives.

First Impressions

When Addie told her parents about Dave, they immediately drove up from Maryland to meet him. They wanted to have a serious conversation with the young man who had won their precious daughters heart. "Dave," they said, "*we really love our daughter. What do you think of her?*" "Oh, I like her!" Dave replied enthusiastically. Needless to say, this was not the answer they were looking for. Addie's mom exclaimed: "*You LIKE her? We really LOVE our daughter!*" The meeting turned understandably awkward. After her parents left, Dave pleaded with Addie to tell her parents how much he loved her.

Two months later, over the 1987 Christmas holidays, Dave and Addie drove down to Maryland to spend some time with Addie's parents. Unbeknownst to Addie, he had brought the engagement ring with him. He met privately with Mr. and Mrs. Lee, asking for their blessing on his proposal. By this time they were ready to give their approval to the young couple, as they had both come to the conclusion that Addie was meant to marry an American.

Dave suggested that he and Addie take a walk around the lake in the local park, where they sat down on a swing. Without any fanfare, he asked the question she longed to hear: "*Addie: Will you marry me?*" "*Of course!*" she answered. Things got very quiet for a few moments after she had accepted his ring, and Dave commented on it. Was she okay? She was, in fact, in a happy state of shock: she was engaged! Although they were preparing to enter a whirlwind of rotations, studies, finals, board exams, graduation, and the challenge of planning a wedding and honeymoon on a budget, peace reigned in her heart. Whatever the future held, they would face it together.



December 25, 1987
David and Addie's Engagement
Left to Right, David, Addie, Addie's Father and Mother, brother
Patrick and sister Sandra in front

Chapter 10

And the Two Shall Become One

*“As God by creation made two of one,
again by marriage He made one of two”*

-- Thomas Adams

The Big Day

It was 1988. The pastor who began their premarital counselling became busy with another commitment, so another pastor stepped in to finish the job. Both Addie and David were happy to receive wisdom from both pastors – surely this would bring twice the blessing! The ceremony would be held at 10th Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, where they were both members now, and the reception would be held at one of the boat houses on the Schuylkill River. It was a lovely spot. At night the exterior frames of the boat houses were covered in white lights, reminiscent of Christmastime.

Their big day, June 11th, arrived quickly. They were both content to keep the wedding and reception simple and sweet: Addie’s dress was borrowed and the reception tables were covered with plain white paper tablecloths, with no decorations. They drove their own car from the ceremony to the reception. Nothing mattered but that it was a joyful day with their combined Jewish, Korean, Catholic and Protestant family and friends sharing in the celebration of their marriage.

One hundred and fifty people were invited, but one hundred and seventy-five showed up! Some people brought their children, and others brought a date. Addie prayed: *“Lord, please make the boat house bigger, or the guests smaller!”* As it happened, the reception was crowded, but the happy people gathered there managed to spread out wherever they found space throughout the boat house itself and out on to the dock. When the time came for dancing, they pushed the tables back and got to it. Addie’s father beamed from ear-to-ear when father and daughter danced together. Others followed, and Addie remembers thinking: *“How good God is!”* Her heart was warmed by the loving community gathered around them.



Dave and Addie changed into Korean costumes and, as tradition dictates, bowed to both sets of parents, showing honor to them as they performed a small part of the Korean wedding ceremony. These wedding costumes were so much more comfortable than their American counterparts.



The ceremony had begun at 4:00 in the afternoon. Before they knew it, it was 10:30 p.m. and time for them to bid their guests goodnight.



Bright and early the next morning Dave's roommate drove them to the Philadelphia airport, where they boarded a plane for Bermuda. The location that they had chosen was the South Hampton Princess Resort: beautiful, but very, very expensive. A friend of Dave's had recommended the following: "*Don't be a scrooge on the honeymoon! Spend the money!*" Dave took that advice, and Addie was reminded of a line from a children's book: "*There is a time for potatoes, and a time for pearls.*" The young couple had already begun to learn when to scrimp and when to spend.



The Big Week

They arrived at the resort tired, but happy for the week that stretched out before them, alone together. Dave was recuperating from taking his medical boards, the rehearsal dinner, the wedding and reception and just generally not getting enough rest. Addie, with her driven personality, was eagerly looking forward to the activities they had planned and to being out-of-doors. After spending a few days resting, they headed out to take in the beauty of the island.

In addition to learning the feel of the little Moped they had rented, Dave was adjusting to having a rider sitting behind him. Having covered the resort side of the island, it was time to ride to the other side and see what awaited them there. David pulled over to the side of the road to get his bearings, and as he re-entered the traffic he

saw a car coming rapidly in their direction. He accelerated hard and lost control of the bike. Addie flew off and was scraped up, but fortunately had no serious injuries. Dave held on and twisted his ankle. Addie remembers feeling as though time had slowed to a crawl. *“Lord, this can’t be happening! We’re on our honeymoon!”* They were able to drive the slightly damaged bike carefully to an emergency room to make certain that Dave’s ankle was not fractured. The x-rays revealed that it was a bad sprain instead, but the injury was still so painful that Dave needed to use a cane to take the pressure off of his ankle.

The next morning Addie had a list of plans for the day. Dave told her that their plans would have to be delayed; he still could not walk very well. Frustrated and angry, his bride stormed out of the hotel, saying she was leaving! Dave gently reminded her that he had the plane tickets.

She marched angrily away from the hotel, complaining to the Lord: *“This is supposed to be one of the happiest times of my life! What in the world are You doing?”* Still fuming, she walked up to the Honeymooner’s Trail overlooking the Atlantic where, as she crested the hill, her breath was taken away. The scene was incredible – almost Heavenly. She sat down on a bench and stared at the horizon, curving gently with the shape of the earth. Brokenhearted, she began to cry, and God began to speak. While she never heard an audible voice, it was very clear: *“Jesus came to serve, not to be served. He made Himself nothing; He emptied Himself and became a servant, and I lifted Him up. Addie, if you are in this marriage for your own happiness, to be served, you are going to be miserable for the rest of your married life – just as you are right now!”*

For an hour, God protected the privacy of her spot from the other honeymooners. Alone in this scenic beauty Addie wept, and God did His work in her heart. *“Lord,”* she sobbed, *“I am totally miserable. This is the most beautiful place I have ever seen, and here I sit, all alone. I have never been such a mess.”*



The view from a hill in Bermuda

Now that she was ready to listen, her loving Heavenly Father began to gently instruct her. “Now, Addie ... regarding the rest of your marriage ...” “Okay, Lord,” she responded, “I’m ready. I know I need a change in direction.” The tenderness of God’s words calmed her heart and comforted her, just as Zephaniah wrote: “With His love, He will calm all your fears.” (Zephaniah 3:17)

With her spirit quieted, she saw the error of her ways. She set off to find Dave in order to apologize and ask his forgiveness. She found him sitting on the veranda by himself, looking dejected. He had no idea where she’d gone or if she was even coming back, wondering: “What has happened to my Addie?” The expression on his face was heartbreaking. Addie went up to him; she acknowledged her selfishness and asked his forgiveness. She told him once more how much she loved him and promised to never leave him.

The remainder of their honeymoon was spent in a truly romantic spot: the swimming pool ... in water therapy for David! They never got to take in all of the beautiful sights of the island, but they had a much better time in each other’s company. Addie had learned an important lesson very early in their marriage.

Many photos were taken by the couple, but as they left the plane the camera was forgotten. Addie called the airline, but the staff was unable to locate it. “Oh, Lord!” she exclaimed, but this thought was quickly followed with another, revealing her change of heart: “It

is okay Lord; I can let this go. We don't have any pictures of our honeymoon, but you have blessed me with this experience, right at the start of our marriage."

Years later, Dave still calls Addie his "Queenie." She calls him her "Farm Boy," from the movie The Princess Bride⁹, because Dave has learned to be a servant both as a husband and a father (something he freely admits he did not come by naturally, but solely by the grace of God).

The Big Year

Addie quickly learned another hard lesson: marriage can be a lonely place for anyone, at any time. She learned to cry out to Jesus, because He is *always* there. At this writing, 27 ½ years after their vows, she is still surprised at the many difference between men and women.

Realistically, Dave and Addie came from extremely different backgrounds and had known each other for less than a year before they were married. Dave was raised in a Jewish home, and Addie spent her early years in South Korea. Spiritually they are of one mind, but their faith plays itself out very differently, reflecting their individual backgrounds and approaches to problem solving. Their first year of marriage was rough, so much so that at times Addie found herself thinking: "*I can't believe I actually said I love this man!*" They were both exhausted, with Dave being on call 36 hours straight every fourth night, and Addie also being on call with third-year medical school clinical rotations. There was simply no threshold for "bearing one another's burdens." (Galatians 6:2) Survival was the name of the game. Every sin that had been buried became magnified, and Addie remembers feeling very disillusioned. "*How is this possible?*" she wondered. She did not talk to parents or coworkers

⁹ The Princess Bride is a 1987 classic American fantasy comedy adventure film directed and co-produced by Rob Reiner, adapted by William Goldman from his 1973 novel of the same name. It tells the story of a farmhand named Westley, accompanied by companions befriended along the way, who must rescue his true love, Princess Buttercup, from the odious Prince Humperdink.

about her frustrations and disappointments, but only to a few trusted fellow students and Christian friends.

Chapter 11

Open My Eyes, That I May See

*“To be fully seen by somebody, then,
and to be loved anyhow –
this is a human offering that can border on miraculous.”*
-- Elizabeth Gilbert

The Lord’s Servant

In 1989 Dave and Addie were entering their second year of marriage. Dave was doing an internal medicine internship at the Presbyterian Hospital in Philadelphia, and Addie was in her third year at the Medical College of Pennsylvania doing her clinical rotations. Since Dave was often on call for 36 hours straight, Addie would go to his hospital after her work day was done and stay with him so that they could have dinner together, spending the night in his on-call room. The next morning she would return to her hospital. Dave would do the same when Addie was on call.

The demands of their schedules were understandably a great stress on their marriage, as they were both continually exhausted and waking up to the reality of life together.

On one of Dave’s on-call nights, they were sleeping in the same tiny single bed. Dave kept getting “beeped” to go take care of patients, and Addie was becoming annoyed at these interruptions to her sleep. Dave, however, never complained. He simply said: *“The Lord is calling me!”* each time he was awakened. Deep in her heart Addie heard God reassuring her that He had given her a good man to share her life with, though she sometimes questioned her own part in the decision. She saw this as God’s kind and gentle way of reminding her that she had been blessed to marry Dave.

Seventy Times Seven

In those early years of marriage, Addie was often reminded of Jesus’ “Parable of the Unmerciful Servant,” as found in Matthew 18:21-35:

Then Peter came to him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?” “No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!”

“Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who had decided to bring his accounts up-to-date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. He couldn’t pay, so his master ordered that he be sold – along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned – to pay the debt.

“But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time.

“‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full. When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened.

“Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’

“Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. That’s what my Heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”

Addie felt her own heart break as she read and re-read this passage. God had so graciously forgiven her sins – all of them – and she was withholding forgiveness from the man she had promised to love for all her life. Additionally, he was her brother in Christ! She felt that she had been, in a sense, “choking” Dave, much as the wicked servant in the parable had choked his fellow servant. This conviction has served her well throughout her marriage, as she is reminded again and again of how gracious the “King of Kings” has been to forgive all of her debt. She knew, also, that the first year of marriage was difficult for many, if not most, couples.

Addie is not a woman to sweep things under the rug; it is not in her nature. She is driven and determined: problems should be resolved! The air should be cleared! Grudges are ugly things and only lead to misery. She was also surprised to learn in that first year that being “right” can still result in stubbornness, bitterness and disappointment, rather than harmony. And of course it was quite a shock that she and Dave could really get on each other’s nerves!

Big News

Slightly more than one year after we were married, as I was finishing up my third year of medical school in the summer of 1989, I found that a desire to have a baby was growing in my heart. A few good friends were becoming new moms, and perhaps this encouraged my desire, which by now was rapidly and steadily increasing. This was somewhat surprising, since in the past I had never had a strong yearning for motherhood. In addition, I knew it would be a huge challenge to balance motherhood with another year of medical school. Dave had three years of residence training in front of him in internal medicine with long, demanding hours of hospital work. We had both just come through one full year of challenging schedules, which had led to quite a stressful first year of marriage! Did I really want to be pregnant right now? God certainly must have influenced my decision.

The first month that we tried to conceive, the result was negative. I was stunned, which just illustrates how determined and goal-oriented I was. Of course I had some realization of my lack of patience, but I

began to weep nonetheless when I realized that I was not, in fact, pregnant. God spoke to me, though, through Isaiah 55:8, saying: “‘My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,’ says the Lord, ‘and My ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.’” Reading this passage focused me and reminded me that He is, indeed, GOD. He is the Lord of my life. I was quieted, humbled and refreshed in my spirit by this truth.

The next month, as we were preparing to leave for a Jamaican vacation, we thought it might be wise to take one more test before departing for the airport. Surprise! We were pregnant! We went ahead with our planned vacation and had a wonderful time (carefully avoided heavy lifting and climbing waterfalls). Although I was quite nauseous for the first trimester, that paled in comparison with our happiness.

Fortunately, Addie only battled nausea during her first trimester; after that, she blossomed. Her belly stuck out in her little “scrubs,” and when they learned they were having a boy, David cried with happiness.

Over the next months, little Joseph-in-utero went wherever I went, on some mornings to a VA hospital for surgery rotation, and on others to Jefferson Hospital for cardiology rotation. The day I graduated from the Medical College of Pennsylvania, I was hoping not to go into labor and was thankful when I made it through the ceremony and the celebration. A week later, on my birthday (June 7th) at 12:25 a.m., God sent me the greatest birthday gift I would ever receive: a sweet little baby boy.

Oh, Baby!

Addie had never cared for an infant before; it was extremely hard for her to allow their tiny newborn to cry. David, like many fathers of newborns, was jealous of the time and energy that his wife was expending on their child. “*Babies are supposed to cry!*” exclaimed David. He saw his wife as being overprotective. But for Addie, who was breast-feeding, the sound of the baby’s wails made

her milk stream down the front of her. Once again, there was tension in the home.

She discovered that it was a great temptation to put her child's welfare above the health of her marriage. Knowing that, however, was quite different from yielding to the necessary changes. They struggled together, trying to find the right balance. To make matters worse, David had begun to feel totally helpless as the baby cried and turned away from him in favor of his mommy. He felt as though he did not know how to be a good father.

One weekend during this period David attended a men's retreat. Reaching out for help, he was unable to really connect with anyone. Alone, he cried out to God: "*Lord, I'm a father, and I need You to show me what to do!*" The Lord directed him to the last verse in the Old Testament, in the book of Malachi (chapter 4, verse 6(a)): "*His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers.*" Speaking through His Word, David heard God say to him: "*David, this weekend I have fulfilled this verse for you.*" God was turning David's heart to his son.

Upon returning home and opening the door, David felt as though a cloud had been lifted. God's peace had settled in his heart, and when he held out his arms to Joseph, the baby cried "*Daddy!*" and ran to him! It was the beginning of a time of healing for father and son. David believed that God had answered his prayer for revival.

He and Addie began to reconnect, too. They talked about parenting styles, and their dreams for raising their children. Although their approaches differed (Addie confesses to being a driven, over-achieving and task-oriented person, whereas David is more relational), they were both delighted with the results they began to see. Their personalities still caused occasional tension, but God was in the mix, blessing their efforts and teaching them to work together.

Chapter 12

All in the Family

*“What can you do to promote world peace?
Go home and love your family.”*
-- Mother Teresa

The Children God Has Gifted To Us

“I will teach all your children, and they will enjoy great peace.”
--Isaiah 54:13

“Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from Him; Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior’s hands. How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them! He will not be put to shame when he confronts his accusers at the city gates.”
--Psalm 127:3-5

Although I know without a doubt that only God knows the number of our days on this earth, I am sensing that my time is drawing to a close. This is due to an honest assessment of the conditions of my physical body, and it causes me to look back over the years at my journey with David, especially our 25 years as parents. These years with the children, nurturing and teaching them, have undoubtedly changed David and me more than any other earthly influence on our lives.

God, I am so grateful to you! You gifted us with these four uniquely designed and wonderful children: Joseph, Daniel, Deborah and Samuel. We chose Old Testament names for them, praying and hoping that You would build into them their namesake’s character – mainly that of Christ! This is the process of a lifetime ... long and arduous at times ... but this is what we have prayed for from the moment they were each conceived.

One of the greatest measures of the life of grace is how we parent. Do we display the grace of Christ, or the ugly hypocrisy of legalism? Knowing God and understanding His grace impacts everything we do. Our God is relational: He is our Father and we are His children.

Grace manifests itself in the context of relationship. As a parent, I learned very quickly that I am legalistic and impatient! My children have opened my eyes to see through to the very core of my sinful nature, where I am proud, selfish, harsh, fearful, unbelieving, and lacking in self-control.

Please don't misunderstand me – my intention is not to wallow in self-pity, or to beat myself up over my failures. Rather, I want to express my gratitude for the sanctification that God has been working out in my life, for the past 26 years at this writing, as a mother.

Joseph Lee Silver

Our Joseph was born on June 7, 1990. Twenty-five years old at this writing, he is our eldest. He has a very steady, quiet, thoughtful and peaceful spirit. Observing this character in him has helped me to slow down, stop and think. This son has a calming effect on my frantic spirit, as if the Lord Jesus is telling me, through Joseph, to be still; be at peace; be at rest in Christ.

I remember being very upset about something when Joseph was only about six months old. I was lying on the floor and crying when I felt a little touch on my shoulder. I looked up and around and there was Joseph! He had crawled over to comfort me! And I was comforted! I sensed the presence of Christ in this infant.

It is not surprising to me that Joseph is a gifted writer, because he has always thought deeply and expressed those thoughts with great creativity. His writings can also be comical. Joseph and Samuel in particular (they are nine years apart in age) love to write together, and often can be found with their heads together, laughing. They sometimes write spoofs of stories, usually of fairy tales.

This son has also shown me the kindness of Christ. Due to the crippling effect of my disease, I cannot bend down low. I remember asking him, when he was about 14 years old, if he would clip my toenails. Without hesitation, he gladly and gently performed this task, one that many adults would balk at. It was a sweet moment between him and me, and one that I have savored the memory of over the years.

Thank you, my dear Joe, for loving me. Your forgiveness and love have covered over a multitude of my sins. Your prayers, notes of comfort and words of encouragement have truly helped me to take that next step in my journey, and to turn to God. I pray and dream of what God must have in store for the life ahead of you. Just imagine!

I love you, my Joe!

-- Mom



Joseph graduating from U of MD, College Park,
with his B.A. in English

Daniel Scott Silver

Our Daniel was born on March 12, 1992 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, when his big brother Joseph was 21 months old. Even as a newborn infant, Daniels's tone of voice was so deep. I remember being extremely happy for a smooth birthing, the good health of this baby, and the blessing from God of another son! Daniel smiled a lot and immediately bonded with his big brother. As little boys, they did almost everything together.

Daniel, my Daniel: the Lord truly knows how best to create each individual. He has taught me so much through your life. You have always had such a compassionate heart, showing tender mercies to others. You feel the pain of others and constantly desire to help those who are suffering.

Once, while you were waiting for a bus, you saw a young boy shivering, without a jacket. You gave him yours! On another occasion, you baked cupcakes and took them to a very straggly-looking, unkempt lady who lived near your apartment. Daniel, you have taught me to never look down on anyone, but rather to treat everyone with dignity.

Do you remember when, a few years ago, you were in the hospital on your birthday? A friend of mine and I took a small cake to the hospital to help you celebrate. Your immediate reaction was to share the cake with every patient on the floor. The patients' countenances immediately brightened, and some of them gathered to sing "Happy Birthday" to you.

Driving home that evening, God convicted me of how much He cares for all of His children in this world, and that He had shown His love through you that day.

You are a generous young man, always thinking of others before you think of yourself. There is so much more that I could write of you, Daniel.

Thank you for holding me close to your heart, and for all of the ways that you show your concern for me. God has truly used you to keep my own heart tender, and to show me how much I need Him. You have taught me how God loves humble hearts, and showers them with His grace.

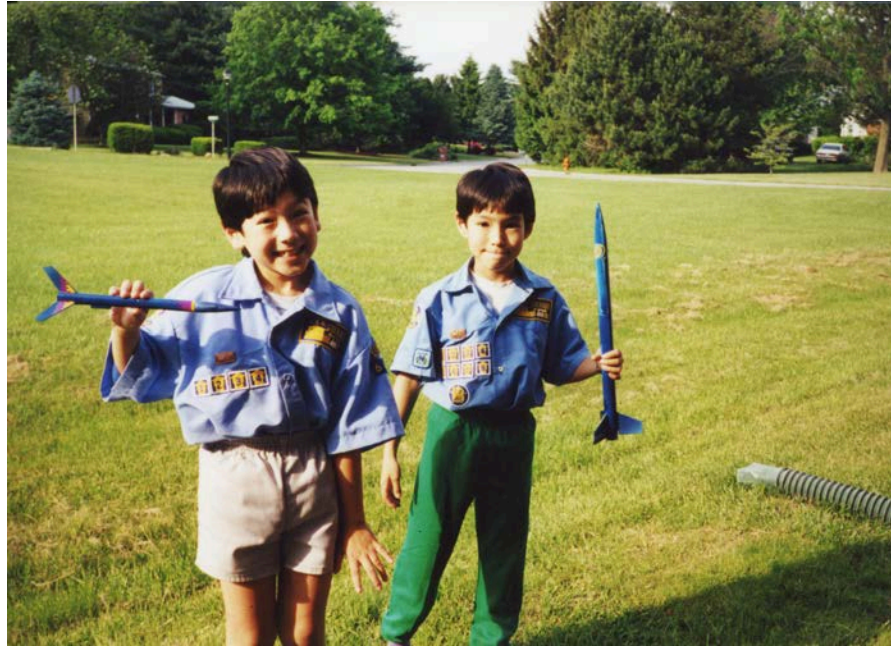
Along with your other talents and abilities, God has given you the gift of music, for great reasons. Thank Him, Daniel – and be who God made you to be!

I love you, my Daniel!

-- Marmi



Dave and Addie with Joseph (standing) and Daniel



Daniel (left) with Joseph



Daniel at piano

Deborah Ann Silver

Our Deborah was born on January 5, 1994. Debbie is a very courageous young lady. She is 21 years old as I write this. Once upon a time, Dave said to me: “I think God is going to create a little Debbie tonight!” I was startled, but sensed God was speaking to us, and so we obeyed God! Well – she was conceived that night! No kidding! (David has always had an uncanny sense regarding each child’s conception.)

As a young girl Debbie was quiet, astute and caring. She is very bright and as she matured has shown a strong interest in science and medicine, as well as singing. Physics, biology, literature, research, and performing in musicals are among her many passions. It has been great fun watching her grow into a young lady.

One weekend, when Deb was 12 years old, just she and I went to the Sandy Cove retreat center. I remember it being so cold. When we went out to take a walk, the wind coming off of the Chesapeake Bay was so strong that we could barely breathe. We just kept walking as we laughed and laughed. It was a silly and fun experience. Her laughter, and her lovely singing voice, are a gift from Heaven. There seems to be bright sunshine streaming down when Deborah is in the room. She never fails to warm my heart.

I have gained such crucial lessons of life as I have watched this child, now a young woman, coping with the challenging disease known as “Crohn’s.”¹⁰ For the past nine years she has been coping with this very nasty disease and its painful symptoms. My heart has struggled, cried and prayed over her as she has endured each and every challenge. I was pretty healthy up until the age of 32, but Debbie was hit with this at only 13 years of age, and has had to take quite potent immunosuppressive medicines. These meds can cause terrible headaches, along with many other unpleasant side effects. She is often in pain and exhausted, but she never lets it affect her goals and ambitions. Her body seems unwilling to cooperate with her, and as a

¹⁰ Crohn’s disease belongs to a group of conditions known as Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IBD), a chronic inflammatory condition of the gastrointestinal tract.

result she has learned to be flexible, to listen to her body, and to surrender to God's ways of taking her through this season of her life. (Debbie, I hope you will write a book about your life someday!)

In many ways, she and I are alike in that we have learned when to adjust, when to let go and accept disappointments, and how to live with physical pain that refuses to go away, including nausea (even while craving healthy food – food that you know your body will not tolerate because of your illness). Deb has taught me to press on, while recognizing and acknowledging how tough, discouraging, sad, frustrating and maddening life can be. Together we are learning that God is sovereign, watching over every detail of our lives. He is with us, helping us in whatever stage or circumstance we are going through, giving us the grace that enables us to climb up yet another rocky hill – and He will deliver us across the finish line someday.

Debbie, I am simply amazed when I think of you. My little girl – whom I sincerely believed I might not live long enough to raise after the hemorrhaging I experienced immediately following your birth – is truly growing up. I'm so happy that I have been given the privilege of being your mom. May God finish the good work He has begun in your life. Thank you for putting up with my struggle as well as your own, and for loving me.

My Debbie, I love you!

-- Mom Mom



Debbie in High School
with her mom, right,
and her High School
portrait, below



Samuel James Silver

Our Samuel was born on March 10, 1999, and gave a cry at birth that sounded like laughter to us. This was only appropriate, since he is filled with joy and laughter almost all of the time. "Hi, Samuel! This is Mommy!" "Hi, Samuel! This is Daddy!" Dave and I were so thankful and happy for the birth of this son. He was healthy, although I had been seeing a high-risk pregnancy obstetrician due to all of my medical complications. I was almost 38 years old at the time of Samuel's birth.

This boy has truly been a bundle of joy since he was a baby. He sees life through the lens of fun and good humor. His personality, especially his love of music, has helped to keep me going each day. He calls me "Sweets." Samuel is 16 years old at this writing, but he tenderly tells me that I am like his little daughter!

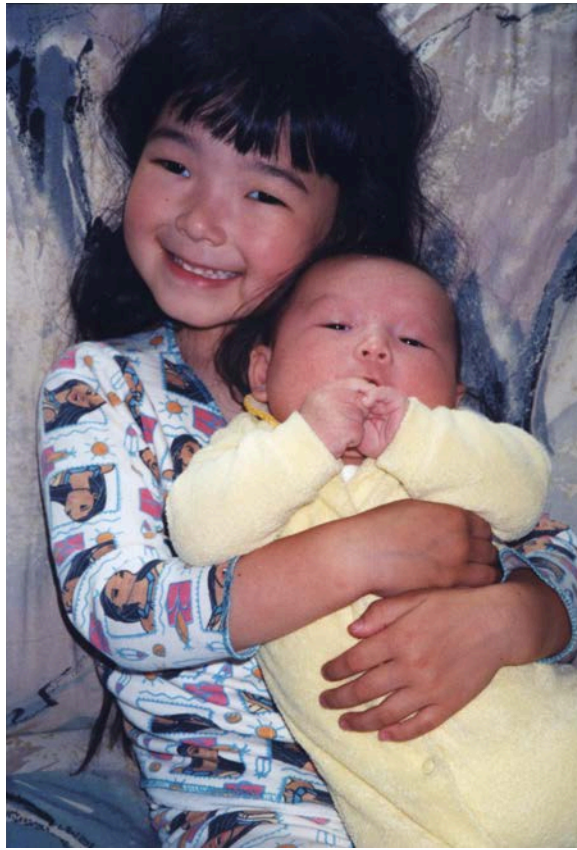
My Sam, I have learned of the empathy and compassion of Christ through you. It hurts you to even hear of anyone suffering. When one of your friends lost her mom to cancer a few years ago, you displayed such genuine friendship to her, and she has blessed your life by returning that friendship to you.

At this writing, Sam has two more years in high school. He often tells me: "You will be here when I graduate ... and for many more years after that!" "I hope so," I respond. "Only God knows." He then looks at me sadly.

My Sam, you know how much I love you, and how crazy (mi-tchut-soyo) and funny we are together! Ha, ha, ha! Here are the words I want you to always remember: Pursue God. Never stop! Seek to know Him personally, and love Him above all else, more than anyone or anything. Live His words, for they are life! He will guide your every path, until you join Him and me in our eternal home! YEA!!

I love you, my Sam!

-- Mama Sheep



Debbie and Sam



Addie and David at surprise shower for Sam



Sam in Middle School



All four of our children have been teaching me to focus on the heart, and not on outward behavior and appearance. “For out of the heart flow the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:23) Because by nature I am such a driven and result-oriented individual, I must confess that sometimes it is easy for me (and really selfish) to want to see my children behave and appear in a certain light. Why? So I can brag about myself – so I can look good in the eyes of the world.

Whatever the future holds, I am grateful for the years I have been given. I gave as much as I was able to be a stay-at-home Mom and educator to these children in the window of time that He gave us. I continue to pray for God’s will to be done in all of our lives, and I leave the result in God’s hands, by His grace.



Chapter 13

Raise ‘em Up

*“Children are not a distraction from more important work.
They are the most important work.”*
-- John Trainer, M.D.

Raise Them Right

The verse, “I will teach all your children, and they will enjoy great peace,” (Isaiah 54:13) has been a continual encouragement and reminder to me to place all my hope and trust in God. He is in charge of my children! Although I know intellectually that God is more than able to take care of my (truly His!) children, with or without me, it is still difficult for a mother to let go of the illusion of control.

Trials, challenges and suffering have a way of opening our eyes to what is important, and what is not. The general tendency of the culture we live in is to continually push and pressure children of all ages to accomplish, perform, gain riches, be popular, stay youthful looking, be a size zero, dress immodestly, and pursue whatever you desire, even if it requires you to live immorally and dishonestly. These things only lead to an empty and miserable pursuit of narcissistic individualism. When you are a child of God, however, you are constantly undergoing a transformation through the love of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. We should never compare ourselves to others, but rather model ourselves after the character and person of Jesus Christ.

I say all of this because I have learned that when it comes to raising/teaching/training children, it is heart and character development that are the most important. All of the external manifestations (i.e. conduct, behavior, communication, accomplishments, even motives and decision making, etc.) flow out of the heart (character) of a child. “Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.” (Proverbs 4:23)

On January 8, 2002, I wrote the following in my journal:

Grace and humility are twin sisters. The only way to obtain grace is by humbling ourselves, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6) Character cannot be formed apart from grace, and grace cannot be received apart from humility. God must change one’s heart and soul in order to develop character. Lord, please do this for all of our children!

I also realize that the parents’ character has an enormous and powerful impact on the children’s character formation. Therefore, being a parent is one of the most privileged, awesome and serious callings from God.



Joseph (top left), Daniel (top right),
Deborah (bottom right), and Samuel (bottom left)

Upward Basketball: A Special Gift from the Lord

It was March 7, 2002, and our three oldest children had just completed a season of participation in a Christian-based community basketball program held at Columbia Presbyterian Church, located close to my parent's home. We were house-sitting there while they lived and worked overseas for nine years. Joseph was eleven years old, Daniel was almost ten, Debbie was eight and Sam was almost three. We were members of Chapelgate Presbyterian Church during that time.

It was the Annual Upward Basketball Award Night and excitement was in the air! People were talking and laughing in anticipation, hoping that their children's good sportsmanship, Bible verse memorization and performance on the court would win them some form of recognition. In addition, at the end of every season the program rewarded one player from each league with a "Most Christ-like" award. There were six leagues, organized by age. We all listened eagerly as the emcee began to describe the characteristics of each child who had won an award.

"This player for League One was a mentor to her teammates, and further displayed thoughtfulness by bringing snacks to practices. She knew her Bible verses well, played the basketball game very well, and was a good leader for her team. The award goes to: Debbie Silver!"

We leapt to our feet smiling, clapping and cheering. "Wow! Good job, Debbie! And praise God!"

League Two came next. The announcer described: "...a player who made a great improvement and became a leader. He knew the Bible verses well and often explained them, commenting on other related Scripture. He was a great team member and played well. This award goes to: Daniel Silver!"

Once again, we cheered and shouted. "Yea, Daniel! Thank You, Lord!" We were humbled, sensing the grace of God.

The emcee continued with his announcements. “Next, the winner for League Three was a player who is the smallest in his league, but was never afraid of the big guys. Even though he broke his thumb during the season and could not play for a time, he continued to come to practice. When he was able to play, he eagerly covered every position we asked him to fill, and he played them all well. He smiled throughout the entire three-month season. This player also knew his Bible verses well. The award goes to: Joseph Silver!”

“Yeah, Joseph! God is so good!” Dave was in tears, and I was almost speechless. I kept telling myself: “This is the grace of God, encouraging us even beyond our wildest hopes – even our imaginations! Lord, we give You all the glory.”

God raised up our family that day, according to His great purposes. As we faced tremendous challenges in our lives, He gave these three young children the strength, discipline and sense of purpose far beyond anything we could have ever expected. He deserves all of the glory for the recognition and awards that our three oldest children received.

Sam was only three on that special night, far too young to even remember it, but he was there to witness the excitement and joy. Only God knows the impact of all of this on him, on us and on so many others for all of eternity.

What can I say? In His great wisdom and love for us, God continually surprises, amazes and fills His children with indescribable joy.

Praise His name! Amen.



Joseph Silver



Deborah Silver



Joseph, Daniel, Debbie, and Sam



Sam learning a dunk shot

Chapter 14

All the Children of the World

*“Children are the living messages
we send to a time we will not see.”*

-- John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Broken Children

Becoming a parent made Addie more aware of the sufferings of children around the world. Her heart was crushed when she imagined her own children living in such a way, leading her to wonder at how the heart of Christ must ache over the sufferings of these helpless little ones.

One day, Addie was reading aloud to her children the story of *The Little Match Girl* by Hans Christian Anderson. This story, about a young girl with abusive parents who beat her if she did not sell all of her matches, moved Addie to tears. She read, in part:

She rubbed another match against the wall: it burned brightly, and where the light fell on the wall, there the wall became transparent like a veil, so that she could see into the room. On the table was spread a snow-white tablecloth; upon it was a splendid porcelain service, and the roast goose was steaming famously with its stuffing of apple and dried plums. And what was still more capital to behold was, the goose hopped down from the dish, reeled about on the floor with knife and fork in its breast, till it came up to the poor little girl; when—the match went out and nothing but the thick, cold, damp wall was left behind. She lighted another match. Now there she was sitting under the most magnificent Christmas tree: it was still larger, and more decorated than the one which she had seen through the glass door in the rich merchant’s house.

Thousands of lights were burning on the green branches, and gaily-colored pictures, such as she had seen in the shop-windows, looked down upon her. The little maiden stretched out her hands towards them when—the match went out. The lights of the Christmas tree rose higher and higher, she saw them now as stars in Heaven; one fell down and formed a long trail of fire.

“Someone has just died!” said the little girl; for her old grandmother, the only person who had loved her, and who was now no more, had told her, that when a star falls, a soul ascends to God.

She drew another match against the wall: it was again light, and in the luster there stood the old grandmother, so bright and radiant, so mild, and with such an expression of love.

“Grandmother!” cried the little one. “Oh, take me with you! You go away when the match burns out; you vanish like the warm stove, like the delicious roast goose, and like the magnificent Christmas tree!” And she rubbed the whole bundle of matches quickly against the wall, for she wanted to be quite sure of keeping her grandmother near her. And the matches gave such a brilliant light that it was brighter than at noon-day: never formerly had the grandmother been so beautiful and so tall. She took the little maiden, on her arm, and both flew in brightness and in joy so high, so very high, and then above was neither cold, nor hunger, nor anxiety — they were with God.

But in the corner, at the cold hour of dawn, sat the poor girl, with rosy cheeks and with a smiling mouth, leaning against the wall—frozen to death on the last evening of the old year. Stiff and stark sat the child there with her matches, of which one bundle had been burnt. “She wanted to warm herself,” people said. No one had the slightest suspicion of what beautiful things she had seen; no one even dreamed of the splendor in which, with her grandmother she had entered on the joys of a new year.

Shaken, Addie ran from the room sobbing, too overwhelmed with emotion to continue. She asked God: “Lord, if there is anything that You want me to do to help the suffering children, show me and I will do it.” He graciously answered, and soon she and Dave were sponsoring four children through Compassion International.¹¹

One night, Addie had a dream in which children who looked as if they were from India or Pakistan sat in a circle. One little boy looked at her and said: “*We need water,*” so she and Dave sponsored two more children from World Vision.¹² Today, Dave and Addie still sponsor children suffering from deprivation around the world.

Whom Shall I Send?

God answered her prayer in another way, too. In 1989, while Dave and Addie were attending Chapelgate Presbyterian Church in Marriottsville, Maryland, the Berlin wall came down, opening a passage to Romania. Dave and Addie and four others from their church (two of whom were nurses) travelled to Romania to visit orphanages and hospitals with abandoned children. She recalls how they landed in the Czech Republic and drove through Hungary to Romania, bearing medical supplies and Bibles. They were stopped at the border. “*We were praying earnestly and desperately for the guards not to open and inspect all of the bags and boxes. We knew that our brothers and sisters at Chapelgate were praying, too. Well, only one bag was examined!*”

¹¹ Compassion International is a child-advocacy ministry that pairs compassionate people with those who are suffering from poverty. The ministry releases children from spiritual, economic, social, and physical poverty. The goal is for each child to become a responsible and fulfilled adult.

¹² World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the root causes of poverty and injustice. Working in nearly 100 countries around the world, they serve all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

Addie felt God's protection as the guards allowed them to pass without confiscating any of their possessions or supplies. They all gave a huge sigh of relief and thanked the Lord.

At the hospital there was a section where abandoned babies were cared for. Dave and Addie, along with their traveling companions, found children from infancy through about two and one-half years tied to their cribs. They were bundled in gauze to protect them, and every one of them was crying. The hospital had no formula and the children were fed on chicken broth or soup. Some were quite malnourished. Donning aprons, Dave and Addie and their friends picked the children up and talked, rocked, kissed, fed, prayed over and sang to them. Their crying stopped as they were loved and comforted, but then it was time for them to go. As they placed the babies back in their cribs, they immediately began to cry again. It was very hard for the team to leave.

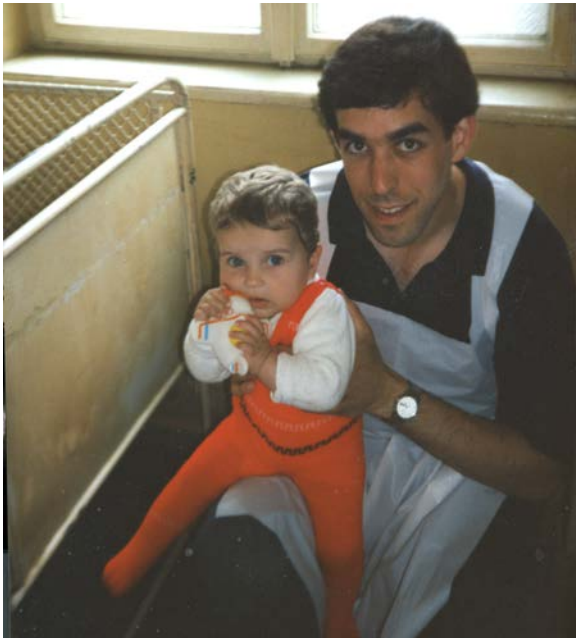
The group formed a temporary staff at the clinic within the mission compound. There were no medical workers there, but with Dave's training as a doctor and the training of the two nurses, they were able to administer basic medical care to their patients, both young and old. The Lord also made use of Addie's training in medical school, enabling her to work alongside Dave and the nurses as they ministered to their patients. Believing that God was showing her how He worked, she wrote: *"Even if this was the only reason God sent me to medical school, it was totally worth it."*

God used this trip and these children to open Addie's heart. The trip to Romania gave her a little taste of how Christ's heart must be broken over the suffering of children. She was reminded of His love for little ones and how He admonished His followers to be like them: *"Then He said, 'I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.'" (Matthew 18:3)*

During their trip, Dave and Addie saw homeless groups of gypsies travelling in nearby wagons. These people were generally shunned by society. Dave and his group visited one of the gypsy villages where, along with a Romanian doctor translating, he was able

to preach to the gypsies there. Surprisingly, many came out to listen. In the meantime Addie and Dave perceived a great spiritual battle and sensed the possibility of gypsy curses being uttered.

Upon returning home, Dave and Addie began having demonic nightmares in which they both envisioned horrible creatures trying to come after them. The Silver children also began having nightmares. Dave, however, suffered the most. The family made a decision: together they gathered up all of the gifts they had been given on their trips, along with everything they had purchased, and threw all of it into a dumpster in a nearby parking lot. They did not even want these items on their property. Addie felt a great sense of relief afterwards, as though they had been cleansed and the oppression had been lifted. The nightmares stopped for her and the children, but Dave continued to have them for another year. Eventually, he sought professional help and told God: *“If it is Your will for me to have these nightmares for the rest of my life, it will be okay with me, Lord.”* But he did plead with God to take them away, and God graciously removed the nightmares and lifted the sense of evil oppression.



David with abandoned children tied to their cribs
in Romanian Orphanage

Dave was able to travel back to Romania two more times, and twice to the Ukraine.



David Silver preaching to gypsies in Romania

Chapter 15

Diagnosis

*“Illness is the most heeded of doctors:
to goodness and wisdom we only make promises;
pain we obey.”*
-- Marcel Proust

Primary Biliary Cirrhosis

In 1993 Addie was pregnant with Deborah, her third child. Having no inkling of the illness that was to come, she and Dave decided that it would be wise to take out a life insurance policy on her. Their insurance company required a blood test before the policy could be issued, and the test came back showing that she had high liver enzyme levels. She was referred to a gastroenterologist, who recommended a biopsy.

After Debbie’s birth, Dave and Addie went together to have the biopsy performed. A radiologist came in to do an ultra-sound. After he had located the spot between two rib bones, marked it with an “X” and numbed it, Addie began to experience a feeling of panic. The doctor then inserted a six-inch needle that had a clamp cutter on the end in order to get a sample. When he pulled the needle out it was empty. The doctor made four more attempts and was ready to give up, informing Addie that she would have to make another appointment and try again. By her side throughout the process, Dave suggested to the doctor that he try one more time, using a different needle. The sixth attempt was successful, but caused Addie excruciating pain.

The biopsy had naturally caused the liver to bleed, so Addie’s torso was positioned to allow the liver to close up in the spot where the biopsy had been performed. In intense pain, she began to black

out from a “vasovagal¹³” response, a common reaction mechanism to severe pain. Although it was not normally their practice, the hospital admitted her overnight for observation so that they could monitor her condition to insure that her lung did not collapse.

Addie felt the Lord’s presence with her that night in the hospital. Through the pain she saw Jesus on the cross as the soldier pierced his side. She realized that what she was going through could never compare with what her Lord had willingly suffered for her. She meditated on the words of Christ: *“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in Me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”* (John 16:33) Through her pain, Jesus was encouraging Addie to rest in His perfect peace.

The biopsy results showed that Addie had a condition known as Primary Biliary Cirrhosis (“PBC”), an autoimmune disease in which the body attacks its own cells by slowly destroying the bile ducts in the liver. Bile, a fluid produced in your liver, plays a role in digesting food and helps rid your body of worn-out red blood cells, cholesterol and toxins. When bile ducts are damaged, as in PBC, harmful substances build up in your liver and lead to the irreversible scarring of liver tissue (cirrhosis). Researchers believe it may be triggered by a combination of genetic and environmental factors.

PBC usually develops slowly. Medication can slow its progression, especially if treatment begins early. It is a very rare disease, affecting as few as ten people in one million. There is no cure except for a liver transplant which, if all goes well, can extend an individual’s life. Addie was 32 years old at the time of her diagnosis; at that time the average patient with PBC had a life expectancy of 10 years.

¹³ Vasovagal Syncope (vay-zoh-VAY-gul SING-kuh-pee) is one of the most common causes of fainting, occurring when a body overreacts to certain triggers such as the sight of blood or extreme emotional distress. The Vasovagal Syncope causes a sudden drop in heart rate and blood pressure, which leads to reduced blood flow to the brain, resulting in a brief loss of consciousness.

Receiving this diagnosis, Addie felt she had been given a death sentence. Most crushing was the thought that her children would grow up without a mother. She found inspiration and comfort almost immediately in the words of the Apostle Paul:

“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because He has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love.” (Romans 5:3-5)

Addie clung tightly to this verse over the next year and beyond, writing in her journal that:

God wants to develop in us the character of Christ. Suffering is necessary. There is no “instant” character development; no short cut. Often it takes time (thus the necessity of perseverance), but we can rejoice in the midst of suffering, because we know the result.

Amy Carmichael¹⁴, an Irish missionary to India in the 1800’s, wrote: “True valor lies, not in what the world calls success, but in the doggedness of going on when everything in the man says ‘stop.’”

The Apostle Paul wrote: “For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting/believing in Christ, but also the privilege of suffering for Him.” (Philippians 1:29) And then, regarding the Church of Christ that Paul so loved: “I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for His body, the church.” (Colossians 1:24)

Breaking It Down

It is best, I think, to hear the almost incomprehensible details of her physical and emotional distress in her own words. She

¹⁴ Amy Carmichael, Rose from Brier

graciously agreed to outline them. As a disclaimer, she clarifies at the beginning that she is not looking for pity.

This is the medical overview of what God has allowed me – actually called me – to live with, for His glory and for my sanctification: in short, to make me like Jesus! I list them here (with explanations for the medical terminology), not to seek pity from anyone, but because people often ask how I am, and it is just easier to list it all here. I am simply sharing the reality of my day-to-day life. I don't believe in feeling sorry for doing/living with God's will, no matter how hard it is. As for God, His way is perfect and best, and His love is unfailing towards His children.

It took Addie a very long time (21 years, in fact), to be able to say this. Now she reminds herself of it every day. As Amy Carmichael would write: “Acceptance of God's chosen will for your life leads to peace.”¹⁵

I do seek your prayers, however. If I am physically dead by the time you read this book, please pray for my husband and my four children. Thank you so much!

My two main diagnoses, the ones that started me on this journey, are:

- *Primary Biliary Cirrhosis (PBC) is a very rare autoimmune¹⁶ liver disease that causes my own immune system to attack medium-sized bile ducts. Over time this leads to the scarring of liver tissues (cirrhosis).*
- *Dermatomyositis is another very rare autoimmune disease which attacks the skin and muscles, where chronic inflammation causes itchiness, discoloration and ulcers of the skin, along with loss of muscle mass and strength. This*

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ An autoimmune disease is one that causes one's own body to perceive itself as a foreign enemy, prompting the immune system to produce antibodies to attack the antigen (i.e., in PBC, the medium-size bile ducts are attacked, creating inflammation of the liver).

caused a sudden onset of weakness, such that I could not even hold Samuel, who was eight months old at the time. My condition was serious enough to hospitalize me at least four times for different manifestations of this disease. Other organs can be affected, such as lungs and heart-conduction cells. One of the most difficult complications of this disease is the calcium deposits (in the form of hard nodules and sharp, coral-reef like growths) inside and outside of my body (legs, arms, back, inside the abdomen, ribs, breasts, upper chest near axillary area, neck, hamstring muscles, gluteus muscles, etc.) causing pain and difficulty in movement.

Addie prompted me to touch the back of her leg. I was astonished; it was completely rigid. It felt as though I were tapping on a plaster cast.

Then there are the other diagnoses that accompany the progression of these diseases, as well as the complications and side effects from various medications. These are: hypertension, type II diabetes, hypothyroidism, insomnia, gastrointestinal distress, dysphagia¹⁷, severe itchiness (especially of the scalp, face, neck and top of the back), hair loss, discoloration of skin, Cushingoid¹⁸ syndrome, neuropathy, arthritis, myalgia,¹⁹ profound muscle weakness, extreme fatigue, intermittent complete heart block (this required the insertion of a pacemaker 19 years ago), depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

I have other, separate diagnoses of pancreatic cysts, endometriosis (necessitating a total abdominal hysterectomy), glaucoma, cataracts (surgery was performed on both eyes), and a partial bowel obstruction, for which I have been placed under hospice care for the past two years.

¹⁷ Difficulty or discomfort in swallowing, as a symptom of disease.

¹⁸ Having the constellation of symptoms and signs caused by an excess of cortisol hormone. While facial puffiness and weight gain are typical features of a Cushingoid appearance, Cushing syndrome is an extremely complex hormonal condition that involves many areas of the body.

¹⁹ Myalgia: muscle pain, a symptom of many diseases and disorders.

Well – I am exhausted just thinking of, and listing, these medical issues. And these are only the physical aspects of my struggles! I have spiritual challenges, along with all of the usual challenges of marriage and raising four children.

Although my life goal was to be a doctor and help sick people, God had the opposite in mind: He has made me a very sick patient. My husband Dave, who has been practicing internal medicine for over 25 years, says I am the most complicated patient he has ever known. God certainly had Dave in mind in the big picture, because as a husband and caretaker to me, he had to come to grips with his own limitations. Thankfully he put his trust in God's plan for all of us, including our children. I am so blessed, and so thankful, that God designed Dave as my husband. He diagnosed some of my diseases before the specialists did, and has protected me from unnecessary and even harmful medical options. God has used him to save my life quite a few times! There are times when I don't want him to be so clinical; occasionally I wish he could just be a husband to me! I have learned, however, to give thanks to God that Dave is the "whole package."

I am grateful, too, for the knowledge God allowed me to gain through medical school. I even studied Latin while I was attending High Point Senior High School, which has proven to be a great help to me in understanding both medical terminology and Greek grammar. Nothing is ever wasted in God's economy; this has certainly proven true in my life. Ignorance is not bliss! It has been such a tremendous help to understand, as much as I can, what is going on in my body. Even though I truly hate what all of the disease processes are doing, Christ lives in me, and this body that is wasting away is still the temple of God's Holy Spirit. This means that I need to take care of it until I get my new one!

I am weary and weak in every way. The Apostle Paul says he will only boast about his weaknesses. The Lord said to him: "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness. So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me." (2 Corinthians 12:1-10) Well, I want to hide my weaknesses, especially in the area of external appearance. What woman wants to look ugly and unattractive? I thank God for wigs

and makeup! I feel that God has been steadily removing anything that I would boast in; Paul is speaking here of boasting in weaknesses, not one's accomplishments, because God's power is best shown in weakness. "So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude He had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin." (2 Corinthians 12:9) "You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God." (1 Peter 4:1)

It is absolutely true that the harder my life becomes, the harder it makes me lean on Jesus. Maybe God is displaying a lot of His power, since I have a lot of weaknesses. I don't know exactly how He does that, since I am often discouraged, depressed, and even despairing of life. A lot of the time I really can't sense much of the strength and power of Christ in my life. If anything, I see more of my own sin, since I don't have a great deal of physical and emotional strength help me to cope with myself, or to handle life in general. I am on the edge much of the time. So I must say: I don't take pleasure in my weaknesses. But I do believe without a doubt that God is doing something eternal, and that it is the best for me, for Dave, for our children, and everyone else in my life. He is certainly changing me from the inside out, as well as the outside in, for His purpose and glory. I thank God and praise Him for that!

As incredible as it may seem, this is but a small sample of her body's daily struggle against itself. As of this writing she has endured almost two years of incredibly painful partial bowel obstruction distress. The bathroom has become her prayer closet. Nausea washes over her in waves; at times the pain is unbelievably fierce. She closes her eyes and pictures Christ holding on to her, even as she clings to Him. She panics; He whispers to her: "*Be still; breathe.*" Her heart slows to a normal rate. "*Don't think about food,*" she tells herself. Naturally the image of food immediately appears, and she is queasy again.

On August 20, 2014, Addie developed a nasty abscess in her abdomen that required a three-inch wide incision and a three-inch

deep cut to drain. As of this writing in March of 2016, the wound remains unhealed.

The itching on her scalp, in particular, never ends. It is so chronic that much of her hair has fallen out, never to regrow because of the death of healthy hair follicles. In the stillness of the night, with nothing to distract her, the itching is almost unbearable. Those closest to her particularly pray for relief from this one horrible symptom.

Her skin has become so thin that, when a compassionate medical care provider tried to help her out of her wheelchair and gripped the back of her upper arms to lift her, her skin came away in their hands. At this writing, more than a year later, this wound has still not healed.

Help me, Lord. Help me. I am helpless. I am wrapped up in pain.

He holds her, and she senses His presence in her despair.

Is this really necessary Lord? I don't want to die in a lot of pain. I want to die, gently, in my sleep. But Lord, I can't instruct you; You will do what is best and I will trust in You. I know that, in the end, I will be with You and it will be wonderful.

She remembers the martyrs who were burned alive. She is very aware of the fact that she is: "...surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses." (Hebrews 12:1)

It sounds crazy, doesn't it? Sometimes I am surprised myself that I have all of these things going on in my body. I often tell people that it does not even feel like I have a human body anymore!

Chapter 16

Healing Hands

*“Lord Jesus, heal me.
Heal in me whatever You see that needs healing.
Heal me of whatever might separate me from You.
Heal my memory; heal my spirit; heal my soul.
Lay Your hands gently upon me.
Heal me through Your love for me.
Amen.”*
-- Unknown

Keeping Up The Pace

It was December of 1995, and Addie was 34 years old. She and her three children (Sammy had not been born yet) had returned home from a fun-filled outing at Columbia Mall during the Christmas season. Entering their home, they settled in for their “read-aloud” time. Joe was five, Daniel three and one-half, and Debbie not quite two. As she read them a Christmas story, she began to experience a frightening sensation: her heart felt as though it was plummeting down, and her eyes went dark. This happened repeatedly; she would come out of it and then once again feel as though she was going to black out.

A little later, although still feeling weak, Addie was able to get up and make some supper for her family. Dave came home from work and they sat down to eat. As she was swallowing the homemade Korean soup, she felt a “bubble” in her chest and asked Dave to listen to her heart. Even with his stethoscope he could barely hear it, and at times he could not hear it at all. Dave told her they needed to go to the emergency room immediately, and called Addie’s brother Pat to come and watch the children. Addie paused to brush her teeth. “*No!*” he shouted. “*Now!*” Rushing Addie to Howard County General Hospital, Dave wasted no time. He informed the emergency room staff that his wife was experiencing episodes of near-fainting and insisted that she be seen immediately.

She was hurried into a cubicle and put on telemetry so that doctors could observe her heart rate and rhythm. The nurse exclaimed with surprise that Addie's heart rhythm was experiencing long pauses. Addie could feel the life draining out of her. An external pacemaker was placed on her chest to protect her. Early the next morning, she was transported by ambulance to the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore City for a permanent pacemaker-placement operation. There she was told she was the youngest person in their unit with a pacemaker.

After the pacemaker operation, Addie woke feeling confused and disillusioned about God and His plan for her life. She questioned Him, asking for help and understanding. Opening her Bible to the book of Psalms, she read: "*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His faithful love endures forever.*" (Psalm 118:1) She felt shaken up, but in a good way. God's message to her was clear: even before receiving an answer to her cry for help, He was telling her to give thanks for His enduring love. She stopped questioning Him, and responded instead with a grateful heart: "*Okay, Lord; You are good; thank You.*" Once again, Addie felt humbled by her great God.

Later Addie learned that while Dave was driving her to the emergency room, he had truly felt that she might not make it. God had used Dave's medical knowledge, experience and instinct to prompt him to hurry her into the car. Through this seemingly simple act, Addie saw God's hand clearly at work in preserving her life. She felt very small, but so grateful and so incredibly loved in the face of God's tender provision for her.

A Loving Touch

When we were still attending Chapelgate, and I had been living with my diagnosis of liver disease for a few years, the church decided to hold a healing service. This was in the mid-1990's, and healing services were not routinely held at this church. They planned it for a Sunday night and encouraged people to come for prayer. Dave and I decided to go.

I walked down to the front of the church and told the people gathered there that evening of my situation. I told them I just wanted to grow old with my husband, if it was God's will, whether I was sick or not. I began to cry.

The people gathered around me and laid their hands on me. I was seized by uncontrollable weeping; not out of sadness, but rather because I felt the Holy Spirit moving inside of me. It must have been God working. These tears were of the same type that fell when my friend shared the Gospel with me for the first time, back at the start of my freshman year at college. It was the same feeling. I was powerless; I could not stop weeping.

In the midst of the prayers and the laying on of hands, I felt strength and energy running from the top of my head and down the entire length of my body. I was startled – I had heard about this, but I was always skeptical of other people's experiences. I began trembling in the holy fear of God. God! He cares for me! I don't know what He did, but I sensed His touch throughout my body, and it was enormously comforting.

Looking back, that was almost twenty years ago and, for all practical reasons, my liver has remained stable. Incredibly, it has not had complications or become cirrhotic. It has just kind of stayed in the center. It may have advanced a tiny bit, but not enough to require a transplant. That is truly amazing, because I was already at Stage II when I was diagnosed. I do believe the Lord did something that night; at the very least, He slowed the progression of the disease.

I was also having additional heart issues at that time, in the form of electrical conduction problems from my atrium to my ventricle. After the healing service, I wanted to know how my heart was beating: was it relying solely on the pacemaker, or was it beating on its own? Cardiologists can test you and interpret the results to reveal almost the exact percentage. The doctor examined me and told me that most of the time (almost 99% of the time, in fact), my heart was beating on its own. That encouraged me very much; I was so thankful for God's healing touch at that service.

Dave and I always pray that when my time comes I will die peacefully in my sleep. He doesn't want me to die in pain and of course, neither do I. Every day before he goes to work, my husband tiptoes in and checks my pulse. My breathing can be so shallow, and I'm lying so still, that he daily checks me for signs of life.

Personal Retreat

For about 15 years while the children were young, Addie would occasionally go away by herself for a weekend retreat, from Friday afternoon when Dave got home from work and on through until Sunday afternoon. She would do this several times a year. She would either go to the Bon Secours Ministry Center in Marriottsville, MD or the All Saints Convent in Catonsville, MD, both of which she had learned of from a friend at Chapelgate.

On these retreats, Addie would soak up God's love, joy and peace, sitting with Him and meditating on His Word. There would be absolute quiet – no television or radio, etc. She would pray for others, read and memorize Bible verses, scrapbook photos of the children, write cards of encouragement to friends and family, and read Christian books. Addie saw this time as that which is spoken of in the Book of Psalms: *“He leads me beside quiet waters; He restores my soul.”* (Psalm 23:2) The purpose of these weekend retreats was to quietly seek refreshment and restoration. These days and nights off by herself helped her to make time for peace in her life, so that the daily pace of the world around her would not drown out God's voice.

On one particular visit, exhausted, she was still able to kneel and did so with her Bible open to just visit with the Lord and tell Him of her needs, seeking refreshment from Him. At that time, she only had the liver disease and the pacemaker, but she was feeling down and wondering about her life's purpose. Tired, crying and in need of His help, she confessed her concerns for the future.

The Lord filled her mind with a sudden image: She was a little girl again, just four- or five-years old. Jesus bent down and picked her up, looking at her with delight on His face. She sensed

both God's nearness and how small and helpless she was, and she knew that she would be okay. God loved her and was with her.

He gave her a precious verse: *"I will be your God through your lifetime, until your hair is white with age. I made you and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you."* (Isaiah 46:4) After receiving this verse, she felt at peace in the knowledge that God was there with her, comforting her and taking care of her. He was telling her not to worry. Addie felt reassured by His goodness and love.

When Addie would return home from her retreats, she would come home to a house cleaned by Dave and the kids. She greatly appreciated this demonstration of loving support.

Chapter 17

Surprise! Surprise!

*“Women who experience an unplanned pregnancy
also deserve unplanned joy.”*
-- Patricia Heaton

Another Miracle

After Deborah’s birth, the doctor gave them a stern warning: *“Don’t get pregnant!”* Although pregnancy itself sometimes mysteriously provides a respite from an autoimmune disease, the symptoms tend to flare up after delivery.

In spite of her doctor’s warnings that a pregnancy would likely intensify her symptoms, Addie was reluctant to take steps to prevent conception. She was resistant to the idea of a tubal ligation; neither did she want David to have a vasectomy, reasoning that if she died he might want to marry again and have more children. In addition, Addie always felt as though someone was still “missing” from their family.

Five years had passed since Debbie’s birth. One morning, Addie woke to find herself feeling extremely nauseous. Believing she had contracted a nasty and stubborn gastrointestinal virus, she called the doctor and told him: *“Something is really wrong with me.”* He calmly responded: *“Oh, let’s just take a pregnancy test, just in case ...”* It came back positive, and the doctor called David at home, at 11:30 at night. *“Your wife is pregnant!”* he growled. But Dave and Addie were so happy.

Addie saw the first sonogram at just eight weeks: a tiny little heart sack, steadily beating away. She and Dave were full of excitement. With two older brothers, little Deborah had already begun praying for a sister, and so they picked out a girl’s name. But at 36 weeks (since Addie’s pregnancy was considered high-risk due to the liver disease and the pacemaker), another ultrasound was taken, and there it was ... the evidence of another little boy coming to live

with them. They wondered how they were going to break the news to Deborah.

“No!” their little daughter cried: “No way!” But her daddy gently told her: “Debbie, do you know what this means? You will still be the only princess in the house!” The little girl was comforted. And so, in 1999, baby Samuel was added to the Silver family.

Little did Debbie know that this tiny fellow would grow up to be her best friend. They have always adored each other, and are as alike as two peas in a pod. Often laughing and singing together, they even seem to think alike. Sammy’s special gift from God seems to be his ability to bring joy to everyone.

Unfortunately, soon after giving birth to Sammy, Addie developed a second autoimmune disease, dermatomyositis²⁰. She grew weaker and began having skin problems. Sammy was born in March and Addie was diagnosed in December, but she knew in August that she was sick and, thanks to Dave, already knew what was wrong: he had diagnosed her second autoimmune disease long before her rheumatologist.

Sammy still asks her: “Mom, did I make you sick?” “No, no, no!” she tells him. “You are a gift to me! You are keeping me alive!”

In all of her youngest child’s memories she has been weak and, in many ways, almost completely disabled. When he was little, this precious boy believed that each time she left for the hospital he would never see his mommy again.

²⁰ Dermatomyositis is an inflammation of the skin and underlying muscle tissue, involving the degeneration of collagen, discoloration, and swelling, typically occurring as an autoimmune condition, and sometimes associated with internal cancer.

Chapter 18

The Valley of the Shadow

*“Faith makes a Christian.
Life proves a Christian.
Trial confirms a Christian.
Death crowns a Christian.”*
-- Unknown

Letting Go

After four years of homeschooling their youngest child, Sammy (12 years after they began with Joseph, their oldest, at kindergarten age), Addie’s eyes began to fail. Her cataracts made it almost impossible to see. Her strength, too, had failed to the point that she was not even able to sit up for any length of time. She and Dave felt as though God was telling them that their season of homeschooling was finished. The middle two children asked if they could go to public school. They were ready. Dave and Addie decided that was the best thing for everyone at that time. Joe said: *“Mommy, it’s okay. I can either stay at home or go to school.”* They let him go to school. He was able to experience public school for his senior year at Towson High before he went on to the University of Maryland’s College Park campus.

At this writing, Sammy is finishing his junior year of high school. Addie clings to the hope that she will live long enough to see him graduate. On her worst days she feels that she cannot live one more day, let alone another year. Sammy tells her: *“Mom, you don’t know – you might live a long time! And if you go, I want to go with you.”*

Seasons come and go. I am so glad I gave whatever I could to my family, and everything else God called Dave and me to do, because I didn’t have any way of knowing what was coming. You know, because of my pride ... I felt so dumb. Because I couldn’t do simple things, I kept dropping things, I lost my memory, you know ... I can’t drive, I can’t play the piano, I can’t even get out of bed normally, and I just ...

Her voice trails off, overwhelmed with emotion. There is no attempt to sugar-coat either her pain or disappointment. Addie's faith is the solid foundation that holds her up; it does not, however, turn her world into cotton candy.

Life is not a bowl of cherries. It's a battle! Otherwise, the Apostle Paul would not have exhorted Christians to take up the whole armor of God. (Ephesians 6) Life is a spiritual battle which began between God and Satan even before the creation of mankind. After the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, this fallen angel didn't waste any time: he went after Adam and Eve, King Saul, King David, Job, Peter and Paul, just to name a few, and even after Jesus Christ our Lord. What makes us think that we will escape from being one of Satan's targets? Godly people are a threat to him. His intention is to steal, kill and destroy. (John 10:10) He wants to keep God's people blind, apathetic and ineffective, as he seeks to hinder the Gospel of Jesus Christ from saving sinners (everyone) from the wrath of a Holy God who graciously sent His son Jesus to take our punishment, and to give us complete forgiveness and eternal life. I am encouraged, though, when I remember this verse from Scripture: "You have died with Christ, and He has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world." (Colossians 2:20)

Fear, ignorance and deception are just a few of his tactics to keep Christians out of his way; therefore, it is absolutely crucial that clear biblical teaching on spiritual warfare be pursued by every Christian, and taught by churches.

Sometimes, when Addie feels she is at her breaking point, the tiniest little thing will knock her completely flat. For many of us the phrase: "My world is falling apart!" can cover anything from a temperamental toddler to a flat tire. For Addie, it is a cry from the heart.

*Addie's Journal – Fall, 2000 – Feather and CellCept*²¹

In 2000, soon after I was diagnosed with my second autoimmune disease, dermatomyositis, one of the new medications we tried was CellCept. It is notorious for one of its side effects: mainly, that of causing gastrointestinal distress. Among many other toxic effects on the body, CellCept sloughs off mucosal cells of the GI tract. I found myself often in pain, usually at night, with severe abdominal cramps. One night in particular I was crying out to God for help, and I heard myself saying: “God, You are good, right? You are good. And You do love me, and You are right here with me.” I was confirming these things out loud, even though it felt as though none of them were true.

I dozed off for a bit, leaning my head on my arm, which was resting on the sink (I was sitting on the toilet). Suddenly, I realized I was being watched by Heavenly beings, eagerly waiting to see how I would respond. Of course! There was something much bigger going on here!

I remembered what I had read in Paul's letter to the Hebrews: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.” (Hebrews 12:1)

I began to praise Jesus, singing:

*“Praise the name of Jesus!
Praise the name of Jesus!
He's my rock; He's my fortress.
He's my deliverer; in Him will I trust.
Praise the name of Jesus!”²²*

Suddenly, my eyes saw light and feathery-looking things, bright silvery and white, coming down as softly as snow. My immediate thought was: “Feathers – from angels' wings! They are here!”

²¹ CellCept (mycophenolate mofetil) is an immunosuppressant (a medicine that lowers your body's immune system).

²² Lyric by Roy Hicks, Jr.

They were not physically tangible, but I knew God was encouraging me with a glimpse of a normally unseen dimension of reality.

To top it all off, the Lord gave me words of encouragement which helped me to press on. I really needed this: “No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.” (Joshua 1:5)

Prayer of Desperation

I have often repeated the prayer which David wrote in Psalm 38. I am so grateful for his complete honesty and total dependency on God. Some of the words from this descriptive Psalm resonate so beautifully with my own desperate heart and body:

*I am bent over and racked with pain.
All day long I walk around filled with grief. (v. 6)*

*A raging fever burns within me,
and my health is broken. (v. 7)*

*I am exhausted and completely crushed.
My groans come from an anguished heart. (v. 8)*

*My heart beats wildly; my strength fails,
and I am going blind. (v. 10)*

*I am waiting for You, O Lord.
You must answer for me, O Lord my God. (v. 15)*

I am on the verge of collapse, facing constant pain. (v. 17)

*Do not abandon me, O Lord.
Do not stand at a distance, my God. (v. 21)*

Come quickly to help me, O Lord my Savior. (v. 22)

Meditating on this prayer, Addie felt she could have written it herself, so strong was her sense of identity with the psalmist's heartache.

Be Thou My Vision

As her physical condition worsened towards the end of 2015, Addie's eyesight was deteriorating. Due to the continued weakening of her eye muscles, her eyelids did not close completely. Consequently her eyes had become painfully dry, granting only very poor vision. Even with a high-intensity light and holding a text only inches from her face, it became very difficult for her to read.

The prospect of surrendering the ability to read, one of her few remaining pleasures, was crushing. Her daily study of the Scriptures had become food and water in the desert of her suffering. As her journal entries reveal over and over, each passage was a fresh communication to her heart.

Although by now Addie was accustomed to resolutely letting go of everyday activities that most would take for granted, this one was particularly painful. Determined to continue reading as long as she could she used artificial tears, then gently rubbed her eyelids until the cloudiness dissipated enough to allow her to read for 30 minutes or so. Her vision then clouded up again, and she patiently repeated the process until the strain on her eyes became too great to continue.

At one of our Saturday morning meetings she confessed the reason for her extreme exhaustion. She had been determined the previous day to read over the entire manuscript at one sitting. It had taken her over five hours, but she had achieved her goal. She smiled broadly as she delivered her most recent revision to me, saying: "*I am reminded of I Corinthians 12:13: 'Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.'*"

I sat in her kitchen that day, balancing in my hands the manuscript marked with her neat and tiny script, and wondered what this effort had cost her. Certainly it was beyond any price I could name. By now I knew that Addie's determination to see this project through was fueled by one simple desire: to see God use her suffering for His glory, and for our good. While there were certainly moments when I saw her leaning towards despair (wondering if she would see this goal realized in her lifetime), most days her spirit seemed light as we worked together and she contentedly entrusted the outcome to God's hands.

Addie's struggle over her failing eyesight as she determinedly clung to the Word of God reminded me of the first and last stanzas of the hymn "Be Thou My Vision."²³

*Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best thought, by day or by night.
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.*

*High King of Heaven, my victory won;
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heav'n's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O ruler of all.*

As always, we concluded our time together that morning with our heads bowed and our hands and hearts joined, sharing our praises and requests with the King of Kings. My heart was always moved as we prayed together. "Lord," I thought later that day, "*please be happy to bless this effort. Live in these pages, Father; reveal Yourself here. And please, Lord, please ... grant the desire of Addie's heart: 'Lord, be glorified.'*"

²³ "Be Thou My Vision" is an ancient Irish hymn credited to Dallan Forgaill.

Chapter 19

Close Calls

*“Death is a reality that we know will claim us one day.
But, like so many other things,
we dismiss the thoughts of its arrival
until it comes a little too close for comfort.”*
-- Matt Slick

Falling Down

I’ve had about five different episodes of falling. About two and one-half years ago, I had a walker right next to me, but I stepped away from it as I walked into the restroom. My right shoe sort of got stuck on the wooden floor, and I fell straight down on my face. (Because I don’t have the muscular strength to brace myself, I always fall on my face.) Miraculously, my skull bone didn’t get crushed, although the bridge of my nose did crack and my front teeth were loosened. I was bleeding quite a bit from my nose and mouth, and a puddle of blood was growing under my face. The rest of my body was contused²⁴ and I was in a lot of pain.

Most people can get up after falling, but due to my lack of muscle strength I have to remain on the ground until someone comes to help me. About 11 years ago, I was lying on the floor for about four hours before someone came to help me, because I couldn’t move to get to the phone.

It’s a very helpless and dangerous situation, and because it happens so unexpectedly I am initially in shock before I can assess what has happened. My sense of desperation goes off the chart. I am begging God to help me, to send angels, any form of help. How fragile life is and how brief it can be! God has been so gracious to literally “take the fall” for me, protecting me thus far from a potentially fatal injury.

²⁴ Contuse: to injure without breaking the skin; to bruise.

Once I was looking for some nuts that I thought I had hidden in a closet, and I ended up falling into the closet, with my legs stuck out, up in the air! Dave finally heard my pathetic cries for help and pulled me out. It seems funny now, looking back on it.

Anyhow, I have to trust God to help me not live in constant fear, and not do anything foolish. My motto is: "Never rush!"

Is it cold in here, or is it just me?

Addie is too weak to get out of her hospital-style bed by herself, so if the electricity goes off and she is alone, she must stay in her bed until someone comes to her aid. The same is true if she is in her electric recliner and the power fails.

At the end of the summer of 2014, I was lying down to rest on my hospital bed. There was a little fan running to cut down on the humidity. Dave was at the grocery store, and Sam was at a cello lesson. Since I would only be on my own for about an hour, we all felt that I would be safe.

About ten minutes after Dave left, I began to feel cooler, and the drop in my body's temperature began to be uncomfortable. I tried to pull the bedspread over me, but I was feeling too weak to even do that. The more I tried to move further up on the bed in order to get up, the worse my body's position became. I could feel my temperature dropping quickly. Soon I was shivering. My whole body began to shake so hard that my muscles tightened up and my teeth were chattering. My intercostal (rib) muscles and face were contracting very tightly, too, and I began to have difficulty breathing. I knew that I was becoming hypoxic (low on oxygen).

I was so frightened. To make matters worse, a terrible headache had come on very quickly, and I was concerned about the possibility of death by stroke. I tried to grab my cell phone out of the pocket on the railing of my hospital bed, but my muscles had tightened to the point that it was almost impossible to reach out for the phone, let alone grab it.

After an agonizing effort, I was finally able to grab the phone and just barely push the buttons to call Dave. My call went into voicemail, and I am sure I must have sounded like a stroke patient: stuttering, barely able to pronounce the words, and short of breath. A sense of doom stole over me. I was horrified at the thought that God, whom I had been crying out to, would allow me to die trapped in my own bed.

I decided to try and call my next door neighbor. I knew she was not at home at that time, but would soon be returning from her son's basketball game.

To make a long story short my neighbor, Carla Knoll, used the extra key I had given to her to come to my rescue. She gently lifted me off of the bed (I needed to sit up and move my body a little bit, in order to get my blood circulating) and covered me with several blankets. She heated some water for me to drink. I began to thaw, and I was soon able to talk clearly and breathe more normally. Dave and Sam came home shortly after that.

Obviously, once again, it was not yet my time to go home to the Lord. I was very frightened, though! I believe that there must be a reason for the Lord to have allowed this terrifying event to become a part of my life's story.

In the midst of her own body's betrayal, Christ brings a supernatural sense of sweetness to this very dark place. Addie describes it as a powerful, intimate thing, to rest in the arms of God. Always free of pretense, however, she looks at me with pleading eyes: *"Pray for me. Please remember to pray for me."*

Chapter 20

A Poem for Addie

“Oh, what good company poets are!”

-- Jose Marti

Gerry Suter, a friend of Addie’s from church, wrote the following poem after a brief reunion with her in 2014. At first glance, Addie was unsure of her feelings about the poem. As a woman, her pride was a bit chafed. After reading it over and searching the lyrics more deeply, however, she saw the love and tenderness in the poem – Jerry was telling her that he was humbled by, among other things, her faith, courage and devotion to her Lord. He was also moved by her interest in the details of his life, in spite of her own suffering and the severe limitations that her diseases had inflicted upon her. Read in that light, the poet’s lyric is indeed a tribute to both Addie and her Savior.

Addie

*Addie was a holy mess, a holy mess was she.
Her hair disheveled, pulling out, strung down randomly;
Her face was red and kind of flushed, red patches certainly;
She was thin and walked a tad, ever carefully.*

*She queried after grandchildren, and asked me what I do.
She questioned me and sought detail, about fields hard to hoe.
She asked of my beloved wife whom she admires too.
She asked about my offspring, there’s one I just don’t know.*

*She’s expected death three times in just this last one year.
She’s suffered more this decade past than any that is clear.
She told me that her suffering left nothing but for cheer.
Because the Lord was good and left her strangely without fear.*

*She said she’d met with God and Jesus often when she prays.
I’m awed by God, amazed and flogged, how little there’s to say.*

Gerry Suter, October 12, 2014



Cakes provided by Eileen Shields



Singing "Your Grace is Enough" with guests



Addie's father, sister Sandra, Addie, and her mother

Chapter 21

Party! Party!

*“She danced. She sang. She took, she gave.
She loved. She created. She dissented. She enlivened.
She saw, she grew, she sweated, she changed.
She learned, she laughed.
She shed her skin.
She bled on the pages of her days.
She walked through walls.
She lived with intention.”*
-- Mary Anne Radmacher

Silver Silver Anniversary

I thought this day would never come!

Ten years ago (at this writing), I began dreaming of a party with a gathering of friends and family – a wonderful party – although I had no idea what occasion we would be celebrating.

My health was declining rapidly, and at that point I really had no expectation of even making it to our 25th wedding anniversary. It seemed impossible from my perspective, but we well know that what is impossible with man, is possible with God! (Matthew 19:26) As the Lord continued to sustain my life, Dave and I reached 24 years of marriage. The dream began to look as if it might become a reality! God began to grow the desire in my heart to plan a Silver Silver Anniversary Party. It grew stronger as I began to picture our gathering as a little shadow of the great wedding banquet in Heaven where we will gather one day. This day would be a joyful celebration of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

About six months before the actual anniversary, we began to plan. I knew that I had no strength or vision on my own to pull this off. Once again, I had to depend on God to provide and guide every detail. It is not easy for a task-oriented, controlling perfectionist

like me to rely on others. I knew, however, that I would need to seek God's help and rely on Him, however He chose to provide.

I really wanted to have a nice meal served, and a beautiful reception. Sitting at my kitchen table, I prayed: "Lord, somehow please provide for a nice meal." I began looking over catering menus, trying to figure out the cost of feeding 120+ people. I didn't have the opportunity to talk to Dave about it that night, so I went off to bed.

The next evening I was in the kitchen when I heard David yell out several times in a row: "This is crazy!" I called out to him: "What's going on?" He had opened a piece of mail from some very close friends of ours, Dwayne and Kathy Florenzi. Dwayne had led Dave to Christ when they were attending Lehigh University together, and we have kept in touch over the years. His face bore an expression of shock. "They sent us an early anniversary gift – a check!" Six months before our anniversary, and without even knowing that we were planning a party and just beginning to sort out the expense, their check was almost the exact amount as the price of the catering that we were considering! We were surprised, encouraged and humbled all at once. Always faithful, God was confirming His will for this reception.

The rest, as they say, is history. Miracle followed miracle. Phyllis Culp-Underland, the sweet woman who had been cleaning my home for about three years at that time and who had subsequently become a dear friend, gave us a wonderful gift. She decorated all of the tables at the reception with banners, flowers, and elegant utensils wrapped in napkins with silver-colored printing of our name and the date of the event. Not content to stop there, she provided a lovely and delicious take-home gift for each guest: white chocolate, in the shape of two wedding bells. Along with all of this, she provided a disposable camera on every table so that guests could photograph the event! In her extreme generosity, she even developed the pictures and made two lovely volumes of memories for our family. We have relived the happy moments of that day over and over again through these beautiful albums. Her friend and her friend's son were also dispatched to the party site to help set everything up.

Keep in mind that before she came to clean my home, I had never even met Phyllis. Over the years, though, she became a great source of encouragement to me. On my worst days, she has heard me moan: “I want to go home! I am ready to go home.” Her response is always the same: “Okay. Let’s see if you can make it through the next upcoming holiday.” Together we’ve been “making it through” each holiday for several years now. Her motto is: “Never look back, always look forward.” In other words: “Press on!”

Another dear friend, Eileen Shields, provided gorgeous cakes – in two different flavors!

Steve Jiminez graciously helped with practically every detail of the service, setting up and putting together photo presentations with special lights and music. I really saw Christ in Steve’s ministry to us.

Renee Haines coordinated and worked with so many other wonderful friends from Covenant of Grace in order to provide all of the rest of the help that we needed. Our pastor, Herb Ruby, was kind enough to lead the service for us and to be the master of ceremonies at the reception. The entire event was so much fun.

But now I must tell you, as they say, “...the rest of the story.” This celebration came about through many hard-fought battles. The reception date was June 15, 2013, although our actual anniversary was June 11th. As the party date grew closer, I became more and more debilitated, weak and sick. My rheumatologist, along with Dave and I, decided that I should try Intravenous Immunoglobulin (“IVIG”), which had given me some positive results 10 years earlier. Beginning in March, 2013, I received a total of 10 treatments.

On the mornings when I was due to receive a treatment, David would help me to get up around 6:30 a.m. I felt so exhausted when he woke me. He would assist me in dressing, drive me to the hospital and drop me off by 7:30 a.m. After about five hours of

treatment, a friend would pick me up and take me home. I was told it would take a while for the treatments to become effective, so I was trying to be patient. Something told me, however, that I was not improving; in fact, I was feeling worse than ever. By this point I was beyond exhaustion, even telling David: "I can't do this." It felt more like torment than treatment.

During the 10th treatment, my blood pressure shot up to 200/100, and I began having hot flashes. The staff immediately recognized my body's rejection of the medication and halted the treatment. Although I was initially scheduled for a total of 25 treatments, my body was unable to tolerate any more.

My body was much sicker at this time than it had been 10 years prior. I thought to myself: "Now that I am worse than before the IVIG treatment, I don't think I will live to see our anniversary, let alone the party." There was no way I was going to cancel all of our plans, though. As long as I was alive, even if I had to be transported on a stretcher, I was determined to try and make it to our party.

Near the end of April, I began to run a high fever and quickly became hypotensive.²⁵ My pressure dropped from 135/83 to 68/40. I could barely walk. Dave came home right away and took me to the hospital. I had urosepsis, a urinary tract infection that quickly spread to my blood. If untreated, it can quickly become fatal, especially for someone who is immuno-compromised like me. I was given quite a variety of IV antibiotics.

During my 13-day stay at the hospital I developed C. Diff (clostridium difficile), an infection in my colon. This is a nasty and dangerous one. We were now in the month of May, and it seemed as though I would not make it to the celebration. "That's it," I thought. "I'm going to die of this infection. Maybe this anniversary thing was not supposed to happen after all." I struggled with sadness, finally telling God: "Okay. If you don't want this celebration to come about, that's okay with me."

²⁵ Hypotensive: relating to or suffering from abnormally low blood pressure.

I came home on May 13th feeling weak and beaten down. I sensed a fierce battle with Satan, who sought to block our anniversary party. We know, however, that God's purposes are never thwarted. "I know that You can do anything, and no one can stop You." (Job 42:2) He is the sovereign God in whose plans we can trust and rest.

The week before the celebration Dave and I went to a hotel that was just five minutes away. We relaxed for three days, enjoying room service for every meal, watching television, and never leaving the room.

June 15, 2013 finally arrived! We had been asking God to give us this day, and here it was!

During the celebration service we worshipped God with singing. Joseph shared his testimony. Deborah sang and played the guitar. A photo presentation was shown, accompanied by the Andre' Couch song, "My Tribute." Dave and I gave separate testimonies of God's faithfulness, and then renewed our vows. Fred and Linda McHargue offered prayers. Dave played the guitar and sang the song "Addie" that he had written and sung to me 25 years ago at our wedding. Pastor Ruby charged us all to remain thankful.

We enjoyed a wonderful reception with family and friends. Everyone was there from Dave's family and from mine. We ate a wonderful meal, talked, Joseph performed a break dance, and David and I danced with our guests. My mom even danced! I felt so fulfilled that day. I had not experienced such a wonderful amount of energy since I became ill, nor have I since. It was a precious gift from the Lord for that day. He even graciously calmed my gastrointestinal tract.

As planned, I went to my parents' home for a week afterwards for a much-needed time of recovery. My parents always take such good care of me, and I love eating my mom's great Korean food.

Later, I reflected: "God did it!!" and remembered these words from the book of Luke: "Blessed is she who believed that there would be

a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.” (Luke 1:45, paraphrased)

Addie's Testimony at the Silver's 25th Anniversary Celebration

First, I would like to acknowledge that this celebration was totally God's idea. Last year, while I was reading through the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, God impressed upon my heart the need to celebrate in His presence. Out of God's great love and kindness He has brought each of us here, at this time, in this place, with a specific message for everyone. What happens here today will never be repeated, but I am looking forward to the best gathering in Heaven!

Over 17 years ago, after I had heart pacemaker-placement surgery, I was wrestling with God about life and death. God comforted me with these verses from Psalm 118:1 and 17:

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His faithful love endures forever.

and

“I will not die; instead I will live to tell what the Lord has done.”

The fact that I am physically here shows how God has faithfully sustained, strengthened and kept me all of these years. Now He is giving me a special opportunity to proclaim what He has done. He is just amazing!

In Jeremiah 10:23 we read:

“I know, Lord, that our lives are not our own. We are not able to plan our own courses.”

Our best idea of a successful life pales when compared to God's plan and vision for us, our children, and others. You see, ever since I was young, I've been driven to do, do, do, and accomplish, accomplish, accomplish. I am a self-confessed over-achiever. Being productive is okay, but my never-ending drive was misdirected, empty, and focused on my agenda instead of God's.

Thirty-four years ago, when I was 18, God opened my eyes to clearly understand His forgiveness and the gift of eternal life through Jesus' death and resurrection. I committed my life to live for God and for His glory. Naturally, I wanted to do mighty things for God and to accomplish great things spiritually, but God showed me my selfish ambition: what I was really seeking was greatness for myself.

God has used marriage and the suffering of various trials to break me of pride. I thought I was a pretty nice person when I got married! I didn't know I could have such an ugly temper. Marriage and children equal unconditional love, forgiveness and sacrifice. I can't think of anyone who God has used to change me more than my husband, Dave. Suffering humbles us and breaks the pride that so completely blinds us. Humility opens our eyes so that we can clearly see who God is, and who we are. To go through the journey of this life, to stay on the right path, to have any understanding of what we are living for, and to make sense at all of the things that happen in our lives, we can't afford not to know God.

If you say: "I am doing pretty well," "I have a good career," "I am getting good grades in school," or "I have a nice house," but your relationship with God isn't right, then you have made a choice that all of these other "things" are more important than God.

Suffering changes our priorities. Knowing God personally, not vaguely or academically, is the very foundation of our journey on this side of Heaven.

Suffering shows us our need for God; God is being merciful when He allows trials to come. Those trials give faith an opportunity to grow. They reveal His power through our weaknesses. By the grace of God, I can honestly say I love Dave even more today than I did 25 years ago. I am so grateful that he considers his major calling in life to take me safely to Jesus and hand me over to Him.

Dave's Testimony at the Silver's 25th Anniversary Celebration

There were two things God made clear to me many years ago. One was the truth of Christianity. Jesus Himself appeared to me in a dream six weeks before I turned 20, and my life was forever changed. At just the right time the Lord gave me purpose, began to transform me, and got me into medical school by His grace. At the age of 21, I went back to Philadelphia, the city I was born in, and started medical school. I joined a good church in Center City and in the membership class I met a woman named Adelaide Lee. She was in seminary at the time. After meeting her I went about my business, not realizing she would one day become my wife. Two years later she got accepted into a different medical school in the area. We were both involved with a school club called the Christian Medical Society. We met again at a retreat on the Chesapeake Bay, and a spark was ignited. She was (and still is) smart, pretty and godly. I call it the "Triple Whammy." Soon after that we went out on a date, and we were married within one year. Through prayer God revealed to me that she was the one for me to marry, but there was no promise it would be easy.

We got married one week after I graduated medical school. Addie was in her third year of medical school. We often visited each other's on-call rooms so we could be together during the stressful years of training. One week after Addie graduated we had our first child, Joseph. She decided to stay home after seeking guidance from the Lord, and I was in agreement. She got very little support from anyone else for this decision (including family and friends), but it was the right thing for us to do. Little did we know that we would homeschool for 12 years and that Addie would develop serious illnesses in her thirties. God knew, though, and directed us accordingly. Daniel was born 21 months after Joseph. When Daniel was two months old, I finished my residency training and we moved to Maryland.

Deborah was born twenty months after the move, and Addie was diagnosed with an incurable liver disease after the delivery. The average life expectancy of that disease at that time was ten years; that was over twenty years ago. Samuel came five years later and

was born without problems, though it was a high-risk pregnancy. Within six months of Samuel's arrival, Addie was diagnosed with a rare skin/muscle disease. We never really expected to make it to our 25th anniversary, though we knew it was possible. God has sustained Addie in answer to the prayers of many. Why didn't He heal her completely from these physical ailments? Wasn't our faith strong enough? After praying and agonizing over these things for many years, I would like to share a few things I have learned.

God loves us all, and He especially loves His people. He cares about our troubles, but He is more concerned about His glory and purposes. I confess we don't always understand how He is working, but it is for the good of those who love Him. Addie is naturally a driven person, and I am not one to be naturally sensitive and serve others around me. God forced us to grow in ways we both needed. There is probably no greater influence on my practice of primary care medicine, aside from my faith itself, than my wife's chronic debilitation.

We don't like to suffer, but we must. We should not suffer by doing wrong, but when we do what is right, we will inevitably suffer. We are not to be masochistic, but rather selfless. We will have trouble in this life, but take heart; there is one who has overcome. God will test our commitment. He will test our hearts. We must count the cost and be ready for trials.

Each season of life has new challenges, and we are not always up for the task. Sometimes circumstances are beyond our ability to cope with. By His grace, God provides a way out to stand up under it. Be wise. Learn God's principles in the Bible. They are sweeter than honey and more valuable than gold. We must repent and believe the Gospel of our great God and Savior. God saves sinners through His Messiah, Jeshua. He died on a tree, but He rose again and ascended back into Heaven, where He ever lives to intercede for us.

He is coming back. Are you ready? Whatever our trials, He will hold us accountable for how we have lived our lives. Everything matters. Everything is spiritual.

I do not believe Addie and I will have another 25 years together as husband and wife, but I do believe we will spend eternity together as brother and sister in Heaven, because of what God has done for us.

Not to us; not to us, but to Your name be the glory.

Amen.



Renewal of vows

Joseph's Testimony at the Silver's 25th Anniversary Celebration

(Joseph was 23 years old at the time of the Anniversary Party)

Imagine for a moment, if you will, that time travel is possible. If we could bring a great Greek philosopher into the present day, pluck him out of his life in ancient Macedonia and into our modern, bustling, technologically-savvy nation, what do you think his reaction would be? He would think he was dreaming, no doubt. Even if somebody sat down with him and explained how things like electricity and hydraulics work, how we are able to travel to the kinds of places that we can reach and practice the kinds of vocations that we have, he would still certainly be rattled and disbelieving. Both ignorant and naïve, he would have to find a way to reconcile the contradictions that he faced due to his pre-established worldview. I am only attempting to illustrate the kind of transition between worlds that just about everyone goes through, fortunately or unfortunately (depending upon your point of view).

When I started college, I encountered just such a challenge. Although I had been warned many times about the unmitigated, unabashed, hardcore, belligerent (not to mention irresponsible) stupor that university students tend to subject themselves to, I was unprepared for the way they would boast about it among compatriots and abolitionists alike, although the revelry takes place behind closed doors, probably owing to the fact that most of the goings-on are illegal. That warning did not prevent me from being aghast at the libertine abandon being perpetrated on an overwhelming scale by members of the undergraduate community. I didn't like it, but there was something horribly enticing about this self-violating lifestyle. First of all, it felt as though everyone but me was participating in it. It's surprising how irresistible peer pressure can be when it comes at a pivotal time in your life. Second of all, on a continual basis (relentless even), the entertainment industry bombards us with media that glorifies the party animal, the sexually prolific, and the rock-and-roll stoner.

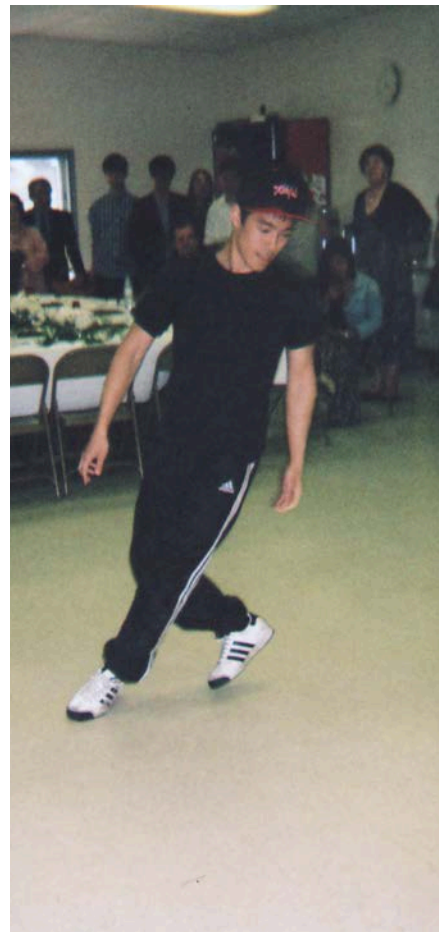
This brings me to my main point: nurture. When a young person makes this jump from world-to-world that I have been describing, they will unavoidably be flooded by a ton of new ideas that challenge the values that they have been taught to hold onto. I can't emphasize enough how honestly hard it is to lose potential friends on account of your beliefs. You may think I was being judgmental just now, but oh, people will judge their fellows mercilessly. You can tell yourself all you want that you're beautiful, and what other people think doesn't matter, but it still hurts when you get rejected. It still hurts when people laugh at you or otherwise treat you badly.

Now, you might ask, what was my source of hope and happiness amidst these trials? You wouldn't ask, though, because you know the answer: my mom and dad. And they still are. Whenever I feel uncertain about which side is right, I have only to look at my parents. Obviously, they are the source of my faith, and furthermore they have taught me how to act on that faith. To me, they exemplify what life is truly about: serving God in humility and holiness.

I wanted to write more, but I couldn't; I knew I would get too emotional. So I'll leave you with this: my parents are my heroes. I don't regret anything we've gone through together. So thanks, Mom and Dad, for everything you've done for me.



Dave and Addie



Joseph break dancing

Chapter 22

Hospice ... A Time to Die?

*“Everybody wants to go to Heaven,
but nobody wants to die.”*

-- Joe Louis

Almost Goodbye

Two and one-half months after their anniversary party, Addie was placed under the care of Gilchrist Hospice Homecare. She had begun experiencing abdominal cramps that were increasingly painful in late August of 2013, accompanied by nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation and back pain. Even more disturbing was the increase, both in frequency and severity, of each of these symptoms. Eventually they would last for 24 hours straight with no relief. She was unable to eat or drink and remembers feeling as though her gastrointestinal system was twisting up inside of her, preparing for her death. The pain was intolerable; greater, in fact, than the labor pains she had experienced during the births of any of her four children.

Knowing the gravity of the situation and the probable imminence of her death, Dave contacted Gilchrist Hospice. They responded quickly, admitting her on Labor Day to their Home Hospice Care program. The staff was, and continues to be, more than wonderful.

She was weak and dehydrated; her system was in a metabolic imbalance and she was barely able to move or speak. The church was called upon to pray and the three older children were called home (Sam, the youngest, was already at home). Joseph returned from College Park, Debbie from the University of Maryland in Baltimore County (Catonsville), and Dan from Towson. Dave wanted to make sure that each child would have a time to say goodbye to their mother.

For a long time they had thought themselves prepared for this moment. Facing it now, they felt awkward and uncomfortable.

They took turns bursting into tears with no warning. The entire family was trying to process the unthinkable. Grateful to be together, they encouraged one another and held on to their faith. God was there, and He was in charge. Ultimately, they believed that they would all be okay.

But in God's perfect timing, it was not time for Addie to go home yet...

As Addie began talking with Joe, she was surprisingly able to sit up and even began to feel a tiny bit better. She felt her spirits rise, too. Dave walked in and was shocked at her appearance: her color was better, and she was almost cheerful! He believes that the powerful prayers of the saints of Christ had been heard, and God was once again showing mercy on Addie's life. They were all encouraged.

As her body continued to deteriorate, however, the symptoms came and went at different levels of intensity. After nine months of hospice care, in June of 2014, her symptoms were so severe that she was taken by ambulance to Gilchrist's Inpatient Hospice Center, where she was certain she would die.

... and a Time for Every Purpose ...

While the nurses were settling her into bed, the pain was so intense that she was praying aloud: *"Lord Jesus, help me!" I prayed out loud, over and over, the same prayer. One of the nurses uttered: 'Hmm. This is a praying one.'* Later, that nurse confided to Addie that she normally worked on a different floor, but they were asking for help while they were settling her in, and the nurse felt God saying to her: *"Who will go?"* So she answered: *"Here I am, Lord; I will go."* Soon they realized they were sisters in the Lord and shared candidly, encouraging each other through God's Word, praying fervently quite a few times over the next 15 days. Addie wrote in her journal: *"Surely this is one of the reasons why God has brought me here, to what seems to be a 'House for the Dying.'"*

Addie heard someone crying down the hall as their loved one died. Her own weight had dropped to 85 pounds, and she was convinced it was just a matter of a few days before those cries would be her family mourning her loss. For eleven days she was unable to eat; ironically, she enjoyed watching programs on the Food Network during that time. It occurred to her then why the food looked so delicious to her: she knew it was not possible for her to eat any of it now. Determined to look forward, she prayed that Heaven would afford “real” food.

Another young nurse shared her spiritual struggles with Addie. They talked quite a few times, and at one point the nurse expressed her desire to repent of her sin and re-commit her life to Christ. They prayed together and Addie was full of joy. God was revealing to her why He had brought her to this place! He cared for these precious, searching souls and Addie could be His voice there.

Profoundly weak at this point, and in such pain that she could not move independently, her friend Denise Detweiler from Covenant of Grace came and helped her with everything, even the most basic of needs. After ten days, she began to be able to eat. She surprised herself and everyone by eating crab salad, seafood chowder and lasagna. Her appetite was amazing! She gave thanks to the Lord for yet another reprieve from death.

Just two months later, however, on August, 2014, she was back in the emergency room of the Greater Baltimore Medical Center with a huge abscess in her lower abdomen and running a 102° to 103° fever. She was operated on that evening to make an incision and insert a drain.

This was a hard one for me. I really wanted to die. But once again God had someone in mind, specifically my surgeon. In our conversations there was a connection. I remember telling him at one point to “... stay in your lane; focus on God; tell Him your troubles and ask Him to help you.” This was in response to his question to me: “What do you do when you are overwhelmed?” After hearing my response, he said: “I’m going to write that down.” I saw him four or five more times for post-operative

checkups. In each visit, the Lord was there, allowing significant discussions that eventually led to speaking about the Messiah's atonement for our sin.

The doctor was from a Jewish home. Addie prayed for his salvation and was grateful for the opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus with him.

While she was recovering at the hospital God continually sent in one particular nurse aid. This woman had overcome many trials and was still living in challenging circumstances. She seemed sad, but when she smiled her face blossomed. Addie told her: *"You have a beautiful smile!"* They shared stories and her countenance brightened as they talked, as if her true self was rising up. She expressed how she wanted to just kneel and thank God, praising Him for all of the blessings in her life. *"Yeah,"* Addie agreed; *"Me, too!"* Once again, God was revealing His purposes to her: the opportunity of sharing Christ with these precious souls was well worth the terrible pain she had experienced. She was comforted, and wrote:

God has every right to choose how He will use us for His eternal purpose and glory. If we truly love Him as we say we do, we can only have one response: surrender, trust and obedience.

It's a good thing that He does the choosing and not us, because only He knows what is best for us. He made us. He knows us. He loves us without fail.

I love this prayer:

*Lord, I give up my own plans and purposes,
all my own desires and hopes
and accept Thy will for my life.*

*I give myself, my life, my all, utterly to Thee to be Thine forever.
Fill me and seal me with Thy Holy Spirit;*

use me as Thou wilt; send me where Thou wilt

*and work out Thy whole will in my life at any cost,
now and forever!*

*(Betty Scott Stam was martyred along with her husband,
beheaded in China in the early 1930's.
Their 9-month old daughter miraculously survived.)*

*Betty Scott Stam was 18 years old when she offered up this prayer. I
too want to arrive at total surrender, as much as God's grace
enables me to.*

Chapter 23

Saints Along the Road

“Friends show their love in times of trouble, not in happiness.”
-- Euripedes

I could not even begin to name all of the sweet and loving people that God has brought into our lives over the years, but there are a few that I particularly want to mention here.



Dr. Diane Poythress (pictured above at Addie’s wedding)

I first met Diane late in the summer of 1984, when I began my studies at Westminster Theological Seminary. My first impressions of her were her long, beautiful hair and delightful laugh. She and Dr. Vern Poythress were expecting their first child at that time, and she was glowing with joy and good health.

Diane has a caring heart, demonstrated in the way she continually reaches out to the ladies at WTS, often initiating events that are both fun and nurturing. She never does anything halfway; instead she is thorough and whole-hearted in everything she turns her hand and

heart to. She was also pursuing her doctoral degree during this time.

We quickly became friends and she was like an older sister to me. She advised, encouraged, admonished and deeply loved me as I wrestled through relationships and other life issues, desiring to be a godly woman. She was there for me through so many different times and occasions: being single, dating, meeting Dave, becoming engaged, planning my wedding, getting married (she was also one of my bridesmaids), growing in my marriage, medical school, beginning our family, raising our children, health challenges, etc. We both loved the teachings of Elisabeth Elliott, as well. At this writing, we have been close friends for over 31 years.

Diane's husband, Dr. Vern Poythress, has also been an enormous encouragement to Dave in the studying of God's Word.

Becky Wyand

Dave and I met Becky through the organization known as "Walkersville Christian Family Services" which oversaw homeschooling families, making sure that they had the right curriculum, that the required work was being done, and ensuring legal accountability. This organization checked over the school work and set up conferences for homeschoolers to attend. Becky was usually one of the two speakers who led the workshops.

Becky is one of the wisest women I have ever met. Our personalities clicked right away. I would call on her whenever I was in a bind and could not figure out what was going on. If I needed wisdom, she was the one I called. Every single time we spoke, God changed my pattern of thought from a wrong or sinful one into a righteous one, through Becky.

When Becky and I first became friends, I was going through a very rough time. Even in my deepest discouragement, however, each contact with her never failed to leave me feeling refreshed. I believe Becky's wisdom prevented me from making some very unwise choices. The New Testament speaks this way of true saints who help

us in our walk with Christ: “I thank God for my every remembrance of you.” (Philippians 1:3) I really do thank God for sending this wise, mature woman into my life, who walks this journey beside me with the mindset of Christ.



Linda McHargue praying over Addie at a women’s retreat

Fred and Linda McHargue

Fred and Linda McHargue were sent to us by the Lord when I was pregnant with Deborah. Dave and I had moved into a small rental home in Columbia, because my parents (whom we had previously been house-sitting for) were returning back from my dad’s overseas work assignment. The McHargues lived just a few doors down from us in our cul-de-sac. Linda recognized Dave from their past association with the Howard County Coalition on Prayer. The four of us immediately connected and spent a lot of time sharing meals, praying and singing together, and having conversations that were so very enriching to us all.

Fred had been a police officer for many years. Linda was the pre-school teacher at a school located in her church’s building. They had three teenagers, and we had Joe (three and one-half years old at the time), Dan (two years old), and Debbie (six months in utero).

We felt so loved and supported by this family. They loved the Lord, His Word, His people, and anyone that God brought into their lives.

January 5, 1994 was an icy winter night. At 12:30 a.m., my water broke and I immediately went into strong labor. Dave and I were in the car, pulling out of the cul-de-sac, and Fred was just coming home from his shift. We told him we were on our way to have the baby, and asked him to let Linda know. Would he and Linda please be in prayer for us?

We made it to Howard County General Hospital and ended up parking somewhere a little too far for me to walk comfortably to the entrance of their emergency room. I had to stop several times due to painful contractions. It was freezing out, and so slippery!

Once inside, everything went smoothly. Deborah was born at 5:20 a.m. After having two sons it was so special, in a different way, to have a daughter. She was crying and her lips were quivering. She was just so cute.

Dave stepped out of the room briefly and came back to find that my blood pressure monitor was reading 50/palp. Because my uterus was not contracting properly, I was hemorrhaging. (This condition is called "uterine atony.") While this was happening, I immediately thought of the story of Rachel in the book of Genesis. She was one of Jacob's wives who died shortly after giving birth to her son, Benjamin. (Joseph was the other son that Rachel gave birth to.)

I remember thinking: "I've just given birth to this beautiful little daughter, our third child, and I may not even get the opportunity to raise her!" I began to cry out to God, asking Him to provide a wife for Dave who would be a good mother to Joseph, Daniel and now little Deborah. I felt a great sadness come over me, for both Rachel and myself.

The medical staff was desperately trying to increase the volume of my blood, using multiple bags of IV fluid. I remained very anemic even as the volume of fluid was raised. But I lived! Later, Linda told me that even as all of this was happening she had been praying

for me, not knowing what was going on in the delivery room. She said she had been awakened throughout the night, sensing an urgent need to pray. How amazing our God is!

That is barely the tip of the iceberg of how these tremendous, intense, beautiful saints have interceded for us, supported us, shared their wisdom and their love with us, and been our treasured friends for over 22 years at this writing. If I were to write all of the ways that God has used this fellowship for His glory, it would fill an entire volume.

Gisela Goetz

I must tell you of Gisela! Dave and I knew Gisela and George Goetz from Chapelgate Presbyterian Church, where we were members from 1992 through 2002. We did not know them well then. We moved to Baltimore City, sensing a strong calling to minister there, and became members at Faith Christian Fellowship (“FCF”), a PCA congregation. Craig Garriott and Stan Long are the pastors there.

We quickly became involved with their young adult ministry, discipling young singles and couples, many of whom were pursuing careers in medicine. It was a wonderful blessing to work with these young people.

Soon after our move there my health began to rapidly decline, and so many from FCF reached out to offer encouragement and support.

Gisela started to come and visit, help, and provide transportation to wherever the children or I needed to go. Of course, she never came without cookies or a yummy meal for all of the Silvers! We would always sit down with a cup of tea for a time of sharing and prayer.

Gisela sometimes brought her husband, George, when he was well enough to come for a visit. He would play chess with Joseph. For about seven years she consistently gave herself to us in such loving, caring ways. She and George moved to Pittsburgh five years ago,

but we still correspond and continue to pray with and for each other, encouraging one another in Christ.

Eileen Shields

About 22 years ago, when Dave and I were attending Chapelgate, I was teaching a ladies' Bible study on spiritual warfare. I met Eileen, now in her 70's, when she was a student in that class.

When we moved our family to Baltimore City after 10 years at Chapelgate, we left behind so many friends, although we knew that they were still praying for us. Eileen in particular was tenderhearted towards us, and her kindness did not decrease after we moved away. She came often and brought food. I told her she didn't have to do this, but she was adamant that this is what she wanted to do. Eileen started bringing meals, and then she called up a friend of hers who did private catering. She paid that person to make food for the Silvers. It was just incredible! She would bring four or five meals at a time that the caterer had made, including a list of all the meals and their ingredients. This was an enormous blessing.

During this time, she decided to celebrate our children's birthdays as if she were their grandmother! We have four children, so that's four times a year that she would come to our home bearing a cake, candles, gifts, decorations, balloons, baskets, and a meal for every single child's birthday. This is a woman with children and grandchildren of her own that she buys for, too! For twelve years she has continued this ministry to the Silver family. Then, incredibly, she added Dave and me to her "birthday" family!

Because of her faithfulness to our family and her selfless generosity, our son Daniel is quick to describe this woman as a "genuine" Christian. She is so incredibly loving that he has begun to call her his godmother. We never instructed him to do that, but he just looks up to her and listens to everything she has to say. Much like Denise Detweiler, who I mention later in this chapter, Eileen blesses my life continually. I am so thankful for these women, and many others, who exemplify Christ to my family.

For years Eileen ran a thrift store in Ellicott City, along with many other ministries in Howard County, Maryland. She is always encouraging, and always on the go ... even more than I have ever been! Eileen is a widow after losing her husband to lymphoma many years ago, but she continues to diligently care for those whom God has laid on her heart. The Silver family, along with many others I am sure, has been greatly ministered to by her kindness and generosity.

Cheryl Beachley

In the spring of 2010, our family began to attend Covenant of Grace. I met Cheryl Beachley in a Sunday School class, and soon after that she and her husband Jim invited our family to their home for dinner. We shared wonderful food and conversation. We prayed together out on their deck, and thus began our friendship. Cheryl immediately reached out to help us in so many ways: meals, rides, lunches with me and the children (when they were around), and books she thought would peak my interest, etc.

I distinctly remember one occasion when she was washing dishes and doing other things in the kitchen. I glanced over at her and was startled and shaken by what I saw: for a split second I saw Jesus, instead of Cheryl. I felt His presence. "He is here, incarnated through Cheryl, to encourage me!" I said to myself. That is absolutely true for all who love Jesus. He is our "Immanuel;" our "God with us."

Over the years, Cheryl has become like a second mother to my Debbie, who has been battling Crohn's disease for nine years at this writing. When I could not drive Debbie to her appointments, visit her in the hospital, or even go out to lunch with my precious daughter due to my health constraints, Cheryl did all of the above and much more, showing Debbie and me the true care and loving kindness of Christ. I will always be grateful to the Lord for Cheryl's presence in our lives.

Carolyn Pentzer

One Sunday morning in 2011, after the worship service had ended, Carolyn Pentzer came over to me and eagerly introduced herself. Soon after we met, she sensed God's calling to help me and my family. She availed herself to God to supply whatever needs we have, and often she would take our son Sam to Panera Bread after his doctor's appointments.

In 2013 Carolyn retired after many years of being a school nurse and gave even more of her time to love, help and serve us. When I was hospitalized several times at Greater Baltimore Medical Center (where she volunteers) she would always come and check up on me. At one point, I was in tremendous pain and close to death as a result of a nasty partial bowel obstruction. I was a patient during this time at the Inpatient Hospice Center. Carolyn literally held me up when I was too weak to sit.

Just recently, I woke up thinking about (almost visualizing and smelling) Carolyn's wonderful Jewish Apple cake. This was startling to me since my appetite was almost non-existent. I had recently lost five pounds in one week and was down to 93 pounds as a result of nausea and lack of appetite. I texted Carolyn, asking if she could possibly bake one of her fabulous cakes. She quickly texted back: "God is good! I was planning to go apple picking tomorrow!" Needless to say, my family and I devoured the cake, even sharing some with friends because she baked so much. Her love for us is always extravagantly displayed and as specific as God's is for His children!

Misun and Geoffrey Lu

Misun Lu is like an angel sent from God to look specifically after Daniel, our second son, in a special and God-designed way. Like me, Misun is Korean. A mature Christian woman, she loves God, is committed to prayer, and full of compassion. We met at Faith Christian Fellowship when she and her husband Geoffrey (who is Chinese) joined the congregation. We also saw worshiped together

at Korean Calvary Presbyterian Church, where she would faithfully take her elderly mother. As our friendship grew, God moved in her and Geoffrey's heart to reach out and love Daniel.

Daniel loves Korean food, so they would often take him out to Korean restaurants. Even when they were stationed overseas, whenever they came stateside they would make it a priority to stop in and take Daniel out to dinner. On one occasion they wanted to get a dessert for Daniel (who had told them of his love for vanilla cake). The restaurant didn't have any, so they went from store-to-store (specifically praying about this!!) until they found a 7-11. They really didn't expect 7-11 to have the type of cake that Daniel was hungering for, but lo and behold! There it was: an Entenmann's vanilla cake – the last one! God cares for us in all the details of our life.

On another occasion Dan had suffered for three straight days with the hiccups. I told Misun about it and we prayed together. Afterwards she called Daniel and prayed with him. The hiccups stopped! My advice: never give up; never stop praying.

Sometimes I wonder how it is that God has blessed me with such wonderful friends in Christ. I have been so incredibly impacted by them for eternity – this is truly the grace of God!

Laurie Shilts

In 2010, soon after my family became members of Covenant of Grace, Laurie Shilts came into my life through the "Steven's Ministry" there. Right at the start, it was clear that we were a good match. She and her husband have five children who are just a bit older than ours, and they were also homeschoolers. Laurie would come to visit regularly, about once every other week, and we would just open our hearts to each other. We shared the challenges, pain, disappointments and joys of raising children. We always brought both our thanks and concerns to the throne of God, anticipating His intervention in the hearts of those that we love so much.

Laurie's love was generous and sacrificial; she made time to take me to the hospital for a pacemaker placement operation, stayed right through to recovery and then brought me safely home again. I remember her kneeling beside me on the hard hospital floor, holding my hands and praying with me. Her genuine love for me greatly touched my heart.

On numerous occasions Laurie has taken me to all sorts of medical appointments and procedures, such as pancreatic cyst aspirations and my abdominal total hysterectomy, which took almost a year to fully recover from.

Through it all our God was actively near to us, abundantly showering us with His great grace. We were blessed in the midst of every circumstance, and especially in the opportunity He gave us to get to know Him, and each other, better.



Denise Detweiler (pictured above)

Denise came into my life one and one-half years ago as an unexpected friend and sister in the Lord.

Upon her retirement from the Social Security Administration in February of 2014, she was ready to enter a new season of her life. Sensing that God was leading her to my side she gently and compassionately sought me out, simply desiring to know me and to help in any way that God would direct her. The Lord used this woman's open heart and obedient spirit to set us on an adventure that neither of us could have ever dreamed of.

I was already under hospice care when Denise came to my home for the first time in March of 2014. She has become my hands, my feet ... sometimes even my brain! She helps me with everything: my struggle with OCD, daily household chores including laundry and kitchen responsibilities, and other tasks that are simply too numerous (some too personal!) to list. I receive a huge mental and emotional lift simply from her presence in my life.

Denise and I are "wired" so similarly. She quickly observed all of my pet peeves and preferences. In addition, she shares the trait of punctuality with me, which I so value.

When I was admitted to the Inpatient Hospice Center, expecting to die within three weeks, Denise was at my side for many of those days. She helped me up and out of every kind of furniture, and she set my tray before me after opening all of the containers and cutting up the food. Anything that I needed, she was quick to anticipate and provide. There was a book that I had begun and now desperately wanted to finish; Denise read it to me. We prayed and shared together.

My family, parents and friends are so grateful to God for bringing this kind-hearted, hard-working, dependable and dedicated woman into my life. I did not know her very well at all when she first came into my home. I had only seen her occasionally at church when I was still well enough to attend, which I have not be able to do at this writing (with one or two exceptions) for about three and one-half years. At this point, she has probably spent more time with me than most of my other friends put together and has seen me in every light: the good, the bad, the ugly (and the crazy). With her easy-going and

good-natured personality, Denise has also come to know my family very well.

How marvelous it is to see God's sovereignty so lovingly and specifically unfold in our lives! Just two months after returning home from inpatient hospice care, I faced yet another medical challenge: abscess surgery. Once more, the Lord used this precious friend, along with many others, to carry me through a variety of problems.

He has revealed His grace in my life by allowing me to proclaim His wondrous and mighty works!

Korean Sisters in Christ
(Friends from Korean Calvary Presbyterian Church)
Mrs. Shin Ki Kim; Mrs. Hyun Jinn Ro; Mrs. Jian Choi

Seven years ago at this writing our children, who are Asian/Caucasian, desired to better understand the Korean half of their cultural heritage. To satisfy this curiosity, for a time we all attended the Korean Calvary Presbyterian Church where James Ro (who graduated from WTS with me in 1986) was the Pastor. It was a delightful reunion for the two of us. Pastor Ro is an excellent preacher and we enjoyed getting to know, and becoming part of, the body of Christ there.

The three ladies named above devoted themselves to standing, walking, praying, sharing and worshiping together with me. We transparently urged one another to pursue a closer walk with Christ. These women, my special Korean sisters, are so precious to me. They have loved and spoiled me not only with their true friendship, but such yummy Korean food! It is always a very special treat from the Lord to spend time with them.

I am so overwhelmed when I examine God's faithfulness to me! He has brought us into such a lively and fun camaraderie of sisterhood. He delights in encouraging me and showing me joy, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Pastor Herbert E. Ruby, IV

I met Pastor Ruby five and one-half years ago when we as a family first started attending Covenant of Grace Presbyterian Church. He welcomed and encouraged us. Soon after visiting, we became members of the church.

As my health began to quickly decline, and for the last one and one-half years (since this writing, in 2015), I came under home hospice care. Pastor Ruby has been reaching out to encourage, comfort, assure, listen, advise and pray for me most consistently. What humbles and touches my heart the most is how transparent and down-to-earth he is. I also greatly appreciate the respect and genuine care he has shown for me.

Pastor Ruby has become like an older brother in the Lord, cheering me on through this, the last part of the race I will run before I am embraced by Jesus, who is waiting for me at the finish line!

How sweet of Jesus to gift me with this unexpected fellowship with His people! “Every good and every perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of Lights.” (James 1:17)

Thank you, Pastor Ruby!

Pastor John E. Aldrich

When as a family we became members of Covenant of Grace Presbyterian Church, we also came to know Pastor Aldrich. Perceiving my medical status and our family’s needs, he immediately provided wonderful support, encouragement and help through the church’s “Steven’s Ministry.” Whenever I needed prayer, advice or a listening ear, Pastor John was always there for me, ready with an encouraging word.

He also reached out in particular to my daughter Deborah, who has been very ill with Crohn’s disease and all of the struggles that it brings. Pastor John ministers to Deb through visits and phone calls when she is in the hospital.

My family has been extremely blessed – privileged, really – to have the family of God with us through this journey. I know that not too many people have had such bountiful rewards while on this earth. These gracious friends are true disciples of Christ, the mighty King, the kind and gentle Shepherd of our lives.

Thank You, God, and thank you, Pastor John!

Linda Davidson

“Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:14) Of course the answer is NO! But in my little faith some things seemed impossible. Writing a book is definitely one of those things. Although I’ve often been encouraged to do so, I am not a writer. The English language is still something of a challenge to me (my native language is Korean) and most of all, I have very little physical strength as a result of all of the diseases in my body. Then: along came Linda! (I can picture her being slowly lowered down from Heaven, sitting on a swing with a beautiful and radiant smile.) God sent Linda into my life in June of 2015, using her to make the writing of this story – what God has done in my life – possible.

Linda is a loving, gracious, friendly, compassionate, fun and wise woman who loves Jesus and lives for His glory. She is wonderfully gifted with a beautiful voice and singing ability, fabulous writing skills, artistic creativity, and many more gifts that I hope to discover. We became friends almost instantly and thoroughly enjoy each other’s company. Although our friendship is a new one, by the time this writing is completed she will, in all likelihood, know more about me than many of my friends, as she has read through my journals, spent hours in conversation with me, and been involved in the actual writing of this book.

I thank and praise God for her life, and pray He will continue to pour out His blessings upon her. To God be the glory!

Love you, Linda!

Chapter 24

My David

*“A wife loves her husband most
when she loves God best.”*

-- Unknown

Our God, whose ways are perfect, certainly did not make a mistake when He brought Dave and me together to be one in Christ, just as Christ is one with the Father. It is amazing to me how similar our interests are, especially considering that Dave’s lineage can be traced back to a Ukrainian Jewish background, and mine to Korean royalty.

Regarding spiritual matters in general, and biblical theology in particular, I don’t know anyone more likeminded than Dave and I. We share a biblical perspective of life, having been grounded in reformed theology as a result of each receiving an excellent education at seminaries of similar persuasions.

Above and beyond the dictates of our common faith, we have a mutual passion for both medicine and music. Dave plays the guitar, which I love to hear. Before my second autoimmune disease began to display full-blown symptoms I played the piano, which he loved to hear! We have both enjoyed that part of each other’s makeup and discipline, while acknowledging that the talent itself is a gift from God.

Dave is a disciplined, self-controlled and faithful man who is totally committed to studying and applying the Word of God to his life. He then finds great joy in teaching others. I don’t know anyone who more consistently searches the deep teachings of God’s Word than my David. He describes himself as a “slow plodder” (a term that William Carey, a missionary to India, applied to himself) but describes me as more of a “jack rabbit.” These days I am more like an arthritic turtle, but he loves me still, just as I am.

I truly believe that Dave’s commitment to the study of God’s Word (over the past 28 years that I’ve known him) has sustained, strengthened, encouraged and enabled him to persevere in the midst

of what has often seemed like never-ending trials and challenges relating to my medical issues (along with the needs of each of our four unique and wonderful children).

I can only describe his love for me as supernatural. I have never once known Dave to waiver in his love for me. He has always been crazy about me, despite the enormous medical issues that we have faced together. I know this is by the grace of God, since we are all sinners standing on level ground before the cross of Christ.

Dave enjoys his work as a doctor practicing internal medicine. In truth, it is rare to hear any complaint from him about anything. Of course, he is not perfect, but he is perfect for me. God chose him to be my husband, and I am so grateful.

As the Bible teaches: “As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.” (Proverbs 27:17) Dave and I each have extremely strong and passionate personalities. This “mutual sanctification” can have a painful and unpleasant effect on our relationship from time to time, but we have discovered that there are no shortcuts on the road to developing the character of Christ.

I am so thankful to our great God for bringing David into my life, and for using him to change me into His (God’s) own image.

Praise His Name!

Chapter 25

A Word from David Silver

*“Husbands, love your wives,
even also as Christ loved the church
and gave Himself up for it.”
-- Ephesians 5:25*

Addie, I have loved you more than any other person in this life (other than Jesus Christ). We were meant for each other. Both strong-willed, stubborn, zealous and committed, we make a good pair. You are also the most like-minded person to me spiritually. We have grown in the Lord together, and it has been quite a journey.

I am crazy about you and always will be.

If you get to Heaven before me, wait patiently. When I arrive, I will surely find you and give you a lot of hugs and kisses (just like in this life). I look forward to getting to know you more and more for all eternity.

In Christ,

Dave

Addie

--Words and Music by David Silver²⁶

*Addie, you are my joy;
More than I dreamed of; loving and oh so kind.
Addie, I love you so;
All by the grace of God we've come together to show.*

*His love for us will carry us over the valleys;
His grace to us will teach us to walk in victory.
He's one in us; rejoice in His holiness.
He's kind to us; say goodbye to loneliness.
He shepherds us, leads us to safety, and gives us peace.*

*Addie, faithful and true;
Holy and blameless, Jesus has made us.
My wife, tender and sweet;
Your precious soul touches all of the people you meet.*

*His love for us will carry us over the valleys;
His grace to us will teach us to walk in victory.
He's one in us; rejoice in His holiness.
He's kind to us; say goodbye to loneliness.
He shepherds us, leads us to safety, and gives us peace.*

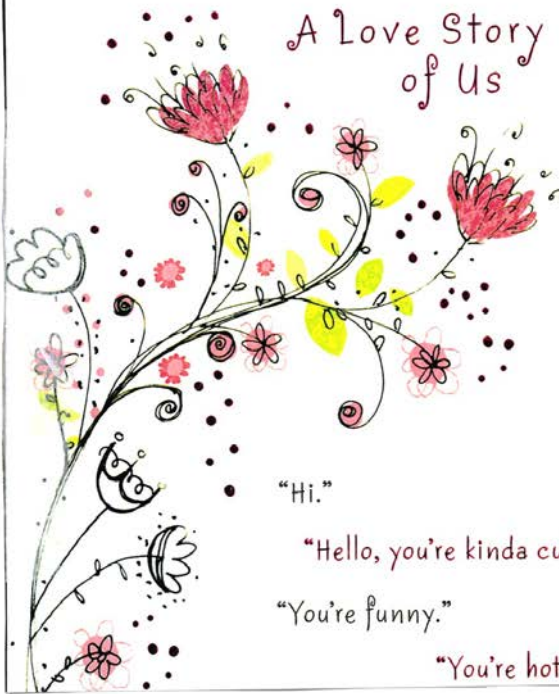
*Addie, my special friend;
You have His protection, and all my affection.
Come now, walk by my side;
You are my partner, in you I will always confide.*

*His love for us will carry us over the valleys;
His grace to us will teach us to walk in victory.
He's one in us; rejoice in His holiness.
He's kind to us; say goodbye to loneliness.
He shepherds us, leads us to safety, and gives us peace.*

²⁶ Dave sang this song (one of his own compositions) and accompanied himself on the guitar on their wedding day, and again at the celebration of their 25th Anniversary.

For My Wife

A Love Story
of Us



"Hi."

"Hello, you're kinda cute!"

"You're funny."

"You're hot."

"You're special."

"You make me feel needed."

"I love you."

"I love you, too."



"I do."

"I do, too."

"I'd do it again."

"Me, too...over and over."

Happy Anniversary

Love,

Sue

Thankful for a long
life together with all
its ups and downs



Chapter 26

From the Pastors' Desks Covenant of Grace Presbyterian Church of America Reisterstown, Maryland

*“And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches..
I appeal to you: care for the flock that God has entrusted to you.
Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly –
not for what you will get out of it,
but because you are eager to serve God.”
-- I Peter 5:1, 2*

From Herbert E. Ruby, IV, M.Div., D.Min.

I consider it an honor and privilege to be included in Addie Silver's story. When she and her family began to attend Covenant of Grace Presbyterian Church where I am the Senior Pastor, I had no idea of the deep spiritual bond of friendship that would develop between us.

Very early in her time at Covenant of Grace I was impressed with her deep faith and superb intellect. Having a health education background before studying for the gospel ministry myself, I was intrigued by this petite Korean lady who had both a theological degree from my alma mater, Westminster Theological Seminary, as well as a degree in medicine. I was encouraged and challenged by her and her family as they attended the membership class which I taught.

Later, at our annual Thanksgiving Eve service, Addie described her struggle with her incurable illnesses. I was deeply inspired as I heard her share her testimony – one of trust in God's faithfulness. Considering the health challenges she endures, her faith is nothing short of amazing. Addie was able to give God praise and thanks despite her constant struggle with severe pain, as well as the progression of her autoimmune diseases. Little by little they were taking away her ability to do the things she loved (such as playing the piano), as well as the daily activities that most people take for granted.

After hearing Addie's testimony, it was my hope that there would be an opportune time for her to share her story with the entire congregation. Her deteriorating health made that more and more problematic. I am so thankful that she has written her story, and hope that many more people will be able to hear and be encouraged by her journey of faith.

Our deeper level of fellowship began after I made a personal visit to her home a little over a year and a half ago. She had developed a very serious, life-threatening complication to one of her illnesses that could very well have ended her life. Despite her initial reluctance to have me visit in her home, she graciously accepted my request. Having not seen her at our worship services for some time, I had no idea how much energy was required in order for her to receive a guest. During our visit she shared how physically weak she was and how much time and effort it took for her to feel comfortable with her appearance in light of her illnesses. Even so, after our time together (as would be the case week after week in the future), my attempts to encourage her resulted in the feeling that she had encouraged me much more than I had her.

Following what could only be described as a very uplifting time for both of us, I desired to continue to visit regularly with Addie, but without her having to spend so much energy going through the process of preparing herself and her home. I asked, and she agreed, that we would talk over the telephone every Wednesday afternoon as long as both of us were able. In order not to overtax her strength I set the time limit at 30 minutes. Often, however, we found our time extending far past that limit, as we would always end by praying for one another. This has continued with very few weeks missed over the past 18 months.

Our telephone conversations include the usual inquiries about our families and about her health situation, and how to support one another. Addie shares her complicated health challenges, and I share the difficulties my wife and I have faced as Shelley dealt first with breast cancer, and then a knee replacement surgery followed by very serious complications.

Around the time we began meeting by telephone I was challenged by a pastor friend of mine to read the book Mansions of the Heart, by R. Thomas Ashbrook. My friend explained to me that it was a particularly insightful book giving a very different paradigm on what constitutes Christian spiritual growth. While many American Christians measure spiritual growth in terms of doing (i.e., reading the Bible more, praying more, evangelizing more or serving more), Ashbrook described a very different model from the goal-oriented model of “busyness” that is so often portrayed in books.

Addie had so little physical strength and so few opportunities to actively do things. Consequently, this book would become an encouragement to both of us as it demonstrated other ways of measuring spiritual growth besides outward activity.

Ashbrook’s model was greatly influenced by the 16th century nun, Teresa of Avila, who had asked God to show her a way to describe the spiritual development in a believer’s heart. What she received was a vivid picture of the soul (or the heart), as a castle with many rooms. Their “Sun” resided in the center and illuminated outward. Teresa imagined the journey of faith as making progress through each of the dwelling places toward the King of Glory, who resided in the center, and she envisioned the castle as a series of concentric circles, with the seventh being the spiritual experience of the deepest human intimacy and cooperation with the Triune God.

This model, which was new for both Addie and me, gave us a fresh way of seeing God’s purpose in her suffering.

The first three “mansions” or levels, working from the outside toward the center, describe the spiritual growth that comes from the discipline and efforts we make early on in our faith. Going from one to three is going from new birth to a level of spiritual life that includes regular church attendance, consistent prayer and a genuine effort to live the Christian life. Ashbrook states that most churches never teach beyond the third level. This is not surprising, since levels four through seven are characterized in many ways by God removing things in our life to assist us in finding our greatest satisfaction in Him and in Him alone. Level seven can be summarized by Paul’s

statement in Galatians 2:29: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” As Ashcroft explains, Teresa’s description of how a believer progresses beyond level two principles becomes abundantly clear. First, only God could bring about these deeper results. Secondly, the results are being achieved by God’s removal of the things we depend on other than Him.

This may seem to be a very hard teaching, but in light of our view of Addie’s life of chronic pain, constant life-threatening complications and progressive weakness, we see that she was miraculously not driven to despair. Instead, her victory can only be explained as the power of God’s grace working in her. Astonishingly, Addie has been able to grow closer and closer to the Lord in the midst of her suffering.

While I do not believe I have ever undergone a “Seventh Mansion” experience, I sincerely believe that Addie has. Instead of becoming angry and bitter through her continual physical pain and suffering, Addie has described to me a relationship with the Lord that fits the description of intimacy and peace between her and Christ – a rapport that can only be made possible by losing things that we would never give up on our own. In Addie’s case, she has come to embrace both the loss of her physical health and the limitations that come with that, as well as her goals and dreams for her life and family.

Ashbrook states that no one stays at the level of the Seventh Mansion for long. People go back and forth between the various levels at various times. This is true of Addie as well, but with every passing week and with every new physical trial and experience of human suffering, she has been able to continually trust in God’s sovereignty and love. There have been times when I have hung up the phone after our weekly conversations and wept as I thought of the enormous suffering she continually endures. Still, even in the face of her constant physical and emotional agony, I am amazed at the consistent expressions of love and trust she displays in her Lord and Savior.

As I write this testimony her book has not yet gone to print, but I know that if it is anything like our dozens and dozens of conversations, it will be used as a source of inspiration for all who read it.

I love you, Addie, and pray that many will read your book. May they be, as I have been, amazed, blessed and challenged by your life of faith.

From John E. Aldrich, M.Div.

When I first met Addie years ago, I knew nothing of her health battles. I immediately observed, however, that here was a person who exuded the joy of the Lord. That joy was conveyed to me through her positive, selfless attitude toward others, along with her willingness to share what God was doing in her life and how specific Scripture had buoyed her on a particular day. I soon learned that Addie's joy in the Lord had nothing to do with how wonderfully life was treating her, or whether or not she was experiencing great visible blessings from the Lord and relishing some answered prayer. To the contrary, it quickly became obvious that Addie's joy was, and is, birthed in the cauldron of pain and suffering.

Addie's life is a portrait that has often shown me in detail what Jesus' power looks like in a life that has, through weaknesses, been offered up to Him. Very few people throughout my ministry have joyfully embraced their weakness as a calling from God. Addie has. Her faith in response to all that she has suffered enables her to confront with joy her severe and chronic health limitations. She has profoundly experienced and accepted with grace a harsh infirmity that continually casts her on the Lord and His mercy. Her relentless desire is to exalt Jesus Christ, and she rests in the knowledge that He alone sustains and propels her to Himself in her physical fragility. This knowledge of hers is not grounded in theory or wishful thinking, but in the stark realism of crippling, unyielding physical pain and the full depletion of strength which, most days, prevents her from performing even the simplest of tasks.

Addie's walk of faith and trust is terribly real because her life demands real provision, real power and real sustenance from outside and beyond herself and her own limitations. She acknowledges both her need and her inability to control life the way she would like to, along with the desperation she feels in the face of her own powerlessness to heal herself or others. When you talk with Addie you are quietly prodded to be honest and forthright with her. Her own honesty and transparency, combined with her brutal down-to-earth faith, makes anything less feel hollow and ridiculous. Though, like the rest of us, Addie's faith is imperfect, there is little room for pretense or superficiality because the pain of suffering drives her to depend deeply upon God's promises and cling tightly to His power.

I have witnessed countless times how Addie's faith has enabled her to be selfless rather than selfish. Routinely she shows more interest in how I'm doing, how my wife and children and my ministry are doing, than in talking about herself. She has asked me more than once how she can pray for, encourage and minister to me. She keeps me updated on how her husband and children are doing, constantly more concerned about their physical and spiritual welfare than her own. It is very rare for anyone who is experiencing endless pain and difficulty to think of others before themselves. In contrast, Addie gives of herself to others out of the abundance of faith and blessing that she receives from the Lord, who upholds her daily.

Knowing Addie has shown me how God not only empowers us during temporary times of weakness, but especially how He strengthens us when that fragility becomes unending.

Our congregation is blessed by Addie's joyful and steadfast faith, daily lived out in the face of enormous tribulation. How easy it would be for any of us to cave in to the temptation to become bitter, resentful, cynical and hopeless in the face of such trials, but Addie stands tall and strong, unwavering in her faith despite the weakness of her own body. How blessed we are to have her at Covenant of Grace. Her life is a testimony to all of us of Jesus' sufficiency.

Chapter 27

Turning for Home

*“Good people pass away; the godly often die before their time.
But no one seems to care or wonder why.
No one seems to understand that God is protecting them
from the evil to come.
For those who follow godly paths
will rest in peace when they die.”*
-- Isaiah 57:1-3

Like a Bad Penny

It is the fall of 2015, and the partial bowel obstruction has returned. Along with her dreadful pain, Addie is feeling weak and exhausted. She writes:

...so weary of this race set before me. I am afraid I won't be able to finish the book. Discouraged; losing heart. Asking God for help. The Holy Spirit exhorts me to remember that Jesus is waiting for me at the end of the race, that my afflictions are light and momentary compared to the glory that far outweighs them, and to focus on what is unseen which is eternal, instead of the temporal and visible. I am to rejoice and serve God gladly, because it is my privilege to suffer for Him.

Even as she writes, even as she suffers, she remembers God's gracious provision. Through the Home Hospice Service, she receives the precise care and all of the help that she needs. His provision is, as always, the very best.

Ready and Willing

At this writing, Addie has long-since made peace with her diseases. Looking eagerly forward to a future with her Heavenly Father, Addie quotes from the Book of Isaiah: *“The Lord cares deeply when His loved ones die.”* (Isaiah 16:15) Her husband David subsequently makes this offering to his wife's story: *“Addie Silver is a courageous woman who endures much suffering. Her*

medical background and profound faith have coalesced to strengthen and preserve her for over twenty years with two rare and incurable diseases. Her story is a meeting of medicine and faith.”

Addie’s life bears witness to how God has loved her and kept her every step of the way.

Throughout the telling of her story, she has faithfully prayed that it will be a godly legacy for the children that she loves so dearly: Joseph, Daniel, Deborah and Samuel. For that immediate purpose and beyond, many have prayed with her as her voice has been put to paper. We boldly trust that all who read this book will find Jesus there in all His power and glory.

Chapter 28

... And the moral of the story is ...

*“Give God the remaining years of your life.
Beg God to use them in the kind of life that is pleasing to Him.”*
-- St. Augustine

As the co-writer of this story I have prayed for all who will read these pages. I have not done this alone nor, I believe, in vain. The Word of God is frequently quoted herein, and we who trust in it believe it to be:

“... alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.”
(Hebrews 4:17)

Have you allowed God’s Word to pierce your heart? Please don’t put it off for even a moment, for none of us know when our final day on this earth will come. And, as Addie says: *“...we are all dying.”* To put this into perspective, she compares her life to that of her father’s:

My dad is 84½. He is hanging in there, but he has metastatic prostate cancer and lives with daily pain. Just recently he retired from his job where he drove to and from Silver Spring to the Pentagon, a daily three-hour round trip, where he put in a full eight-hour day (a career that began at the American Embassy in Seoul when he was just 21 years old).

None of us know how many years we have. For all I know, Dave could be taken before me! And we are all dying.

Perhaps you are chronically ill as you read these pages. Or perhaps you are a young person, and believe death to be a distant specter.²⁷ Like most adults, I have lost friends and loved ones of all ages. Several of my precious grandchildren never even lived to see

²⁷ specter: a ghostly apparition; a phantom

this world; their time on this earth ended in the womb. My best friend, a person with a tremendously healthy life style, died in her early 40's of pancreatic cancer. Her life ended so rapidly that it took our breath away. She left behind two beautiful and vibrant teenage daughters. My parents, on the other hand, are in their mid-80's, still active and in relatively good health. It is an undisputable fact that none of us can know God's plan regarding the number of our days. Our birth was in His hands; our life is in His hands; our death is in His hands.

As King David testified:

*You made all of the delicate, inner parts of my body
and knit me together in my mother's womb.*

Thank You for making me so wonderfully complex!

Your workmanship is marvelous – how well I know it.

*You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion,
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.*

You saw me before I was born.

Every day of my life was recorded in Your book.

Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

(Psalm 139:13-16)

I do not tell you these things to frighten you, for "...*God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.*" (II Timothy 1:7) I don't know anyone who has ever been terrified into a loving relationship, but the God who created us grants peace freely to those who love and trust Him.

In the Old Testament book of Daniel we see God's sense of irony as this much-loved servant was unjustly thrown into a den filled with hungry lions, but slept like a baby all night long. Meanwhile, the

evil King Darius lived in an opulent palace with every possible comfort, yet tossed and turned all night long. (Daniel 6:16-23)

Here is the secret to the *genuine* peace which Daniel (and Addie) found in spite of their circumstances: God loves us so much that He sent His precious only Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the ugly penalty for our sin. (John 3:16) We had not sought His sacrifice; few of us even acknowledged our need of a savior. He loved us long before we loved Him. (I John 4:19) He loves you now, even as you read this. With a fully uncompromised knowledge of your life, everything you have thought, said and done, He loves you. He loves you. *He loves you.*

And what a powerful love it is! Nothing in this life compares with God's love for His children. I love my parents, my siblings, my children and my grandchildren. I can't imagine loving them more than I do – my love for them fills me up and makes me ache, but it is an imperfect love (just ask either of my two daughters!) and falls far short of the benchmark set by the love that our Creator has for His children.

If you would know Him, talk to Him. Open your heart and tell Him that you desire a relationship with Him. A gentle sovereign, His love is never forced upon us, but in the book of James He generously promises to answer the prayer of a seeking heart:

“If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask Him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waiver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.” (James 1:5-8)

In the book of Hebrews, the author relates:

“And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe that God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

Will you agree with Him that you are a sinner? Could any reasonable person argue otherwise? Ask Him for the mercy that He stands ready to offer you. Give Him your heart. His grace is not easy or cheap, but it *is* free to those who believe in Him and repent of their sin. I can promise you this: your life will be changed forever, in an instant, when the King of Kings enters it.

“‘Safe?’ said Mr. Beaver; ‘Don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course He isn’t safe. But He’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.’”²⁸

If you have not met Him yet, I pray you may put your trust in Him now – before the number of your days on earth has been completed.

“Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.” (Psalm 90:12)

Addie and I thank you for reading her story and hope that you have found it to be an encouragement in your own life. We would love to hear from you. You can contact me at yayadavidson@gmail.com, and Addie Lee Silver at dsilver3@verizon.net.

--Linda M. Davidson

²⁸ C.S. Lewis, [The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe](#)

Chapter 29

Lessons Hard Learned – A Few of Addie’s Journal Entries

*“The difference between school and life?
School teaches you a lesson and then gives you a test.
Life gives you a test and then you learn the lesson.”
-- Unknown*

“...and the Truth Will Set You Free.” (John 8:32)

I find that whenever I am going through a very uncomfortable trial, with great suffering, its effect is to stop me dead in my tracks. I am suddenly aware that God wants my immediate attention. It gives me a sense of urgency, and I want/need to clear my heart and mind of anything that could come between me and my Heavenly Father. Usually it’s because either: (1) I’m mad at someone; (2) I have neglected to forgive someone; or (3) I’ve been hurt. In the middle of my prayer, I sense that I am hanging on to an unforgiving spirit. I need to let go; I need to surrender. That desire becomes much stronger when I am in the midst of suffering. It is a good thing; my first impulse is always to hang on to my own stubborn will, but pain quickly puts my spirit into sharp focus. I know instantly exactly what I need to do.

One thing I frequently find myself guilty of is judging people, or having a bad attitude toward someone. These always crop up in my prayer life, and then they come back to haunt me. For example, I once had a neighbor, probably 25 years ago, who had Lupus and was taking steroids as part of her treatment. Over a long period of time, steroid use will give you what is known as “Cushingoid syndrome.” This means that you get a round “moonface.” Your belly swells; your appetite increases; you eat more and more and, of course, gain weight. You also get a “buffalo hump” on the lower part of the back of your neck. Observing all of this, I thought to myself: “I will never take steroids. No way!” Now, look at where I am! I have been taking steroids for almost 16 years, and am struggling with some of these same symptoms. Never say “never!” I have learned the hard way not to make quick, superficial judgments about a person or an issue.

I am by nature very critical, especially of my husband and children. That's where it starts, you know? I have this super standard that nobody can ever reach, and then I get mad at them because they don't reach it. Then I'm mad at myself, for being mad at them! It just goes on and on – it's terrible. God is showing me: "You're no better!" I always used to think that I was superior to everyone, but my pain reminds me that we are all on level ground.

Addie's Journal – September, 2010 – Accepting Your Lot

I was trying to draw closer to the Lord, as I know He desires an intimate relationship with me. He wants me to love and know Him better and deeper. Well, I was thinking and asking myself: "Would my life be better, happier, and more fulfilling if my circumstances were different (i.e., healed of my diseases, have strong normal muscles, clean smooth skin, full head of hair, easier time raising my children, less difficulty getting along with my husband, chronic itchiness gone, a roomier home, etc.)?"

So I asked God: "What is the answer?" After I thought about it very carefully, God helped me realize that different circumstances would not make my life better.

What I do with my life now, what I have now, is God's best for me. This means that I already have everything I need to live a godly, holy, abundant, and even fun life that pleases Him and gives Him glory. So: don't wait for things to get better, but enjoy His goodness, faithfulness, and provision now. I was reminded of this Scripture: "I know, Lord, that our lives are not our own. We are not able to plan our course. So correct me Lord, but please be gentle. Do not correct me in anger, for I would die." (Jeremiah 10:23, 24) Basically, we must acknowledge God's sovereignty and our need to surrender to Him.

Addie's Journal – November, 2011 – Words of Wisdom

I was reading and talking to God in prayer, and my brain was filled with these words of wisdom which kept running over and over in my mind: “A wise person is someone who is able to make prudent decisions. This starts with having the mindset of God.” Therefore, guard your heart, fear God, love Him, obey Him completely, rely on Him for everything, delight in Him, live for Him with joy and gladness, do not fear people but love them with His love, humble yourself before God, be strong and courageous in Him, know His words in your heart/mind/soul, talk to Him constantly, accept and love yourself the way God made you (He made you wonderfully, uniquely, and specially), take good care of yourself (body, mind and spirit) and finally, rest and lean on Jesus. (He is there when you don't feel His presence, and even when you doubt His presence.)

Jesus lifts and holds you up in His gentle and loving – yet firm – arms. He has the perfect story of your life already carefully and lovingly planned out. Follow, walk beside, and attach yourself close to Him so that you can hear His heartbeat and His voice. But do not be ignorant of the craftiness of the devil! Arm yourself with the armor of God (Ephesians 6), especially with His words and truth.

Don't ever lose joy – it is a fruit of the Spirit, and the evidence of the presence of His Holy Spirit in you. Joy has nothing to do with circumstances, but it has everything to do with your relationship with God, since He is the source of it. Remain close to Him and you will have joy.

When trials come that seem like giants, you must face them. They are there for your good. So you must go through them with the courage, faith, strength and determination that God will faithfully and sufficiently provide. You will never lack anything to live life with victory in Jesus. (Psalm 23)

Addie's Journal – March, 2012 – The Wise Man and the Foolish Man

If your foundation is anything other than God, well ... you are sunk!

Jesus told a parable about two men. The first man built his house upon the sand and therefore it could not withstand the great storms, but the second man built his house on a rock and the storms of life could not destroy it. (Matthew 7:24-27)

I was going through (and in many ways I still am) a really rough time, filled with challenging events and illnesses. God was allowing some of our children to walk through terrible heartache. It is so difficult for a mother to see her children suffer, especially when you feel as helpless as I did, and still do. Asking God for help and intervention, however, is something I could do. I'm sure I'll continue, until the day I step into Heaven, to pray for them. God is so gracious. He mercifully hears my cries and is faithfully leading me and my family every moment along the way. I know He will continue to do so.

There are times in life where the foundation you are standing on seems to crack, and you feel as though you are falling through. This is a subjective experience, if your foundation is God.

“Lord, I know You are good, so somehow what seems terrible will turn out for good, right God?” or “If You are not the God You say You are in the Bible, well, I don't want to be here!” It was when I was at this point, in the midst of doubts and questions, that He comforted me with the images of what I have come to think of as:

Treasure Under the Sea

In my mind's eye, I saw myself treading water in the middle of the ocean. I am afraid of deep water, because I know I am not a strong swimmer. I was fighting against God, who was intent on pulling me out into even greater depths. Frightened, I was refusing to go with Him, but He continued to call me to Himself.

I told God that I could no longer endure the things that had been happening to me and to my family. I just couldn't take anymore. I questioned why He allowed all of these terrible things to happen to us. He didn't answer; He just kept pulling me out into deeper water. I was very afraid and angry, and I struggled to pull away from Him.

Led further out into water that was very dark and deep, I was cold and afraid. Exhausted from battling Him, I gave up and said to myself: "As long as He is holding me, and He knows where He is taking me, I will be alright."

Suddenly, I was pulled deep under water – down, down, down – to the very bottom of the ocean. I was stunned by what I saw: it was dazzling and so very beautiful! My eyes were filled with the wonderful sight of beautiful corals, plant life and vibrantly colored fish: an entire world that I would have missed if I had chosen not to go with God. It was a beautiful world of hidden treasure under the sea.

I felt that God was saying: "Addie, do you trust Me? Just come with Me. You will see the City of God. You will be speechless; it will take your very breath away." I was amazed at the sights before me, but still so scared of what was happening in my life. I was shaken, too, by the thought that I would have missed all of this beauty, had I continued to struggle against Him.

He tells us in the book of Isaiah: "I will give you the treasures of darkness, [of] riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you by name." (Isaiah 45:3)

Relating these images to me, Addie said:

To be honest with you, I'm so scared of what's happening. But I don't have to know what's ahead; He knows. I just need to take today as it is, and not worry about what's coming.

And so I pray: "Lord, get me through this day, this moment, knowing that Your grace today, right now, is sufficient."

I know that fear is a horrible monster that can climb inside of people's heads. God tells us over and over in His Word not to fear, but to trust in Him with all of our heart. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do and He will show you which path to take." (Proverbs 3:5, 6)

Addie relates one of the ways in which the Lord has used her diseases to gently shape and humble her heart:

Dave and I went to a wedding in Colorado about eight years ago. I wasn't walking well; it was a huge deal for me to go. I had to be in a wheelchair for the first time, and it was in such a public place: the airport. I felt very self-conscious. We took a train to go to another terminal, and they had to actually tie me into the wheelchair, because it moved. They have a handicapped space for wheelchairs, and they sort of lock you in. I was just sitting there, out in the open, and I could feel the people staring at me. "What is wrong with this lady? Why is she in this wheelchair?" But the Lord spoke to me tenderly, saying, "Addie, do you remember how you used to look down on handicapped people as being inferior, thinking that you were better and more important, and feeling proud?" The Lord humiliated me, but it was a good humiliation.

Now my handicap is worse than ever. In the eyes of the world, I'm just not normal in so many ways. But it is such a good thing to have compassion. I know I would not have developed any if I had not lived through this experience. I tell you this: if God ever raised me up, and gave me strength and health, I would go and work with people who have physical limitations.

When I see people who are running and who have a lot of strength, and I watch them get up and drive a car, and go shopping ... just the simplest things ... wow. I want to tell them: "It is a privilege; everything is a privilege. You can be strong and healthy, but there are no guarantees in this life. Only His love. Only His person."

Storms at Sea

Addie remembers daily what she has learned of the goodness of God: His love for us; how He Fathers us so tenderly; how He patiently seeks to grow our faith in Him. She has learned how much He desires our love and trust based, not on circumstance, but on who He is. Her life's trials have caused her to learn more and more of His character, and to lean hard on His faithful arms. She senses His pleasure when she trusts in Him.

Sometimes doubts and questions creep into her heart. Like the disciples in the boat on the stormy sea, she says: "*Master, Master, I am perishing!*" And He answers: "*Where is your faith? Why do you doubt? I'm right here! Of course I care. Don't be frightened; I'm right here.*" (Luke 8:22-25, paraphrased) Once again, He calms her heart. She says to me, with wonder in her voice: "*How can we not trust God to manage our lives better than we can manage them ourselves?*"

Addie's Journal – March, 2012 – Be Still and Listen

I am very discouraged – feeling weighed down and sad about my childrens' futures, especially as I probably won't live long enough to see them. I am sensing battles being fought in my life and the lives of my children. The enemy is so relentless. He seeks to destroy my childrens' faith and trust in God. I am feeling the heat from the battle of dying young.

In the middle of this, I read the following verse in my One-Year Bible: "But Moses told the people: 'Don't be afraid. Just stand still and watch the Lord rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. The Lord Himself will fight for you. Just stay calm.'" (Exodus 14:13)

Exodus 14:21 describes how the Lord sent a strong east wind to dry out the Red Sea. The next day as I was lying in bed trying to focus, while feeling anxious and restless, the Lord quietly told me, "Listen! Listen to the wind; just listen." It was then that I heard how unusually windy it was. Earlier in the day, there had been no wind.

God was letting me know that He is fighting for me, and on that day the Lord took care of three specific troubling financial situations regarding the children! The Lord did it – He broke through – Hallelujah!! He IS a mighty God who cares.

She is continually reminded that we are soldiers. Christ has already won the battle, so what is our responsibility? We are to *put on the full armor of God* (Ephesians 6:10-20); we are to *trust in Him* (I Peter 5:7); we are to be *sober-minded and watchful* (I Peter 5:8).

Addie's Journal – April 13, 2015 – What Suffering Has Taught Me

Here are a few of the things that suffering and pain (both physical and emotional) have taught me, and how they have changed me:

- *I have learned to fear God;*
- *Suffering has broken my pride;*
- *Suffering has made me more thankful;*
- *Suffering has taught me to forgive and let go of resentment and bitterness (because I know it is God's command and will);*
- *I have learned to give God the credit for everything;*
- *I have learned to follow God's Word (to obey it more closely);*
- *Suffering has encouraged me to look forward to reigning with Christ one day;*
- *Suffering has enabled me to comfort, encourage and love others, especially those who are suffering;*
- *I have gained wisdom and now I see the world more clearly through God's perspective;*
- *I want others to see Christ in me, not just "me;"*
- *I have a longing to be more intimate with Jesus (to be drawn closer to Him);*
- *Suffering has helped me to better understand and appreciate Jesus' suffering; and*
- *Suffering has made me less judgmental and critical of others, because God hates the proud.*

“Addie Silver is a courageous woman who endures much suffering. Her medical background and profound faith have coalesced to strengthen and preserve her for over twenty years with two rare and incurable diseases. Her story is a meeting of medicine and faith.”

Dr. David Silver (Addie’s husband)

“She has remained, by God’s grace, His prized masterpiece: a fragrant, flowering tree after severe pruning.”

Dr. Diane Poythress

“There have been times when I have hung up the phone after our weekly conversations and wept as I thought of the enormous suffering she continually endures. Still, even in the face of her constant physical and emotional agony, I am amazed at the consistent expressions of love and trust she displays in her Lord and Savior.”

Dr. Herbert E. Ruby, IV, M.Div., D. Min.

“Addie’s walk of faith and trust is terribly real because her life demands real provision, real power and real sustenance from outside and beyond herself and her own limitations ... When you talk with Addie you are quietly prodded to be honest and forthright with her. Her own honesty and transparency, combined with her brutal and down-to-earth faith, makes anything less feel hollow and ridiculous.”

John E. Aldrich, M.Div.

“In Addie’s life, her response to enormous suffering has been, in large part, to ask the Holy Spirit to mold her more and more into the image of Christ. Her friends and family can attest to the fact that He has been granting that request for over 20 years.”

Linda M. Davidson