OUR FAITHFUL GOD

“To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible.” Thomas Aquinas

The red digital numbers on the bedroom clock switched to 5:15 am, reminding me that it was already Monday again. Even before dragging myself out of bed, I could already sense that familiar sick feeling in the pit of my stomach.

For the most part I had loved my job. As an in-house Rehabilitation Consultant of a large insurance company, I had the pleasure of interacting with well over a hundred different disability insurance specialists. Helping these specialists target claimants for rehabilitation potential and designing individualized re-employment programs for disabled clients, had been both a challenging and stimulating career opportunity.

Dealing with the schizophrenic boss, had become something I just had to learn to live with. Unfortunately, I had become her obligatory sounding board for every whimsical thought that flashed across her mind. Since our cubicles were side by side, I had listened to all of her be railings with her soon to be ex-husband who could never seem to do anything right. The next year brought the birth of their daughter, which sadly only added to a new string of unsolicited details surrounding the nasty divorce. Out of a compulsory obligation, I wasted many valuable work hours being dragged into debriefing sessions following their phone scrimmages. Under normal circumstances, this type of verbal abuse would have been reason enough to file a grievance. Regrettably for me, my manager was seen as the brainchild of the company and resignation was my only option.

Each year our company’s demand for minimizing claim dollar expenditures obligated our unit to severely cut benefits, for even the most deserving disabled claimants. For years the employees, now claimants had faithfully paid the vast majority of their own policy premiums. Disability payments for these claimants were valid entitlements under contract law. In my final year with the company, I had become a settlement broker of sorts. Being forced to close files at a small fraction of their true value, I had become a co-conspirator in cheating people out of their much needed payable claim dollars. So on that warm July Monday morning, I threw my feet over the edge of the bed and knew I was done. As a Christian I could no longer stay with this company.

 OK GOD, WHAT’S NEXT?

Unfortunately, my corporation was the only long term disability management company in the entire state. I had previously worked as a Rehabilitation Specialist in the Worker’s Compensation arena. However, with restrictive legislative changes rehabilitation benefits previously offered to injured workers had been severely slashed. Consequently my re-employment options in that area had disappeared as well. Although I could have sought employment with our State Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling system, at half my previous rate of pay, it too had been inundated with a flood of unemployed Rehabilitation Counselors like me. The sad truth was that for all practical purposes my fifteen year career as a Rehabilitation Consultant had come to an end.

Disheartened and perplexed I had to ask the question, where was my faithful God now? Unemployment or underemployment had always been someone else’s problem for me to solve. I had been trained as a head hunter for my disabled clients and now I couldn’t even develop a viable job for myself. It soon became painfully obvious I needed more training or a new line of work. Finances did not allow for the former so quick entry level jobs were my only option.

Following up with job leads from friends, combing the newspaper ads, and surfing career websites had proved to be futile. Throughout my entire life, I had always seen God come through for me just in the nick of time. He helped me in choosing friends, studying for exams, finding a wife, completing my degree, landing great jobs, and even adopting a baby in eight months no less. Why then was it so difficult to believe that God could still be faithful? In Hebrew, the Old Testament word for faithful meant to prop up or give support to. In Greek, (New Testament), language the same word is translated as trustworthy or someone/something to be relied upon. That’s just what I needed, a trusted support!

Sitting alone in church on one of those early hot summer Florida evenings, I began questioning again, ‘*where is this God of the Bible’*? How was he supposed to prop me up or give me the support I needed? After-all, how could I be expected to trust in or rely on God when my career and family’s future had crumbled to an end? Then, I heard that unbelievable word. It was a fantastic word that came directly from our minister’s lips straight to me. I Corinthians 1:9 - “God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.” *‘Faithful?*’ How was he going to show himself faithful to me? To be honest I had no clue, but I did have something new. Peace. Peace and an inner assurance that the Lord of the universe had invited me to spend the rest of my life and the next with him. Somehow, I just knew deep inside that He and He alone was going to be faithful to me.

 FAITHFUL, REGARDLESS OF THE WIND’S DIRECTION:

The next morning nothing had changed. I still had a steep mortgage, two vehicle payments, credit card bills and a family to raise. The economic stress had turned me inside out. I was quickly nearing what felt like, and had been described as, a nervous breakdown. There simply were no realistic entry level employment options that could approximate even half of my regular salary. Despair had quickly overshadowed hope for any type of a promising future.

After venting to my wife for the third time and feeling worse than a used car salesman, she finally convinced me to draft my resignation. The weeks and years that followed, were nothing short of frightful. I’m positive that had I not been a Christian and actively looking for God’s hand in all of this, I would have easily slipped into a deep depression.

Having given my company a three week notice of my decision, one afternoon while driving home I found myself desperate to hear from God. I turned on the car radio and heard a pastor share this story. “One day he had visited a farmer who was a member of his congregation. As the pastor climbed out of his car he noticed a windmill on the barn which carried an inscription. The pastor could just barely make out the words: GOD IS FAITHFUL. "Do you mean," asked the pastor, "that God's faithfulness depends on the direction the wind is blowing?" "No!" said the farmer. "The words mean that, regardless of which way the wind blows, God is faithful!" That evening I believe that faith finally took root in my heart. It may have only been a seed germinating without any viable sign of maturity or fruit, but none the less, I could feel something new had been established on the inside of me. It was, Potential!

 A WIDE OPEN SPACE

As the days concluded and I finally left the company I still had no real prospects for re-employment. Thankfully, my wife convinced me to start my own one man lawn service, as at least a means of keeping food on the table and a roof over our heads. Lawn care had been a hobby of mine and I had cut lawns just after graduating college while looking for my first career position. To my great surprise I found that I loved working out doors and breaking free from the CCC – (Compact Cubicle Crevice.)

One morning in my quiet time, I asked God to start re-assuring us of His faithfulness in visible ways. First He directed me to 2 Thessalonians 3:3 **“**But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.” Then during, lunch on the car radio I heard Deuteronomy 7:9, “Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.” Wow! It seemed as if the Lord was speaking directly to me. Then as if just to make sure I was getting the message, our Pastor used 1 Thessalonians 5:24, in his sermon that next Sunday, “The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.” Confident that I had been hearing clearly from God, he provided one final statement from our youth pastor’s message on Wednesday night, “God is worth it!” ‘*Wasn’t he worth it?’* I kept asking myself for the next several years.

 LAUNCHING A SECOND CAREER MINISTRY

Today, nearly ten years later, I still operate my own single man lawn service. (And it was worth it!) Each morning, I look forward to getting up and celebrating my freedom and growth. Most of my customers are elderly and in need of encouragement and special help. I love having an opportunity to witness and serve them. Throughout my workday I am free to listen to books on CD, (via my clip on IPod) or receive free biblical radio teachings from some of our country’s brightest Christian teachers. In addition, I’m able to hear inspirational music, intercede for others, memorize scripture, or even develop ideas and material for my new part time writing career. Certainly none of these or other countless spiritual growth opportunities could have been realized without our faithful God’s hand in, what seemed like, my horrific circumstance.

What a joy to know that God’s faithfulness is always available to us twenty four seven. In Lamentations 3:23, God reveals that his mercies are new every morning and how vast and great is his faithfulness to us. In Psalms 36:5, King David declares that God’s faithful love reaches up even to the skies. Every day we each face challenges that could easily take us under, were it not for the strong and mighty hand of our great faithful God.

 GOD FAITHFULLY KNOWS HOW TO PUT THINGS TOGETHER:

A few years ago the Our Daily Bread Devotional guide featured a story about a young girl who had been lost in the woods and discovered by a local farmer. When the old farmer happened upon the child, he could hear her reciting the letters of the alphabet. Upon approaching the youngster, he asked why she was doing this.” The young girl smiled and told the farmer she had been praying all the letters of the alphabet to God. When the farmer asked her why she would do such a silly thing she explained, “That way he can put the letters together in whatever way he wanted to.” God know how to put things together for our good! The entire bible reveals countless stories of our great God proving to be faithful in the greatest and smallest details of our lives. All He asks us to do is place our faith and trust firmly upon Him. Our greatest challenge is to grab hold of the support He offers. It was this type of faith that Charles Kingsley yearned for, “I do not want merely to possess a faith, I want faith that possesses me.”