

My Grace Is Sufficient

Steven Laman

© 2008 by Steven Laman

Published by Words of Hope, 700 Ball Ave., NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-1308

E-Mail: devotional@woh.org
www.woh.org

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the New International Version, © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society, used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Scripture references marked (CEV) are taken from the Contemporary English Version, copyright © American Bible Society, 1995.

Scripture references marked (NIRV) are taken from the New International Readers Version, copyright © 1994, 1996 by International Bible Society, used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House, all rights reserved.

Scripture references marked (TLB) are taken from The Living Bible, © Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois 60187.

Scripture references marked (*The Message*) are taken from The Message. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Cover and text design: Ragont Design

PREFACE

A CLOSE FRIEND OF MINE was walking through a crowded shopping mall one day many years ago. It was during a difficult season in his life, and he was struggling with feelings of discouragement and worry. As he stood outside a store, an elderly woman came up to him. My friend thought she was going to ask him something, perhaps for directions, or for help of some kind. Instead, she looked him in the eye, and without introduction or explanation, declared to him, “My grace is sufficient for you this day.” Then she walked away. When my friend told me the story he said he thought he was visited by an angel of the Lord that day.

Whether or not that woman was literally an angel, she *was* an angel in the literal sense of the word. *Angel* means “messenger.” The message she delivered is a great Bible truth. It’s a message Steve Laman has learned first-hand in very difficult circumstances, and one that he’s passed on to many through his writing ministry. Steve too is one of the Lord’s angels (messengers), sent by God to share words of encouragement that he himself lives by.

For more than ten years Steve has been writing devotionals for the *Words of Hope Daily Reflections*. In 1998 we published a collection of Steve’s devotionals entitled *Strength in Weakness*, and thousands of copies of that booklet were distributed. Now we are offering an all-new selection from Steve’s writings, which we are calling *My Grace Is Sufficient*.

You may recognize the source of both these titles. They are from the verse where Paul repeats God’s answer to his prayer for healing. He refers to a “thorn in the flesh”—some difficult and painful physical affliction that caused Paul great impairment.

Three times [writes the apostle] I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
(2 Corinthians 12:9)

That is Steve Laman's life verse, and on the pages that follow he will challenge you to prove its truthfulness by relying on God's promises in your own life's afflictions, as he himself has done.

David Bast
Words of Hope

INTRODUCTION

Through Tragedy to Triumph

“THIS IS THE WORST THING that ever happened in our family.” Those were the words my grandfather spoke when he learned of my difficulties. As a result of my oxygen supply being cut off during birth, I have severe cerebral palsy. True, being born with a crippling disability is tragic. But thank God, there is someone who specializes in turning tragedies into triumph!

Throughout the gospels, Jesus was always working in tragic situations. One of the most devastating was when a synagogue ruler named Jairus begged Jesus to heal his dying daughter. Before Jesus reached her, a report came that she was dead. Anyone would say that this was a tragedy. Anyone except Jesus. Not even the disaster of death could stop the Lord from turning this dismal situation into something wonderful. When he arrived, Jesus brought life back to this little girl. Jesus can handle anything!

As I was growing up it was sometimes difficult to see how God could work in my life. Jairus needed to be patient and believe. I do too. Today, though, I can truly say that God has turned my tragedy into a triumph. He has worked through my life and writing to encourage many. Do you find it hard to see how God can work in your calamities? Believe in the One who raised the dead. He has the power to turn your tragedies into triumph too.

My prayer as you read this devotional book is that you will be encouraged to “be patient and believe,” and to join me in relying upon God’s all-sufficient grace.



Steve uses his electronic speech device called the Pathfinder to speak in his home church, Calvary Reformed in Ripon, California, where his father Duane is pastor.

SIN—THE REAL DISABILITY

“We are all disabled; we are incapacitated by sin.”

WE ARE ALL DISABLED

Romans 3:21-31

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (v. 23)

IN HIGH SCHOOL, I was a part of a club called Interdependence. Interdependence was designed to mix the disabled and non-disabled students in a social atmosphere. One of the main teachings of the club was that everyone has a disability in some way. For a while, I had trouble believing that, because not everyone's disability is visible.

The dictionary defines being disabled as, "to be unable, unfit, ineffective, incapacitated." We are all unfit and unable to get to heaven on our own because of our sins. If we go by the dictionary, we are all disabled; we are incapacitated by sin.

When Jesus was on earth, he went around healing people. He healed people with all kinds of disabilities—the blind, the lame, the lepers, even those who were dead. He will heal our disability of sin too, if we confess it to him and believe that he is the Son of God. None of us can enter heaven on our own. By the blood of Jesus, we can be forgiven of our sins, and then we can live in heaven forever.

I guess the Interdependence teaching was right; we are all disabled—on the inside. But the good news is that we have someone to help us overcome our greatest disability. His name is Jesus. Praise God for him!

PRAYER

Thank you, Father, for forgiving all of our sins so that we can live with you forever. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FIRST-CLASS GRACE

Romans 3:21-24; 2 Timothy 1:8-10

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

STANDING IN LINE at the ticket counter of our connecting flight, Mom noticed that our seats were way in the back again. I didn't relish the thought of being walked down the narrow aisle of another 757. We stepped up to the ticket agent and Mom asked if there was any possible way to move closer to the front. Taking our tickets, the man punched a few keys on his computer and handed them back. "I think these will be better," he said. Then he whispered, "They're in first class."

Wow! We weren't expecting anything like that. We didn't deserve it—we hadn't paid for the privilege of riding in style. God's grace is like our first-class seats—a free gift, plain and simple. Nothing we can do can ever make us good enough to earn his love. We don't deserve his unmerited favor. Yet, out of love for us, he sent his only Son to forgive our sins by dying on Calvary's cross.

Thanks to the ticket agent's gift, I didn't have to struggle to the back of the plane. God's grace is the best gift in the world. Have you received it? If not, I invite you to accept Jesus and what he did on the cross. Once you do you will have a first-class ticket to heaven on the wings of God's grace.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for giving me the first-class treatment of your gracious love.

A HUGE PROBLEM SOLVED

Romans 3:9-24

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law. . . . But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known. . . . This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. (vv. 20-22)

AS I WHEELED past the kindergarten rooms of the school where I volunteer, a little brown-haired boy peeked around the corner and sweetly asked, “What’s wrong with you?” Before I could answer, he ran off to recess.

My wheelchair is a dead give-away that something is wrong with my body, but that’s not my most serious problem. I share a worse problem with every human being—a sinful heart. It all started with the first two people in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve ate from the tree that God expressly told them not to eat from, they started the whole human race down the road to sin and death. Being separated from our Maker by sin is our biggest problem. Thankfully, God didn’t let this predicament go without a solution.

Here’s the gospel solution in a nutshell: “Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God’s glory. The free gift of God’s grace makes . . . us right with him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free” (Romans 3:23-24 NIV).

That kindergartner’s question was correct. Something is wrong with me, and everyone else! Jesus came, died, and rose to solve our most basic human problem. Do you know him as the answer?

PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, for solving my sin problem.

COMPLETE ACCESS TO GOD

Mark 15:33-39; Hebrews 9:11-14

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. (Romans 5:1-2)

I AM FORTUNATE to live in a country where getting around in a wheelchair is, for the most part, hassle-free. Thanks to building codes, all public buildings are required to have ramps or elevators. I am grateful for the curb cuts which are on almost every street corner. Our government sees disabled people as important and has passed laws ensuring them access.

We are so valuable to our heavenly Father that he sent Jesus to be our “ramp” to enter into his presence. After Jesus took his last breath on the cross, the temple curtain was ripped in two, symbolizing that our sin no longer separates us from God. Thanks to his blood we can stand before the Lord unashamed, pure and spotless in his eyes. Through faith in him, Jesus Christ gives us entrance into God’s throne room.

You don’t have to be a wheelchair user to know how important access is. Next time you use an elevator or see a curb cut or a ramp, let it remind you to thank our Savior that he has given you the most important access of all.

PRAYER

Perfect Father, thank you for sending your Son so I can enter your presence with barrier-free access. Amen.

THE GREATEST VOLUNTEER

John 10:17-21

“No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily.
For I have the authority to lay it down when
I want to and also to take it up again.” (v. 18 NLT)

FOR MANY YEARS I have served as a volunteer teacher's aide at a local elementary school. I find volunteering satisfying, especially when I give students much needed help in language and reading. Numerous people must feel like I do, because they regularly give their time in churches, nursing homes, hospitals, food-distribution centers and youth sports programs.

All our voluntary service fails to compare, though, to the greatest volunteer of all, Jesus Christ. That's right, Jesus. He was a volunteer when he agreed to go to the cross for you and me. Our Lord didn't relish going to Calvary. He knew it would be the most painful experience ever. Yet he elected to suffer, following his Father's will to let himself be crucified.

I am humbled when I realize my Savior chose to suffer and die for my sins so I could be forgiven and live with him forever in heaven. Every student I work with is worth my time and energy. We must be of incredible worth to Jesus to cause him to decide to go to the cross. That makes him the greatest volunteer of all, wouldn't you agree?

PRAYER

*Jesus, I can hardly believe that you were
willing to die in my place. Thank you.*

BEAUTIFUL SCARS

John 20:24-31

He was punished to make us whole again.
His wounds have healed us. (Isaiah 53:5 NIRV)

WE ALL HAVE THEM, ugly scars permanently etched in our flesh, reminders of past surgeries, burns, or childhood falls. Emotional wounds are sometimes more hideous. Countless people live with injured spirits from an abusive parent or spouse, or a classmate who constantly ridiculed them. These marks can last a lifetime. And all of us have sin-scarred souls.

Disfiguring scars are nothing to look at. But there was someone who wanted to see the nail prints in Jesus' hands and touch the spear wound in his side. To Thomas, Jesus' scars were beautiful because they served as visible evidence that he had indeed defeated death. We too will see those same nail prints when we meet Jesus face to face. The only wounds in heaven will be those of our Savior. Our heavenly bodies will not have a single scar from this life. All the defects caused by years of sinning and suffering will be completely erased.

Are you living with physical or emotional scars? In this life we have to endure them. Thanks to the nail marks in our Lord's hands, our ugly scars one day will be gone and only his will be left—but beautiful to behold!

PRAYER

*Wounded Savior, thank you for all the anguish
that you endured on my behalf. Amen.*

GOD'S COMMUNICATION PLAN

John 1:1-18

The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the one and only Son. He came from the Father. And he was full of grace and truth. (v. 14 NIRV)

CEREBRAL PALSY HAS AFFECTED my fine motor control so much that it is impossible for me to speak understandably. Without some form of alternative communication, my life would be one of silence. However, thanks to a computerized electronic speech device, I can converse with family and friends.

God had to find an alternative way to communicate his love after sin entered the world. Those intimate moments talking with Adam and Eve in the garden were no more. Thankfully God didn't keep quiet. He was determined to communicate his love by speaking through prophets. He sent many, but people continued to drift away. Finally, he came to earth himself—in the human form of Jesus Christ. In him is all the grace we need for a perfect relationship with God. When Jesus declares us forgiven, we can believe him because he is the final Word of truth and love, and because he died to take away our sin and restore us to God's family.

Knowing how I struggle to communicate makes me even more grateful that God found a way to express his love. Are you talking with him? Are you listening too?

PRAYER

*Thank you, Lord Jesus, for coming down to
communicate your love for me.*

GOD DOESN'T GIVE UP!

Acts 9:1-19

Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (1 Corinthians 13:7 NLT)

A TEACHER I WORK WITH introduced me to a book entitled *Petey*. It's the story of a boy born with cerebral palsy in 1920. Everyone convinced his parents to give up on him and commit him to a mental institution. Reading this emotional story made me extremely grateful that I was born in 1970 to parents who persevered with their loving devotion during some trying times.

Everyone can pinpoint those special people who faithfully loved them through difficult times. The Lord should be on the top of that list. No matter how awful we are, God still loves us—his children. The apostle Paul knew this firsthand. Before the Lord changed his heart, he was Saul, the church persecutor. Christians had given up on him, but not God. He changed this murderer into Paul, the great evangelist.

After Adam and Eve sinned, the Lord could have started the human race over again, but he didn't. Instead he kept loving them and promised a Savior. That Savior is Jesus, his only Son. Jesus is the proof that God never gives up on us.

PRAYER

Lord, your love is so amazing. Thank you that even when I am unlovable, you never give up on me.



Steve writes his devotionals by using a dowel to depress the keys on his computer's keyboard.

FAITH STRUGGLES

“God has shown me how to deal with sufferings the way my Savior did.”

WRESTLING

Ephesians 6:10-18

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood.” (v. 12)

LIFE IS A STRUGGLE FOR ME. It takes a considerable amount of effort to dress and feed myself. Communication has always been difficult, even with a speech device. I love to write, but it is tiring and time-consuming to plunk out my sentences one letter at a time with a wooden dowel.

You may not identify with my daily struggles, but there is a battle that we all face. Paul describes this fight as wrestling against the evil spiritual forces in this world. They are constantly attacking—trying to lure us away from the Lord and into sin. To combat this, the apostle encourages us to always be prepared to stand up and fight by clothing ourselves in God’s impenetrable armor. When we put it on, it completely protects and strengthens. The key to this protection is the sword of the Spirit, the Bible. When we have it in hand, reading it daily, then we will know what is right and can defend against any temptation that comes our way.

I am grateful when someone sees me struggling and offers to lend a hand. God’s armor is always available whenever we battle with evil. Put the armor on so you can stand prepared to handle the tempter’s tricks. We don’t have to fight alone. The Lord is standing with us and he cannot be defeated.

PRAYER

I am grateful, Father, that you strengthen me for the struggles I face. Amen.

IMPRISONMENT

Acts 16:22-28

He put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. (v. 24)

SOMETIMES MY WHEELCHAIR feels so confining and restricting that I can hardly stand it. I felt that way when I used to watch my brother and his friends running and laughing as they had a wonderful time on the beach or playing sports. When I see others enjoying an active life, my chair can feel like a filthy, bug-infested, concrete jail cell. My disability makes me a prisoner in my own body.

It helps me to recall the time when Paul and Silas were thrown in jail for preaching the gospel. They could have been bitter. They were doing the Lord's work, and all they got for it was a jail cell. But they didn't get bitter! They actually praised God while their feet were fastened in the stocks. The two were practicing what Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Sometimes it is very hard for me to give thanks in everything. But the Bible commands me to do so, despite the circumstances in my life.

One way that I try to keep the right perspective is to look at all the people who are worse off than I am. Even though I can't participate in some activities that I would love to do, I still thank God for what I can do. I know that my disability could be a lot worse, and I just thank God that it isn't.

PRAYER

Lord, help us to praise you in the jail cells of life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

DISAPPOINTMENT

Romans 5:1-11

And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (v. 5)

WHEN I LIVED IN SOUTHERN California, a speech pathologist asked me to help her demonstrate one of the latest speech devices on the United Cerebral Palsy telethon. After receiving the machine, I spent hours preprogramming it with what I was going to say. On the day of the telethon, I set our VCR to capture my television debut. My mom drove me to the studio where I did the demonstration live on the national broadcast. When I got home, I looked at the tape, but to my dismay my demonstration wasn't there. That segment had been replaced by local telethon coverage. What a disappointment!

My experience with the telethon has helped me learn that although this world may disappoint us, God will never do so. Throughout the Old Testament, God promised a Savior. The Israelites might have thought that God had forgotten his promise because the Messiah took so long in coming. Yet, at just the right time, God did send Jesus to fulfill the prophecies.

Since God did not disappoint us in his greatest promise, we can have confidence that he will fulfill his other promises. He has promised to be with us (Matthew 28:20), answer our prayers (Matthew 21:22), and to prepare a place for us in heaven (John 14:2). The Bible is full of a myriad of promises. Aren't you glad that we serve a God who will never disappoint us?

PRAYER

*Father, thank you for fulfilling your promise
to send a Savior. In his name. Amen.*

DEVASTATION

Isaiah 53:4-12

By his wounds we are healed. (v. 5)

“YOU CAN BE HEALED!” I heard the televangelist say. “Jesus has taken all your diseases with him to the cross. You are healed because of what Jesus has done.” I raised my hand toward the screen and believed that I was healed. Slowly I started to get off the couch, believing that I could stand and walk. But when I tried to stand, I fell to my knees as always. I was devastated! Why didn’t the televangelist’s words come true? I do believe in Jesus and what he did on the cross, with all my heart. So why wasn’t I healed?

God graciously helped me not to dwell on that disappointment. Some time after that, I heard a sermon on the radio about Isaiah 53:5 by Dr. Walter Martin, the late founder of the Christian Research Institute. He said one of the most important rules of Scripture reading is context. We have to look at the verse in its context to figure out what the verse means. He explained that the context of Isaiah 53:5 was not physical healing, but spiritual. If we read it in context, it is plain to see that Jesus was punished and crucified so that we could be healed of our sins.

It would be wonderful if Jesus’ crucifixion would guarantee my physical healing, but thank God there is a better healing—the healing of our souls. Physical healing would be great, but it would only last a lifetime. Spiritual healing, on the other hand, will last for all eternity.

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for sending your Son to heal our souls so that we can spend eternity with you. In his name. Amen.

JEALOUSY

James 3:13–4:12

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God
and he will come near to you. (4:7-8)

GROWING UP WITH A brother who was not disabled often caused me to be jealous of him. At times I would be angry because I could not run and play with him and his friends. When he got his driver's license, I was envious of his freedom to go places on his own. I was jealous of his special times with Dad, when they would shoot baskets or work on his car.

Jealousy between siblings is nothing new. Cain was jealous of Abel because God accepted his brother's offering but not his (Genesis 4). Joseph's brothers were jealous of him because their father gave Joseph a special robe, showing he was his favorite (Genesis 37). In both cases jealousy led to terrible results. Cain murdered Abel, and Joseph was sold into slavery. James wrote: "For wherever there is jealousy or selfish ambition, there will be disorder and every other kind of evil" (James 3:16 TLB).

As I have grown older, I have learned that feelings of jealousy lessen when I draw closer to God. Do you ever struggle with jealous feelings toward a sibling, a coworker, or a friend? When we feel jealousy creep in, let's take James' advice to "Resist the devil and . . . come near to God." If we do, then our jealousies will slowly melt away. God will come near to us and help us realize that we are loved as we are. There is no need to be jealous when we are loved by the Lord of the universe.

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, that when we come to you, you come near to us. Help our jealousies to melt away. Amen.

ANGER

Psalm 103

The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love. (v. 8)

I WAS GETTING MORE and more frustrated as the constant chatter continued. I was trying to teach a spelling lesson. Instead it turned into a gab session. I had enough, and the words “Shut up!” came out of my mouth. Fortunately, not many of the pupils in that classroom understood me—for once I could be glad that my speech is garbled! I was not slow to anger with the kids that day.

Working as a teacher’s aide has given me a glimpse of how God must feel when we commit the same sin again and again. My students had been told to quit gabbing numerous times. However, no matter how often I reminded them, they kept on breaking the rules. I wonder how many times God shakes his head at us as we go on disobeying him time after time.

I am so glad the Bible reveals God’s nature to us. Unlike me, he is always “slow to anger and abounding in love.” He is not only slow to anger, but “he does not treat us as our sins deserve.” Our loving Lord sent his only Son to forgive all our sins. I am amazed. Being frustrated with my students—and with my reaction to their disobedience!—makes me grateful that I have a God who is so tolerant. Join me in giving thanks to our Lord who is very patient with us, his children.

PRAYER

*We are grateful, Father, that you are slow to anger
and rich in love toward us. Help us to be
patient also with others. Amen.*

LONELINESS

John 14:15-21

“I will not leave you as orphans.” (v. 18)

THE HOUSE IS QUIET. My parents are out for the evening and I am alone. I'm wishing I wasn't trapped here, all alone. If only I could drive a car, then when my parents are gone I could go places to escape this loneliness.

At times everyone feels lonely. The disciples were no different. Jesus knew they would feel abandoned after he was crucified. So he promised that he would never leave them as orphans. He would come to them in a new way, in the person of the Holy Spirit, so that he could be with them, always, everywhere.

Jesus' promise was not only for the twelve disciples. This promise is for us as well. Most of the time, I really don't mind being alone because I know that Christ's Spirit is always with me. When I feel lonely, then he comes to me in a special way to comfort and help me, and to reassure me that I am never alone.

Do you ever feel physically or emotionally abandoned? Like an orphan? When the feeling of loneliness comes, open your heart more fully to the Holy Spirit. He will fill you with his presence and assure you that he will never leave you or forsake you. I know that wonderful feeling. You can too.

PRAYER

*Lord, sometimes we feel like orphans in this world.
Thank you that we are never really alone because
your Spirit is with us wherever we go. Amen.*

BITTERNESS

Exodus 15:22-27

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

(Psalm 95:7-8)

A LITTLE BOY WAS sitting dejectedly on the curb with tears in his eyes. The sounds of children laughing and riding their bikes filled his ears. He longed to join them, but he couldn't. That little boy was me. Oh, how I wished I hadn't been born with a disability. As I heard those kids having a good time, I became bitter.

The Israelites were faced with a bitter situation too after traveling in the desert for three days without any water. When they finally stumbled into an oasis, they found that the water was bitter. God could have made the water drinkable before they got there, but he didn't. It was not until Moses cried out to the Lord that he showed him a piece of wood to throw into the water to make it sweet.

Like Moses, we need to ask the Lord to show us ways to work with him to sweeten our lives. When we ask, he will show us how to change our attitude toward our situations. In my case, he has shown me how to focus on how I can use my weaknesses to bless others rather than concentrate on my disability and become bitter. When bitterness traps us, our lives can become as sweet as the waters of Marah—if we ask God for help.

PRAYER

Lord, show us how to turn our bitterness into something sweet so we can bless others. Amen.

QUESTIONING

John 13:1-17

“Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” (v. 6)

“WHAT IS THE MASTER DOING?” Peter must have thought as Jesus knelt down to begin the menial chore of washing the disciples’ calloused, dusty feet. His mind couldn’t grasp what was happening, and so he objected strenuously. Have you ever felt unable to comprehend what the Lord is doing? I often feel that way. Why does God let babies be born with crippling birth defects? Why doesn’t he send rain to parts of the world to relieve the drought and suffering? Why is life sometimes so unfair? My list could go on and on, and surely yours could as well.

Peter couldn’t grasp that the Lord Jesus was the prophesied suffering servant. When Peter objected to the washing, Jesus didn’t get upset. He just tenderly replied, “You don’t really know what I am doing, but later you will understand” (v. 7 CEV).

Those words are comforting. No matter how hard we try, some things will always perplex us. When life gets confusing and we have questions, our Lord will not be irritated if we ask. He might not always give us the answers, but we can know that one day we will be able to look back and realize that God did work everything out for the best (Romans 8:28). It may not be in this lifetime, but someday we will understand.

PRAYER

Lord, even when I am clueless about what you are doing, help me to continue to trust you.

GRUMBLING

Exodus 16:1-18

In the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD,
because he has heard your grumbling. (v. 7)

IT WOULD BE VERY easy for me to be a grumbler. I could complain about not being able to walk or talk, about my difficulties in doing the simplest tasks, about the fact that sometimes I feel like life is passing me by. Thankfully, I am not prone to complain, but if I were, I would be griping not only about my disabilities but also against God, who allowed me to be born with cerebral palsy.

When the Israelites were in the desert, they thought they were grumbling against Moses and Aaron, but actually they were complaining against God. It was God who led the escape from Egypt, and he was preparing the way for a better life in Canaan. Despite what the Almighty was doing, they refused to see his goodness to them. Their constant complaining must have hurt the Lord's heart. Yet, for all their moaning and groaning, for all their criticisms and complaints, God never stopped caring. He still heard his peoples' cries and met their needs.

Sometimes I grumble. When I do, I have to remind myself that God loves and cares for me. He will meet my needs. Do you ever find yourself complaining about problems large or small? When you do, join me in remembering that our God can handle whatever we may face.

PRAYER

Lord, forgive my grumbling spirit and help me to see that you want the best for me. Amen.

MEANING

John 6:60-69

Peter replied, “Master, to whom would we go? You have the words of real life, eternal life. We’ve already committed ourselves, confident that you are the Holy One of God.” (vv. 68-69 *The Message*)

AS A DISABLED PERSON sometimes it is difficult for me to find meaning in life. I don’t have a full-time career, so I am not wrapped up in what I do. Driving is an impossibility, so my car can’t be my life. I never got into wheelchair sports, so athletics is not my number-one priority. At one point in my life these worldly pursuits looked very enticing. I am grateful that as I have grown and matured the Lord has shown me that life’s true meaning comes only through following Jesus Christ.

After being with the Son of God for nearly three years, the disciples came to this same conclusion. When the masses fell away because they didn’t like what they were hearing, the twelve recommitted themselves.

If we follow their example, we will find that Christ defines the only worthwhile purpose in living. Life is no longer lived only for ourselves, but for our Lord and to bless others in his name. Are you living this way? I pray that you are. Jesus leads us on the only way to a meaningful life.

PRAYER

*Jesus, thank you for bringing meaning to my life.
Help me never to fall away into a meaningless existence.*



Words of HOPE

Good News. No boundaries.

A VISION FOR GROWING A GLOBAL CHURCH

Words of Hope exists for one purpose—to share the good news of Jesus Christ, the world's one Savior. Our mission is to build the church worldwide through broadcasting.

Distinctive features of our ministry include:

- daily radio programs in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish to the heart of the Muslim world.
- partnerships with key churches in Africa and India that enable them to evangelize in 20 different languages.
- daily English language programs on more than 100 stations around the world.

**Your gift will help us reach the world
with the good news of Jesus Christ.**

To learn more visit www.woh.org

TEKO
TELECOM

DOUBT

Luke 8:22-25

Jesus . . . ordered the wind and waves to stop. . . . Then Jesus asked the disciples, “Don’t you have any faith?” (vv. 24-25 CEV)

LIFE’S STORMY WATERS crash over all of us. When I was younger, storms of doubt and despair would come up in my mind many nights, causing me to toss and turn as I struggled to come to terms with my cerebral palsy.

The disciples weren’t immune from the raging waters of life’s storms. They got caught in a violent tempest one evening on the Sea of Galilee. Even with the creator of the wind and the waves in the bottom of the boat, the threatening squall still blew in. Couldn’t Jesus have commanded the storm to die down even before it started? He could have, but he didn’t choose to do so. I think the reason he let the storm toss that little boat around for a while was to give his disciples a clear picture that he would be with them no matter what.

I am confident that Jesus was always with me when the waves of my emotions started to churn. Do you have that same confidence in the middle of life’s storms? When the winds start to howl, let’s not give up on faith, but trust the One who controls our lives. He is always in the boat with us.

PRAYER

*Creator of life, especially in life’s storms
help me to have confidence that you are with me.*

DISCOURAGEMENT

John 17:6-19

[Father], I am on my way to you. But I say these things while I am still in the world, so that my followers will have the same complete joy that I do. (v. 13 CEV)

IN THE LAST WEEK of his life, Jesus prayed that his followers would have his joy. With the cross looming ahead, you would think that joy would be the last thing on his mind. Yet Jesus prays that his followers would share the “same complete joy” that he has. How could he do it? How could Jesus face suffering and death with joy? I think Jesus’ happiness came from the fact that he knew his agonies would serve a greater purpose—the salvation of souls.

My cerebral palsy can’t compare with the cross, but it does occasionally rob me of joy. In fact, sometimes it’s the pits. I need the Lord’s perspective—the ability to concentrate on the bigger picture rather than on the immediate situation. Having a disability is not always pleasant, but I can shout for joy because God is using my limitations to encourage others.

We can all rejoice despite our difficulties when we realize God is in control and will bring something good out of our sufferings. It might not be at this very moment, but we can trust him to be faithful. If we, like Jesus, are on our way to the Father, we all can be joyful.

PRAYER

*Lord of joy, help me have your attitude
when I go through the pits of life.*

FRUSTRATION

Matthew 26:36-46

Jesus . . . prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, don’t make me suffer by having me drink from this cup. But do what you want, and not what I want.” (v. 39 CEV)

HOW DO YOU RESPOND to suffering? Do you wallow in self-pity, get frustrated, or lash out? I had to learn to react to many, many disappointments in my life resulting from cerebral palsy. Thankfully, God has shown me how to deal with sufferings the way my Savior did.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus faced his feelings about his upcoming suffering and death. He absolutely did not want to be crucified. He expressed his frustration and despair. When facing life’s miseries it is all right to be honest with God. After an honest prayer Jesus accepted the Father’s will. I am so glad he did, because his suffering had a purpose—to save me! But the Lord’s salvation does not always mean he takes away our every frustration. Sometimes we have to accept them and rely on his grace.

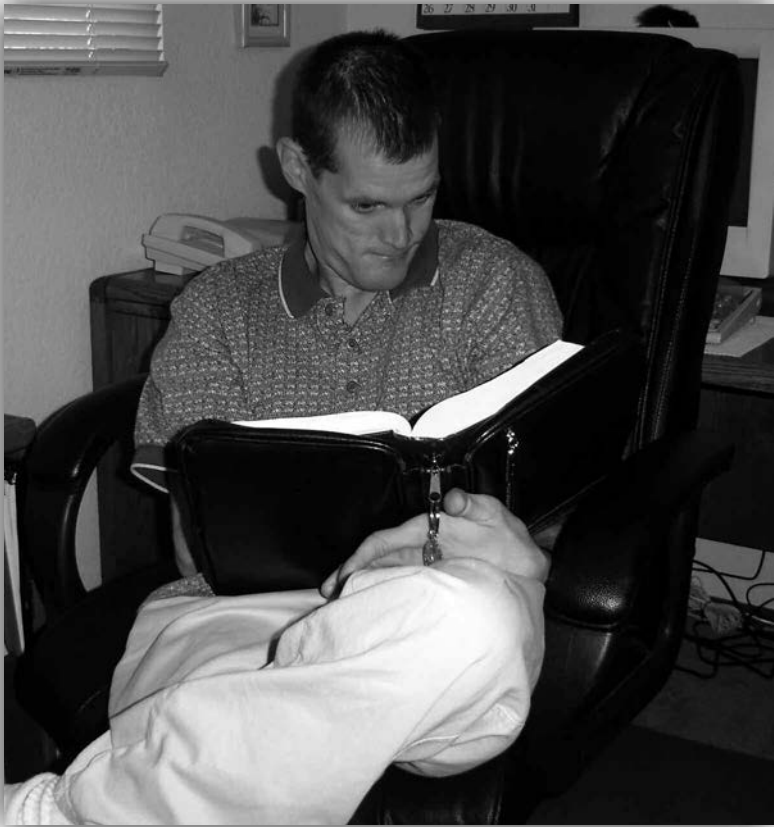
I have found that learning to accept my struggles is the key to living with them. Jesus had to endure his. I had to come to grips with the fact that wheelchairs and speech devices will always be a part of my life. If Jesus could relent and accept the Father’s will, he will give me the grace and strength to do so also. And he will do the same for you.

PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, for accepting the cruel cross. Help me to embrace your will for my life, disappointments included.



Steve with his parents, Duane and Sheryl.



Steve doing personal Bible study.

LEARNING TO TRUST

“True faith becomes stronger when introduced
to the burning blast of hardships.”

THE GOOD OUTWEIGHS THE BAD

Job 2:1-10

“Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” (v. 10)

SOME PEOPLE MIGHT say to me, “What makes you so happy? You are stuck in a wheelchair, and you can’t even make yourself understood most of the time. Why in the world are you happy?” Sure, my disability limits my life in many ways. On the other hand, I still have a multitude of good things in my life.

Job lived like a king. He had a large family and all kinds of livestock. Satan then asked if he could test Job to see if he loved God only because of what he got from him. When the test started, Satan took away all his children and livestock, and inflicted him with all kinds of painful sores. Still, Job did not curse God. In fact, he said, “Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”

Like Job, I have to accept some trouble along with the good that God gives to me. However, I am constantly amazed that the enjoyable experiences in my life outweigh the disappointments and the sorrows. God has given me friends who accept me, eyes that can see the beauty of his world, and most of all, a close relationship with him. The list would go on and on if I took the time to inventory all the good in my life. My disability is an island of trouble in a sea of good and wonderful gifts that have come to me from my Lord’s hand.

PRAYER

Lord, help us to see that the good outweighs the bad in our lives. In your Son’s name. Amen.

GETTING RID OF ANXIETY

Luke 12:22-31; 1 Peter 5:6-7

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (v. 7)

IT'S A GREAT DAY FOR fishing, and Uncle John is casting my fishing line. As it gently glides over the lake, Peter's words come to mind, "Cast all your anxiety on the Lord because he cares for you."

I've tried casting my own line, but it gets horribly tangled up and doesn't go very far. That reminds me of how I often try to deal with my anxieties. It seems like whenever I cast my cares on the Lord, I never let them go far enough. I keep taking them back and soon I am worried again. I am learning that instead of giving the Lord just the circumstances that worry me, I should also ask him to help me forget about them. When I pray like that, in a sense I am asking him to help me cast my cares far enough so I cannot reel them back in again.

Have you ever found yourself reeling your anxieties back in? Ask the Lord to help you cast them away far enough so you cannot take them back; so far, in fact, that you don't even remember them! He will gladly help because he cares deeply for you. He doesn't want you to live a life filled with worry and anxiety.

PRAYER

Lord, I cast all my anxieties on you. Help me to cast them so far it is impossible to reel them back in.

OUT OF THE SILENCE

Luke 1:5-20, 57-66

Immediately [Zechariah's] mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. (v. 64)

EVEN THOUGH I CAN communicate with a speech device, I don't use it to chat often. Communication is still tedious and time consuming. Given the difficulties, most of the time I would rather listen than contribute to the conversation. But listening has its advantages. By listening I learn about people, and it also gives me time to think.

Zechariah should have been quiet when Gabriel told him that his wife was going to have a son. Instead, he questioned. This priest should have believed the words of Almighty God without doubt. Since he didn't, he was sentenced to be speechless until his son was born. What a harsh punishment! Was it really severe, or did being hushed actually help Zechariah grow in faith? I believe so. Months of silence forced him to do a lot of thinking. As John grew in Elizabeth's womb, his father's faith must have also grown. When John was born and Zechariah could speak again, his mouth overflowed with praise.

You may not have a speech disability or have to endure nine months of silence, but have you ever tried being quiet before the Lord to ponder his goodness? Take it from a guy who doesn't speak. It is wonderful to sit and reflect on the goodness of the Lord. When the time of quietness is over, our mouths will be filled with praises.

PRAYER

*In my silence, Father, help me to ponder
your goodness and let me shout your praise.*

THE LORD OF SURPRISES

Genesis 18:9-15; 21:1-7

“Is anything too hard for the LORD?” (v. 14)

OUT OF THE BLUE an e-mail appeared on my computer. After reading it, I let out a scream. Mom came running. “What’s wrong?” she asked. Nothing was wrong—I had screamed in excitement! Joni Eareckson Tada read my devotional book *Strength in Weakness* (published by Words of Hope) and wanted to feature and offer it on her radio program. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that Joni would read my little book, let alone talk about it and offer it to others through her ministry. God sure is the Lord of many surprises.

The Lord has been surprising his people throughout history. He sent three visitors to Abraham and Sarah to announce they were going to have a son. Not just any son, but a son who would continue the line through which the Savior would one day come. What a shock to these senior citizens, since it was physically impossible. But nothing is impossible for the Lord. He loves to do the unthinkable in the lives of his people.

When Isaac arrived, Sarah gave all the credit and glory to God for this blessing. Have you ever seen the unimaginable pop into your life? A perfect job has landed in your lap or someone you haven’t thought about in years gives you a call. Whenever circumstances work out perfectly we can know that the Lord of surprises is at work. Let’s praise him for the big and little surprises in our lives.

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for all the unexpected ways you work in my life. Amen.

VALUE IN SUFFERING

1 Peter 1:3-12

These [trials] have come so that your faith . . .
may be proved genuine. (v. 7)

WHEN YOU READ the title of this meditation you might have scoffed and said, “Get real! There is no value to be found in suffering.” In a sense you are right. It is very hard to uncover anything good in suffering. Most of the time I find the effort to discover anything positive in my cerebral palsy overwhelms me.

The apostle Peter had a different view of suffering. He says our troubles have value because the trials we undergo prove our faith is real, as gold is refined in the fire. And Peter adds that genuine faith is worth far more than gold. True faith becomes stronger when introduced to the burning blast of hardships. I can see that in my life. My disability has helped to make my faith more durable. When I get discouraged about my limitations and feel like no one understands, I remember that Jesus knows my feelings and he does understand. This forces me into his arms and strengthens my faith in him.

Anything that builds our faith is more valuable than riches. When our life on earth is over, faith is the only treasure we can take with us. I want to have a solid faith when that time comes, don't you?

I guess there is value in suffering after all.

PRAYER

*Strengthen my faith, Father; make it more
and more valuable to me. Amen.*

TWO-SIDED TRAGEDIES

John 11:1-15, 32-44

Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead! I am glad that I wasn’t there, because you will have a chance to put your faith in me.” (vv. 14-15 CEV)

OCCASIONALLY I GET totally fed up with my limitations. I feel an overwhelming desire to be healed. Other times I am actually glad for the opportunities that are mine because of cerebral palsy. If it weren’t for my disability I know I would not be volunteering at an elementary school, and I might not be writing devotional books.

Jesus had mixed reactions at the death of his good friend Lazarus. Arriving at the tomb, the Savior was overcome with sorrow and wept for his friend. But before going to Bethany the Lord had the opposite reaction. He told his disciples that he was glad for Lazarus’ death! At first we might think this is hard-hearted. After examining his statement, we can see it was not Lazarus’ death that made Jesus glad but the opportunity this crisis gave him to show his power and help others to believe.

When we face tragedies, we can take comfort in knowing that our pain deeply saddens Jesus. But he also desires to use our misfortune for good. May we have our Savior’s perspective on experiences that look like total disasters.

PRAYER

Lord, when life goes terribly wrong, give me eyes to see it as you do, and to know that everything is not out of control and totally lost.

“I HATE MY LIFE”

John 12:20-26

Anyone who loves his life will lose it. But anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it and have eternal life. (v. 25 NIRV)

ENTERING THE SPECIAL education classroom, I saw her—our newest student. Hearing that we shared the same disability, I was eager to work with her. However, my job quickly became frustrating because she often refused to work and constantly whined, “I hate my life.” This bothered me because I find life to be good, and I wanted the same for her.

Her expression also made me wonder about Jesus’ words, “Those who hate their life in this world will keep it . . .” What did the Lord mean? Does he want us to have suicidal thoughts or live in depression? Certainly not! Jesus uses exaggerated language here. What he wants is for us to be so devoted to him that it looks like we hate our own lives by comparison. When we love him even above our own lives, we will happily lay aside our desires and become more concerned about pleasing him.

That new student might never realize how her words sent me on a quest to understand these words of my Savior. She helped me understand that living completely devoted to Jesus is the only way to live joyfully and eternally.

PRAYER

Lord, help me to love you more and my life less.

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

Mark 10:35-40

“You don’t know what you are asking for,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup of suffering I drink? Or can you go through the baptism of suffering I must go through?” (v. 38 NIRV)

WHEN YOUNG BOYS see me in my electric wheelchair, they occasionally make a comment like, “Cool! It would be awesome to speed around in that thing every day!” I can see where they would find “joy riding” in a chair fun for a while, but from the perspective of a life-long wheelchair user, I also know that the novelty would quickly fade away and they would soon long to run again.

We like to think we know what is the best answer to our prayers, but Jesus has a much better perspective. He filters our requests through his eternal eyes to determine what is best. When James and John asked the Lord about sitting next to him in the places of honor, they thought it was the perfect plan. They even thought they could endure what Jesus was about to face, but he knew differently. In response Jesus said, “You don’t know what you are asking for.”

Often we don’t know what we are asking for either. I am so grateful that Jesus doesn’t just rubber stamp our prayers. Instead, he uses his wisdom to determine the best answer.

PRAYER

*Lord, help me to always trust in
your judgment and perspective.*



Steve in front of the school where he volunteers as a teacher's aide.

SAVED TO SERVE

“God likes to work through what we already possess, when we place ourselves at his disposal.”

THE LITTLE THINGS

Luke 12:1-12

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?
Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. (v. 6)

MY DISABILITY MAKES it very hard for me to accomplish fine motor activities. Ordinary, everyday tasks like tying my shoes, combing my hair, and a multitude of other seemingly insignificant things are either tough or impossible for me to manage. Most people do such tasks without even thinking about them. But I have to struggle with these details or have someone help me. That is difficult.

Somehow, God seems to know when I need help. He always sees to it that someone is there to help me. Whether it is opening a door that I am having trouble getting through, or getting help from my mom in fastening a button so I will be ready to go somewhere, my Father in heaven sees to it that every little thing is taken care of.

Jesus says that God cares even for sparrows, sold for the slightest amount of money. We are so much more important than the sparrow! Our Father has each one of our hairs numbered! He even sent his only Son to die for our sins, both big and little.

I can feel the love of God for me when someone helps me with little things that I cannot do. What small details of your life has God worked out through the help of others? May you see his hand in them, and be glad.

PRAYER

*Father, help us to trust that you can care for
the littlest things in our lives and use us
as your helpers. For Jesus' sake. Amen.*

FOLLOW THAT FAITH LINE

Hebrews 11:22–12:3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. (v. 1)

WHILE RAFTING down the Snake River a few summers ago, our guide told us the importance of following the foam-line when riding the rapids. The foam-line was a V-shaped line of bubbles in the water. The guide kept the bow of the raft in the center of the “V” because it showed us the best way down the rapids.

As Christians, we also have a line that shows us the best way to live. It is a line of faithful people. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews lists more than fifteen people who overcame through faith. Their faith was passed down through the generations. Each one of us has our own faith line. It may be that the Christian faith was passed down to you by your parents, grandparents, or other family members. Maybe your friends helped you find faith in Christ.

For me, I find my faith line in my family. I am extremely thankful for the people who passed down the knowledge of Jesus’ love to me. Some of my family members continue to show me how to live closely to the Lord. Others have died, and I can imagine them cheering and rooting for me from the grandstands of heaven as I live out my Christian life. Who do you have in your faith line? Is there anyone who is cheering you on from the heavenly grandstands? Praise God for the people who have passed down their faith to us!

PRAYER

We are so grateful, Father, for those who have shared your love with us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

FILLING OUR NICHE

1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 14-27

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (v. 7)

THERE ARE TWO generations of ministers who stand behind the communion table of the church I attend—my dad and grandfather. As I watch them serving the sacraments, I wish I could follow in their footsteps and become an ordained minister. God knows that particular ministry is out of my reach, but he still has given me an important place to serve.

Paul compares the Christian community to a human body. God created each part of the body for a necessary purpose. He made every person to serve in the body of Christ. It doesn't matter if we teach Sunday school, rock babies in the nursery, or serve at a funeral lunch; every job is essential to the body. Even though I cannot follow the legacy of my father and grandfather, I am glad that I can serve the Lord and his body, the church, through my writing. Every time I get a letter or a word of appreciation about them, it makes me realize that the Lord is using me in his service.

Have you ever wished you could serve God in a bigger way? Paul says every assignment God gives you is a significant one. As we each serve the Lord in our own ways, we are working together to accomplish Christ's purpose here on earth.

PRAYER

Lord, when we feel our service is insignificant, help us realize that everything done for you is important. Amen.

SPIRITUAL PICK UPS

Mark 2:1-12

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic,
“Son, your sins are forgiven.” (v. 5)

“HEY, WHERE ARE you taking me?” I imagine the paralytic yelling that as four men lifted his bed. These loyal friends cared for their disabled buddy enough to bring him to Jesus. Even the packed house didn’t deter them from their mission. They hauled him up the outside stairs. Making a hole in the roof, they lowered him directly in front of Jesus.

The paralytic must have felt good about his friends’ love and acceptance. I know I did when friends made it possible for me to attend our church men’s retreat. They helped me dress each day and eat my meals. They carried me in my wheelchair to an upstairs meeting room. You may not need to depend on someone to physically bring you to Jesus. Yet we all need others to come beside us to encourage us, pray with us, and bring us closer to the Lord. Those who come beside us in such ways pick us up spiritually. They are just as effective as those four men who carried their friend to Jesus.

These men must have made quite a racket on the roof. Despite all the commotion, Jesus didn’t get irritated. Instead, I imagine him greeting the intruders with a gigantic smile. Jesus has the same reaction whenever we help someone get to him. His heart fills with joy at our faithfulness. Join me in looking for ways to lift others up and bring them to Jesus.

PRAYER

*Open my eyes, Father, to those to
whom I can give a spiritual pick up.*

YOKED WITH JESUS

Matthew 11:25-30

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.” (v. 29)

WHEN WE ARE AT a restaurant Mom usually feeds me. I am sure when some people see us they think, “Her son must be a burden on her.” Admittedly, I do need a lot of care, and it does get wearisome at times. My parents get tired of helping and I get really tired of having to be helped!

Jesus realizes that life is difficult. His prescription is for us to take his yoke and learn from him. Yokes harness two animals together so they’ll share the work. Despite its appearance, it is not a torture device but actually distributes the load. The same is true with Jesus’ yoke. He doesn’t ignore and abandon us; instead, he longs to lighten our load and share our burden.

When we take his yoke upon us, he might not take our problems away but will give us the grace to handle them. When I get sick of the whole ordeal of my cerebral palsy it helps to look at it as Christ does. He sees it as something he can use to bless others and make me more like him. If your problems are crushing you, Jesus is waiting to help. When we give him our hardships, he will give us the strength we need. With Jesus our burdens are lighter as we handle our problems yoked with him.

PRAYER

*Thank you, Jesus, for making my burdens
lighter as I team up with you.*

WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?

Exodus 4:1-17

Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he replied. (v. 2)

I FIRST SAW AN ADAPTED computer at an abilities expo where products to assist disabled people were displayed. Soon afterward God provided my first computer through a gift from a Lion's club. So when God nudged me to start writing devotionals, he had already given me the tool to get words down on paper.

God likes to work through what we already possess, when we place ourselves at his disposal. As a shepherd Moses probably didn't have very much, but he did have a plain old staff. His stick became anything but ordinary as an all-powerful God used it in miraculous ways. Moses raised his staff and the Red Sea divided. He held his staff in his raised hands and the Amalekites were defeated. When he used it to strike the rock at Horeb, water gushed out for the people to drink.

I am sure that Moses at first had trouble believing that God wanted to use him and his staff. After he said "yes" to God, God used Moses and his rod to bless a whole nation. Is the Lord asking you, "What do you have in your hand?" Let him use it! You will be amazed what he can do through you, with what you already possess.

PRAYER

Lord, all that I have is yours; use whatever I have to make me a blessing.

A CORD OF THREE STRANDS

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

You are better off to have a friend than to be all alone, because then you will get more enjoyment out of what you earn. (v. 9 CEV)

SOLOMON, THE WISEST person on earth, considered everything under the sun and determined that most of it was distorted and meaningless. About relationships he concluded that in life it is best to have friends who work with, walk with, and care for us. As a physically disabled person, I am grateful that God has given me such good friends. It doesn't matter if it is opening a door, turning a page of my Bible in Sunday school, or feeding me a snack. I know I can count on them to help.

Life is so much better when we have friends, especially when our friendships include the greatest friend of all—Jesus Christ. In verse 12, Solomon talks about the strength of a cord of three strands. I believe that this third strand in the cord of friendship is Christ himself. I am extremely grateful that Jesus called his disciples “friends” (John 15:15) because without his love, forgiveness, and support we have no hope of a satisfying, abundant life here or in heaven. May we always do all we can to strengthen our bonds of friendship with each other and with Jesus.

PRAYER

*Jesus, thank you for my friendship
with you and with many others.*

A FAITH ASSISTANT

Judges 4:1-16

Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go;
but if you don't go with me, I won't go." "Very well,"
Deborah said, "I will go with you." (vv. 8-9)

AS SOMEONE WHO has grown up with a disability, I am grateful for the various assistants who have helped me. There were helpers in physical therapy who positioned me in my wheelchair, teacher's aides who were available to answer my questions, and note takers who made it possible for me to succeed in college classes.

The prophetess Deborah was a faith assistant for a Jewish general named Barak. Through Deborah, God summoned Barak to defeat Sisera, the captain of the Canaanite army. At first he was reluctant to take up the challenge, but after persuading Deborah to go with him, Barak accepted the Lord's assignment. Even though God would rather have had Barak exercise faith and go fight Sisera on his own, his hesitation did not disqualify him from being used by the Lord.

Whom has God used as a faith assistant in your life? Maybe it was your parents. Or could it be that pastor whose sermons challenged you? It does not matter how many "Deborahs" we need to encourage us on our faith journey. What is important is that we end up with a strong faith—and help others to do the same.

PRAYER

*Thank you, Lord, for people who are kindling
faith in my life. Help me to help others.*



The Laman clan: Steve between his mom and dad; brother Mark, his wife Abby, and their daughters Grace and Audrey. Daughter Elise has since joined the family.

EPILOGUE

“When [healing] didn’t come,
I had to make a choice.”

POWER IN WEAKNESS

2 Corinthians 12:1-12

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (v. 9)

PRINTED ABOVE IS my life verse, where God promises to give power in weakness. I need that because sometimes I get discouraged. When I do, remembering that God has worked in my difficulties is a great comfort. He has shown his power in the devotionals I write, in the occasional talk I give, and just in my joyful attitude toward life.

This was not always my attitude. Like Paul, I have pleaded with the Lord for healing. When it didn't come, I had to make a choice. I could let what I couldn't do sour me, or let the Lord give me the grace I needed to handle my disability and change my outlook. I chose God's grace. Paul made the same choice. Even though his affliction was not healed, he rejoiced in knowing that God could work in his situation. I am not at all glad that I am disabled, but I am overjoyed that God's grace is sufficient, and that his power is at work in my life.

Have you ever wondered what God can do with your weaknesses? Give them to him and you will be surprised. If he could use Paul, if he can work in my life, then he can definitely use you. When he does, you will know that his power is made perfect in weakness.

PRAYER

*Father, your grace is all I need.
Your power is strongest when I am weak.*



Steven Laman
“My grace is sufficient.”

