

Brain Injury Awareness Devotional Book

By Steve Love



This devotion book is dedicated to all who live their life with a brain injury but do not let their brain injury run their lives.

I like to mention those who have encouraged me in my life and the writing of this book.

Philicia L. Deckard Executive Director of the Brain Injury Association of Illinois, she is always there for us who have to live life with a brain injury. She puts her whole heart/mind into helping us adjust to this life. It is more than a job for her it is a way of life helping and making a difference in lives within the state of Illinois.

Ginny Lazzara, Board Chair of the Brain Injury Association of Illinois, who spends her time working with Philicia to make a difference in the lives of the brain injured of Illinois.

Christ Hess and everyone at the Peoria area's Brain Injury Group, their caring and loving concern for Barbara and me has made a difference in our lives. Helping us to adjust to living with a brain injury through their example and becoming role models for us.

The members of the Fulton County Brain Injury Support Group for their help in making a difference in our committee and helping Fulton County to be more aware of brain injury.

Barbara my wife, and our three children Elizabeth, Nathanael, Andrew, grandpa's pal Asher, grandpa's little girl Reagan, and my youngest grandson Cruz who has shown me love and compassion. Letting me know they still need me in their lives.

God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit for they are a vital part of my life. I thank and praise God for ministering to my heart/mind/soul and using me to be able to help others even with my brain injury.

Brain Injury Awareness Month

Brain Injury Awareness Month is the Month of March. This book is design for the Month of March. The 31 days devotions are not dated, so it can be use at any time in the year. The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control "estimates that at least 5.3 million Americans, approximately 2% of the U.S. population, currently have a long-term or lifelong need for help to perform activities of daily living as a result of a TBI."

The number of 2% hold true for any population. I attend the Church of the Nazarene, which reported a membership of 636,296 for the U. S. in 2005, which would reflect approximate 12,726 Nazarene in the U. S. would be living with disabilities because of brain injuries. Brain injuries happen to the Christian and too the non-Christian. You can do the math for your domination and community and see the true scope of brain injuries we are face with in the U. S. When you see the vast number in relationship with your church and your city, then it will become more real for you, and you will want to do something about it. 1.5 million People this year will assent a Traumatic Brain Injury. When compared with the other know known dieses and injuries, it is overwhelming. I was not enlightened about brain injuries until the day I receive mine. Brain injuries takes in more then the just those with TBI. Millions more add each year through Acquired brain injuries.

There are 50,000 deaths each year from a TBI. Brain injury is the number one cause of death for those 40 and younger., and those over 65. Every day a child will die from a brain injury because they did not wear a helmet riding a bike. Approximate 2,685 children under 14 will die from a brain injury this year. 25% to 40% of abused children will surfer a Traumatic Brain Injury. Sadly, many of these death and brain injuries could have been pervaded.

Became a Brain Injury Advocate and make a different in the life of a person with a brain injury and their family. Please help your community to be more informed about brain injuries. To learn more about Brain Injury Awareness Month and how to become an advocate please contacts the Brain Injury Association of America at 1-800-444-6443. Web sites to help your church to know about brain injuries, Brain Injury Association of America www.biausa.org and Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center . www.dvbic.org

How big is your God?

I have a quote framed hanging on the wall near my desk by P. L. Liddell, "You are not discouraged unless the situation you face seems bigger than the God you serve - how big is your God?" My God is bigger than my brain injury and He is helping me ever day to be able to handle my life as a survivor. This devotional is to help us to forces on God who is greater than our Brain injuries.

No where in the Bible is word brain is found. The words heart and mind are found through out the Scriptures the heart was seen as the central point and the seat of man's physical, mental, and spiritual life. The brain in man fulfills this task. The Hebrew and Greek language uses the same word that could have been translated as heart or mind. The brain is the physical home which controls our physical, mental, and our spiritual life. My brain has been damage because of my brain injury, but my mind is still intact. I have trouble with my brain allowing me to complete some of the tasks I would like to be able to accomplish, but I still have the full use of my mind.

Debate about the housing of man's soul has been going on now since the fall of man. I have read many accounts about the home of the soul being in the brain. If it lies within man's brain, it could be house in the area that is calling the Inner Brain. The Inner Brain lies deep with in the brain and acts as a gatekeeper between our spinal cord and our cerebral. Studying the job of the inner brain reminds me the roll that soul plays in man.

God is our maker, and He has made us like Him. He is a Triune God. We are a triune being we have a body, mind, and soul. We had to work with the different kinds of therapies to help us to reclaim use of our bodies and minds. What of the soul? This Devotional Book is design to help us to touch the spiritual side of our nature. I pray that it will also help you to answer the question we must all answer in our lives. How big is your God?

To learn more about God, study His book, the Bible. You can not reach Him on the web but though prayer. Good news His serve is never down. It is never too busy. It is never unnamable. He is a 24/7 God.

Day 1

Romans 8:26-27 (New International Version)

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

Paul gives the person with a brain injury some very good news. Depending on where the brain was injured the ability to express thoughts, feelings, desires, and needs is very difficult. We are not able to find the words we need. At times we hear the wrong words or at times we can not find the words we want to use. My brain has this problem. It is very frustrating when you can not find the words you want to use. I am glad that God knows what is in my mind/heart.

Many who have damage to the brain can not even speak, even though their mind is intact and working. Many of them must use communication charts, pointing to the right square to express their needs and desires. Some survivors can't even use written notes or technology to give a voice to their thoughts. There is no way they can communicate with their family, friends, or anyone. Yet they still can communicate with God. This is very good news.

Paul knew that even those who do not have a brain injury can have problems expressing their thoughts to God. There are times we just do not know what to say. In times like this Paul tells us, "We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf. The Spirit searches our heart/mind and knows us. Because He also knows the very mind of God is why He can intercede for us. This is great news.

I might not be able to communicate with others, but I am very thankful that the lines of communication between God and me are still open. Following the prayers of others is sometimes hard, especially in a formal church setting. But God can talk to us anywhere and is able to touch our heart/mind/soul. He can work on our behalf helping us to live a meaningful life.

“He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the

Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.” The Spirit of God is interceding on our behalf. It is God’s will for all believers for the Spirit to make intercession on their behalf. This is wonderful news for those of us who with a brain injury. It is good news that God can communicate with us no matter the extent of our brain injury.

Pray and thank God that He is still able to communicate with us.

Pray and thank God for the Spirit who intercedes for us.

Pray and ask God to help us to be more understanding with others when we are having problems communicating with them.

Day 2

1 Samuel 16:7 (New International Version)

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Samuel went to the town of Bethlehem for the purpose of anointing the next king of Israel. Jesse had 8 sons; one of them was to be appointed king by God. The seven oldest sons were there to meet the prophet. When Samuel saw the first-born son Eliab, he was ready to anoint him king, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord." God knew what the prophet was thinking and told him, "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

God rejected the seven oldest sons. The prophet asked Jesse "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse's youngest son was not at home, but out taking care of the family flocks. Jesse did not think that David was important or anyone who would be of any interest to God. Nevertheless, David was the one who was anointed to be the next king. God does not see us as men see us. God knows us for who we are. He does not judge us by the way we look, nor does he judge us by our brain injuries. God knows me. He can help me and my family deal with problems arising because of my brain injury.

Many people do see and judge us by our brain injury. Some can not deal with our injury. They just want us to be the way we were. Statistics tell us that 90% of our friends will drop out of our lives after a brain injury. Many do not understand the facts about brain injuries nor are they willing to take the time to get to know us all over again. But it is worth the time it takes. It is worth the time to get to know the remarkable group of people who are brain injury survivors.

Our minds are not damaged just our brains where our minds live. It is through our mind/heart that God can talk to us and to minister to us. He will never leave us, nor will He be part of the 90% that will drop out of our lives. He will be with us and always help us meet the demands that our injuries have placed upon us.

Those we meet might judge us unfairly but not God. He knows us for who we are. He looks at our heart/mind and knows the whole truth about who we are. We might be able to put a mask on to hide who we are from the world or even from our family and friends. But we cannot hide the truth from God. The world sees us only in our physical form, God looks beyond the physical to the very depth of our heart/mind/soul.

Pray and thank God for being a personal God, who cares for us and takes care of us.

Pray and thank God for all the people who are still a part of our lives.

Pray and ask God to help us to be a person who can show people how to live a meaningful life.

Day 3

1 Kings 19:3b -9 (New International Version)

He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." 5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." 6 He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

7 The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. 9 There he went into a cave and spent the night.

Elijah had just completed the challenge on Mount Carmel with the prophets of Baal to put to rest the question who God was truly. Was the true God the God of Elijah or Baal the god who King Ahab and Queen Jezebel served? The nation of Israel would have no doubts about who was truly God by the end of the contest between the God and Baal. Even though God won that day, Jezebel still planned to end Elijah's life.

Elijah was tired from the events of the day. He was drained physically, mentally, and spiritually. He was afraid for his life. He knew all too well what Jezebel was capable of. In our scripture today we see that God took the time to allow His Caregiver to the nation of Israel the down time he needed. God fed him, allowed him to sleep, and gave him the time he needed to be spiritually renewed.

The caregivers and family of a person with a brain injury do a wonderful job helping us live a meaningful life. They work hard seeing to our need's day after day, but at what cost to them? Their life rotates around the needs of the person with a brain injury. Even when they are at work, shopping, or doing the many tasks of the home and family, they can not leave the worry and burden they are carrying for the person with a brain injury.

We need to make sure our loved caregivers and family members take

quality time away from us. They need time to be renewed physically, mentally, and spiritually. My wife is a wonderful caregiver. She does get tired of dealing with the problems which affect the family and me because of my injuries. I know she needs time away from me. She needs time for herself to help her grow as a person. She needs to take the time for herself, for her church, other family members, and to spend time alone with God. When she takes the time to fulfill these needs in her life, she becomes a better wife and caregiver. God helped Elijah by giving him down time. In the same way, our caregivers need down time away from us.

Pray and thank God for the caregivers we have in our life.

Pray and thank God for the members of our families.

Pray and ask God to help us make sure our caregivers and family members take the time they need to help them be the person God wants them to be.

Day 4

Matthew 6:19-21 (New International Version)

19 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Jesus had just instructed His disciples on how they should pray. He then begins to teach about having the right concept of God and man. He tells us, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal" We live in a world where storing up treasures is an art form. The modern reality shows on TV are based upon man's greed for treasures. They will do the most outrageous things, for what, fame and money,

On 9-11-2004 I came within one breath from death. That changes the way one looks at what is truly important in this life. My God, my family, and my friends in that order, they are my treasures. Five years before that day I became a person with a brain injury, the medical knowledge that allowed me to survive was not available.

Next to my computer screen is a photo of my grandson Asher, Reagan and Cruz were born after my Brain Injury. What a treasure they are to me. Money and the needs that life puts upon us are real. Medical bills alone just do not stop. I am sorry to tell you many do lose their home and anything of earthly value is taken from them. We must learn the lesson that Jesus was teaching his disciples. We need to store up "treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

What are the treasures we store up in heaven? Souls are the answer. As we look towards God and the things of God, we invest in is our soul and the soul of others. We must help others and focus on the how we can help them. When we are spending the mental energy on helping others, we do not spend the

time focusing on the problems that are facing us. Helping other not to become apart of the group of people with a brain injury is one of my goals. Being an advocate for brain injury awareness is helping the person with a brain injury and their family to be able to handle this life that we must live.

Our souls, the only part of man which is immortal will live in heaven were God our greatest treasure lives. Our soul and our mind are link together and for now are just residing in our brains. Jesus tells us, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." If our treasure lies in Heaven with God, our heart/mind/soul will be in Heaven with God.

Pray and thank God for our value treasures, God, family, and friends.

Pray and thank God for His help in providing for our physical needs.

Pray and ask God to help us to bring comfort and meaning to someone else today.

Day 5

Proverbs 16:1 (New International Version)

1 To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the reply of the tongue.

John Wesley wrote, "Men can neither think nor speak wisely and well without Divine assistance." We are to live life and make decisions to the best of our knowledge. If God changes them that's OK. The Living Bible Paraphrased states, "We can make our plans, but the final outcome is in God's hands."

For some of us making decisions is very hard. At times I must drive my wife crazy because I can not make even the simplest decisions of life. My family's life was changed by my unplanned accident, but life is still going on. Plans need to be made. We must always allow God to change them, and when He does, they always work out better than we could have imagined.

Our brain injuries were not in our plans. No one wakes up and says, "Today would be a good day to get a brain injury." Yet many of us now deal with the brain-injured- life. We see the life we are now forced to live and wonder how our lives can have any meaning. Why should we make any plans beyond our crisis and rehab? How can we fit our brain injuries, our life into God's plans for life? The good news is God still has a plan for our lives. Our lives can still have meaning.

Our lives do have an impact on those around us. The question is will our life impact them positively or negatively. Will the plans we are making affect our lives for the good or for the bad? Making no plans is a negative plan. God wants very much to be apart of our plans for this life. Are we dead or alive? Alive is to make plans for our lives.

I am alive. He is taking care of my needs. We have his assurance that He will work everything for His and our good. Romans 8: 28 "And we know that

in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." We need to continue to make plans. God will let us know if they are the right ones for us. We just need to take the time to listen to Him.

God will share with us what His plans for our lives are. He will speak to our heart/mind what He wants us to do. Listening and waiting for God to share His plans is not an easy task. God has a plan and a timeline in mind. As we listen, He will show us how and when to act.

Pray and thank God that we are His and that He has a plan for our lives.

Pray and thank God that He loves us and wants only what is best for us.

Pray and ask God to help us making decisions.

Day 6

1 Kings 3:11 - 12 (New International Version)

11 So God said to him, since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, 12 I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.

One night God came to Solomon and said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." What to ask for? Anything he wanted to ask God for he could. How many of us would love to have that opportunity? What would you ask God for? What did Solomon asked for, "Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

God was very pleased by what Solomon asked for, "discernment in administering justice." And He then tells him, "I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be." We all know Solomon for his wisdom. God gave him a "wise and discerning heart/mind."

Wise and discerning heart/mind is what we must seek. We need to make wise choices in our lives. Brain injury does not help us to make wise choices. Just like with young kids, who must learn how to make the wise choices, we also must learn all over again. At times there is almost a battle going on in my head. When first released from the hospital, if I wanted to go someplace and no one could take me, I would start out on my own, no thought of the danger and no thought to the wisdom of listening to my caregivers.

Most of us had to learn the social skills we once had. Many times, I would say what was in my mind/heart. I did not know that I should just keep them to myself, I am sorry for the hurt feeling and pain I brought many people. If they had a not to flating outfit on, I told them how bad they looked in it. My wife, who understands the problem I am faced with, helps me to understand what was wrong with my choice of words. One day she had a new bright orange shirt. Did I tell her she looked nice in it, no, I said "you look like a big pumpkin today."

Solomon asked for “a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.” We need to ask the same thing from God. A heart/mind that is discerning and able to distinguish between right and wrong. When we seek and want this God will give it to us. We will not have the Wisdom of Solomon but will have the wisdom we need to live our life.

Pray and thank God that He has the wisdom we need to live life.

Pray and thank God that He will help us to make the right choice in our life.

Pray and ask God to help us to think before we say what is on our mind and to keep quiet when we should.

Day 7

Matthew 22:37 (New International Version)

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

Jesus tells us to "Love the Lord your God." Your God means a personal God, one with whom we have a relationship. Just like any relationship, a relationship with God needs to be maintained. We maintain our relationship with our friends by spending time together, talking and interacting in person or by phone or email. We love to go over to our friend's house to spend time with them. We talk and interact with God through prayer. In this world, we spend time with God by reading the Bible and going to church. Someday we will live with Him in His home, heaven.

Jesus tells us we are to love God, "with all your heart and with all your soul and with your all mind." The people who were listening to Him saw the heart, mind, and soul as interrelated. By linking the three – heart, mind, and soul – Jesus tells us that our entire being is to love God. Because we have our heart/mind/soul intact we can love God the way Jesus told us. Our brain injury does not stop us from fulfilling this command of Jesus.

The life of a person with a brain injury is filled with limitations. Many who have a mild brain injury will be able to live their life without any restrictions. Life for them goes on like nothing has happened. Many others of us must fight to maintain any type of normal life. What is a normal life?

Wheelchairs, canes, walkers, feeding tubes, and many more devices help us live a "normal life." Much of our mental energy is spent on simple tasks. Limitations hinder us from doing most tasks that the "normal" individual gives no thought to. We do have limitations we have to address in our lives. The one area which is free from limitations is our love for God. We still can love Him with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with our entire mind.

We might not be able to follow formal worship services like we once did. The ventilator which helped me breathe and kept me alive in my coma also

damaged my vocal cords. I can no longer sing the songs of praise and worship. But I can still hear the words and allow them to minister to my heart/mind/soul. None of my limitations can stop me from worshiping God and loving Him. We can have a personal relationship with God despite any limitations.

Pray and thank God that we still can love Him.

Pray and thank God for the personal relationship we have with Him.

Pray and ask God to help us with the limitations that we face.

Day 8

Proverbs 16:23 (New International Version)

A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction.

Proverbs say a "wise man's heart guides his mouth." In the heart/mind we find what wisdom we possess. Some do have more wisdom than others. That's a fact of life for people with or without a brain injury. What is important is how we use the wisdom we do have. The words we speak show the quality of our wisdom. Intelligence is no measure of true wisdom. Intelligent people without brain injury often lack wisdom to make the good choices in life.

The heart/mind filled with wisdom guides our mouth. We who have a brain injury know that the words we speak do not always show the wisdom we have. Our brain does not allow us to allow us to "speak our mind." We might have problems communicating what our minds want to say. I have trouble finding the words I want to use to express my ideas. At times my brain puts another word in place of the right word in what I hear or say. In conversation, I can fall behind as I struggle with what I thought I heard or what I meant to say. My injured brain gets in the way of what I want to say.

As children, we had to learn how to respond to others when they spoke to us, and now we had to learn anew. Our brains do not help make the right choice in all situations. We must rely on those around us to help us make the right choice. We can learn from them, and our wisdom will increase. Our wisdom is seen through what we do, "and his lips promote instruction." Instruction or teachings, comes to our lips from a wise heart.

What are you teaching or instructing? We are now an expert, one we would not have chosen to become, but we are an expert on brain injuries. We are the ones who can share with other about what it is like to live with a brain injury and how they can avoid becoming a person with a brain injury. We also know God and have expires His great love. I know the only reason I am alive today is because of my wife Barbara's and other prayers. I know that the life I am

now living should not have happen for me. The best I should have achieved is living life in a comatose state. It is though prayer of others and that I believe God has a task for me in this world. Today I can have a life with meaning.

The task He has for me. "A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction." Instructing others about God and bring awareness about brain injury is the work God wants me to do. God did not cause me to have a brain injury, but He can use my knowledge of Him, His word, and brain injury to "promote instruction."

Pray and thank God for the wisdom He has given to us and how He can use us to help other.

Pray and thank God for His love and care for us.

Pray and ask God to help us in the instructing of other about God and brain injury.

Day 9

John 19:25-27 (New International Version)

25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing near by, he said to his mother, Dear woman, here is your son,

27 and to the disciple, here is your mother. From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Jesus was nailed to the cross and was about to die. He sees his mother, his aunt and two other women named Mary. John the brother of James, one of the sons of Zebedee, was standing near his mother. Jesus tells his mother "Here is your son." He then addresses John telling him "Here is your mother." Being the oldest son of Mary, it was Jesus' reasonability to the needs of Mary. From that day on, John welcomes Mary as part of his family and saw to her needs.

Like all mothers, Mary met the needs of Jesus, his brothers, and sisters when they were young. Our parents are the first caregivers we have in life. Today many parents are still the number one caregiver for their adult child with a brain injury. The needs of the person with a brain injury are overwhelming and can become the focus of the home. As the person with the brain injury, we add to the problem. We do not mean to do it, but we do. It is hard for many of us not to have a self-centered focus.

Our caregivers do have needs. I might not understand their needs; they are different from that of the person with a brain injury. Some of their needs are the same one we face. The caregivers need someone who understands the problems they face. Support groups are a vital help for the person with a brain injury and their caregivers. A support group that ministers to the emotional needs of both the person with a brain injury and their caregiver becomes their lifesaver. I work with two support groups. It is a wonderful blessing when someone new comes and you see in their eyes that they now know they are not alone. The person with a brain injured helps the others who have a brain injured. The caregivers help the caregiver that is beauty and the idea support group.

Even from the cross, Jesus saw His caregiver, His mother and remembered

her needs. Jesus made the provision to meet those needs for Mary. We survivors need to take his example to heart/mind, make it part of our long-term memory and see to the needs of our caregivers and loved ones.

Our caregivers need to recharge their personal lives by spending time away from us. Many married couples do not stay together after one of them receives a brain injury. The pressure and demands on them become to overwhelming and the only way they can think to save themselves is to seek a life away and to separate themselves from the injured. Parents find their once married injured survivor now their responsibility. Out of love for their adult child they renew their role as the primary caregiver. Some parents in their 60's and 70's is still their child's main caregiver. We need to remember our caregivers' needs; they need time away from us and we must see to it that they have some. We must allow them the time they need and do what we can help them meet this need in their life. Jesus remembered his mother Mary while hanging on the Cross. We need to remember the needs of our caregivers.

Pray and thank God for the caregiver who love us and show their love by meeting our needs.

Pray and thank God for His love He has shown to both the person with a brain injury and the caregiver.

Pray and ask God to help our caregivers to take personal time away from us, help them not to worry about us, and give them the help they need.

Day 10

Nehemiah 4:6 (New International Version)

So, we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the king Artaxerxes I, the son of Xerxes who formed the Persian Empire. One day one of his brothers who lived in Israel visited Nehemiah. Nehemiah wanted to know the news of their homeland and quickly asked his brother about his home and the lives of those who lived there. His heart/mind was greatly upset when he heard and had finally understood the plight of Israel.

The king helped Nehemiah to go back to Israel and gave him the orders he need to help rebuild the city of Jerusalem. He was able to help the people see that they could rebuild the walls and their lives. Each one had the task of building the portion of the wall near where they lived. Nehemiah notes, "we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart."

Our lives, our family life, at the time we had our brain injury seem very much like the walls of Jerusalem. Broken and scattered we were just waiting for someone to come and rebuild our lives. God use Nehemiah to help the people to what they could do to help bring about rebuilding the walls. God use the people who entered our live from the EMS team, doctors, nurses, Therapists, minister, social worker, and neurophysiologist to help rebuild our lives.

The wall was rebuilt when the people had the heart/mind to see it rebuilt. The ones with a brain injury and their family need to come to term with what has happened to them. We all go through the grief process. First, we live in the state of denial. Anger follows and we want to know why me? Slowly we start to accept it and start rebuilding our lives. Sadly, too many near moves beyond the denial stag. It is only when we have the heart/mind to rebuild a life that we will be able to build one.

The lives we build are the one, we chose for ourselves. If it will have meaning and make a different to our homes and committees it is by our choice and no one else. We are in control of what we make of our lives. We do not

have to allow our circumstances to dictate to us what kind of life we will live. We chose, we are the ones who decide to have a predated one or non-predated life. Yes, our lives are not what we hope them to be. It is up to you to choose if you live life or just exist.

The people who work with Nehemiah, who had a heart/mind to work made a big different in their home comity. We can make a different in ours. It is in our home city and county, we can and will have the greatest impact. Canton Illinois and Fulton County is becoming more aware about brain injuries. I spend a large amount of my time trying to raise the awareness of brain injury and how to avoid becoming a person with a brain injury. My life is one of meaning and is making a different in Canton and Fulton County. What about your life?

Pray and thank God for everyone who had played apart helping us to rebuild our lives.

Pray and thank God that we might have to live a life with a brain injury, but the brain injury doses do not dictate how we chose to live it.

Pray and ask God to help us to live a life that will have meaning for us, our family, and our committees.

Day 11

Romans 8:18-21 (New International Version)

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

C. S. Lewis in *Perelandra*, the second book of the interplanetary adventures of Dr. Ransom, show us what life might have been like if Adam had obeyed God and did not eat the forbid fruit of the tree of Good and Evil. The world which we live in for now is one of imperfection deformed from the original one God created for us. It is because of the fall of man and its consequences that we have illness and disease, among them brain injury. Paul tells us that "The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope."

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." The hardship and suffering of living a life with a brain injury is very real and I do wish I did not have to live it. I wish my car accident never happened. I am now a person with a brain injury, not because I was a bad person and desire it. It is not God's fault; He did not cause my accident. It is from living in this in perfected deformed world we must live in for now.

Paul tells us that our "present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." He is talking about the life, which is to come, living with God in Heaven. Life there can not be compared to life here. We are told that we will know and be known in Heaven. In this world, in this life, we are restricted by the informative of this world. In the life which lies before us we will be free from those informative. I will not have to live with or use my cane and eye patch in Heaven. I will be free from the restrictions I have to deal with every day because of my brain injury.

What will it be like for us, to see those who are confined to a wheel chair to walk? To talk with one who for now in this world has no ability to speak to us. Look at the problems you for now must deal with everyday in this life. Look

at all the aids you must use to try to have a 'normal life" and think about how they will not have to be used ever again once you are in heaven. When we force our thoughts on the life which wait for us with God in Heaven we have hope and faith to help us to face today. Like Paul we will "consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

Pray and thank God for the life that awaits us with Him in Heaven.

Pray and thank God for His love and the help He gives us to live in this in perfected deformed world.

Pray and ask God to help us to live life forces on the world that awaits us and not just forces on the life we are force to live in this world.

Day 12

Psalm 117 (New International Version)

1 Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples.

2 For great is his love towards us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures for ever.
Praise the LORD.

Praise the Lord, the palmist instructs us to Praise the Lord. Many might wonder how a person with a brain injury can praise the Lord because of our circumstance. Our praising God does not depend on the circumstance of life. Our ability to praise the Lord is based on who God is to us. We can praise Him when we have money in the bank, and we can praise Him when we are flat broke. We can praise the Lord no matter what our state of health might be. My praising God is based on mine relationship with Him.

I praise God because I am alive. I am still living that is a big reason to praise Him. 9-11-2004, I came very close to having that being my last day in this world. The time I have with my family and friends is another reason to praise God. My life's values have change. The items I once treasure and saw important to have a meaningful life do not exist for me. What is the treasure I hold to have value and meaning? It is my relationship with God, my family, and my friends. It is for those relationships that I still process bring out my praising God.

Today is a great day to take inventor of the items in our lives which should cause us to issue praises to God. The palmist give us his reason to praise the Lord, "For great is his love towards us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures for ever." God's love for us is great. His loves for us impact us everyday as we live. A friend of mine John Simpson, who has been battle cancer for years and within the last year was discovered that he now has a brain tumor. John's outlook about his cancer is an inspiration for every one of us. John gives praise to God because of the love and the faithfulness God shows to him every day. John tells people that he is in a win win situation. If God heals him and allow him more time that great for, he has more time to share with his family, friends, and more time to share with other about the love and faithfulness of God. If I die, John explains he wins, for he will be living with his God and enjoying heaven.

As Christian who has a brain injury, we can praise God. We expire His love and faithfulness everyday of our lives. The sad fact is to many do not see how God is showing us His love and faithfulness. All they see is their circumstance. If we just force on our circumstance, we will become bitter, sad and lonely for no would want to be around us. Look beyond your circumstance and see God, see His love for you, and see His faithfulness. It is only when we look beyond our circumstances and forces on God and our love ones that we can and do Praise the Lord.

Pray, praise, and thank God for His love and His faithfulness.

Pray, praise, and thank God for our family and friends who relationships with us help to bring meaning and love within our lives.

Pray and ask God to help us to be an inspiration to other around us all who we have contact with.

Day 13

Acts 9:26-28 (New International Version)

26 When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. 28 So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

After his conversion, Saul/Paul went to the city of Jerusalem to join the disciples. But the disciples did not believe he had been truly converted. They saw his becoming a Christian as a ploy to arrest them. They would not take the time to see the person Paul had become. Barnabas saw Paul for who he truly was, and he was the only one from the church in Jerusalem to reach out to Paul. This made a difference for Paul and for the Church.

The person with a brain injury and their family can relate and can totally understand what Paul was facing. Many of the people who were an important part of our lives before our injury have dropped out of our lives. They do not want to take the time to get to know us as we are now. In many ways, we have become a different person. For many of us, the person we were died the day we were injured. Often, even members of our extended families cannot accept the new us. They want us to be the way we were.

I know that I am not the same person I was before my brain injury. It has taken time, but my family has accepted who I have become. I know they still miss the old me, but they have moved on and gotten to know the new me. My friend James tells me that he really likes the new person he has become. Many of his friends and family would agree with him. I did not know James before his brain injury. I know that the James I have gotten to know is a wonderful guy, one worth the time it takes to become his friend.

Those who drop out of our lives are the losers. They rob themselves of knowing the remarkable person we have become. It hurts when we lose those who were our friends and loved ones from our lives. The sad fact is 90% of our friends and acquaintances will drop out of our lives. I have made many new friends who have invested themselves into becoming part of my life. We

might not be the same person. We might have different likes and goals in life. It is good to focus on those who chose to be part of our new life. We need someone like Barnabas who took the time to invest himself in the life of Paul in our lives. We need those who will take the time to invest in who we are now.

Pray and thank God for the family and friends who have remained part of our lives.

Pray and thank God for all the Barnabas' in our lives.

Pray and ask God to help us to be a Barnabas in someone else's life and help our family and friends to be able to handle the new person we have become.

Day 14

Mark 4:38-41 (New International Version)

38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, Teacher, don't you care if we drown?

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, Quiet! Be still! Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40 He said to his disciples, Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?

41 They were terrified and asked each other, Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!

Jesus has just finished a busy day ministering among the people of Israel. He fell asleep in the boat as his disciples sailed across the Sea of Galilee. A storm came upon the boat which frightened even those among his disciples who fisherman by trade. They have sailed these waters in all kinds of weather. They were frightened and so they woke Jesus and asked him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

Jesus calmed the water and the wind died down by as command. The disciples asked themselves "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" Jesus asked them "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith? " We must look at our lives and answer that question Jesus asked his disciples. Every thing in our life has change and we are in mist of a great storm. Do we have faith or no faith in God? If we have faith in God, then why are we afraid?

Storms are a part of every life. In our own strength, it is hard to ride the storms out. God gives us the strength to overcome our storms. No one is prepared for a life with a brain injury. When the call comes that a love one is being taken to the hospital, no one thinks about a brain injury. Even at the hospital, as the terms head injury and brain injury are being used by the doctors and medical staff, the full understanding what those words mean for our life escapes us. We have read novels and seen movies and TV shows where it all works out, and the patients are perfectly 100% better when they wake up from a coma caused by brain trauma. We all know that is not the reality. Even a mild brain injury can cause long term problems. We are not ready financially, mentally, or emotionally to handle life with a brain injury. Like the disciples we want to cry out to Jesus, "don't you care if we drown?"

Jesus does care about us. The storm of brain injury we face can be raging all around us, yet we can have a calm heart/mind. It is Jesus' Presence in our life which helps us through our storm. The disciples had not come to a full understanding of who Jesus was. We need to understand Jesus and our relationship with him. The disciples call him teacher; they did not yet see him as the Christ, the son of God who was capable of all things. How do you see Jesus?

Pray and thank God for the help and peace He gives us as we go through the storms in our lives.

Pray and thank God for His love to us and being with us as we face our storms.

Pray and ask God to help us with all the problems that arise because of the storm in which we find ourselves.

Day 15

Proverbs 3:5 (New International Version)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart." This is great wisdom. Trust has become a vital part of our lives. Many have never trusted anyone let alone God. Reliance, care, position of obligation, and a hope for the future are the elements of trust. Reliance is our confidence in and dependence on others fairness, truth, honor, or ability. When we trust others to help us with our care, we give them the responsibility to take good care of us. When we give someone a position of obligation, we expect them to behave responsibly or honorably. Hope for the future means we will have a hopeful reliance on what will happen in the future because of the trust we give to others.

We have given our trust to our Doctors, Nurses, and Therapists. We know they are more knowledgeable than we are in their area of expertise. They have our trust. Having spent time in the hospital on floors where the staff does not know anything about a person with a brain injury was a to my recovery hindrance. These medical people did not understand my needs and how to respond to them. I quickly lost my confidence and trust in them.

We have learned we can trust in God. God keeps all the promise He makes. I spent 18 years working in retail. One of the biggest sellers was an item with a lifetime warrantee. The problem was the company which backed the warrantee went bankrupt and the lifetime warrantee was no good. God is everlasting and His promises have an everlasting lifetime warrantee. How are we to trust God? We are to use all our heart/mind.

People mad a distinction between head knowledge and heart knowledge. Having the facts is not the same as living the life which makes sense and meaning out of the facts. Head knowledge is having the facts. This process of making sense and meaning of our lives is heart knowledge. We know the facts of who God is and how God works. It is only when we make those facts a vital part of the way we live life that accept we then can put our trust in God. Our heart/mind allows us to trust God and aspects His judgment when in comes to our lives. At this point in our spiritual life with trust in God we no longer "lean

not on your own understanding."

Many people lean on their own understanding and can not put their trust in anyone let alone God. Their life becomes one where their stress level increases and their ability to cope decreases. The more their coping ability decreases the more stress is added to their lives. It only when we trust in the LORD with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding, that we will have the ability to successfully live life with a brain injury.

Pray and thank God for being the One whom we can trust.

Pray and thank God for how He provides for us by meeting our needs.

Pray and ask God to help us trust Him with our whole heart/mind and to give us the ability to cope even in our stressful times.

Day 16

Luke 10:38-42 (New International Version)

38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.

39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!

41 Martha, Martha, the Lord answered, you are worried and upset about many things,

42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.

Jesus and his disciples came to the home where Martha, Mary and Lazarus lived. Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening as he talked with his disciples. Martha being a good hostess was distracted by the many preparations she had to make. A meal for at least 15 people required many preparations. Think about those times when you served a holiday meal or one for a large gathering. All the work you did. Now think about doing it without all the modern-day appliances we have at our disposal. So much needed to be done and who was helping Martha? No one. Her sister Mary who normally would help was just sitting in the other room with their guest. Martha was upset and asked Jesus to tell Mary to help her.

How many of us see ourselves in Martha? The many tasks of living, taking care of the home, seeing to the paying of the bills, the list go on and on. There is no end to the problems a family must deal with every day. Add to that list living with a person with a brain injury. No one can prepare for that life. There is a popular misconception that when a person is dismissed from the hospital, they have made a full recovery. We know the truth. Especially for a brain injury survivor, life is far from normal.

So much needs to be done and there no one to help. The pressure builds up, the worry increases; the needs are real and overwhelming. Martha could not handle the pressure of their tasks. She did right to turn to Jesus for help. She told the Lord how he should help meet her needs by telling Mary to help her. Jesus answered, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed." How many can put their name in place of Martha? Jesus told her she only needs one thing in her life to help. She needs to take time out of her life and do what Mary did. She needs to spend time with Jesus, talking with him and listening to him.

We need to spend time with Jesus. When we focus on our tasks, putting all our energy into them, we become overwhelmed. We become like a battery running low and out of power. Soon we do not have the power we need to be able to handle our tasks and our lives. We need to be recharged. Spending time with Jesus is the only way to recharge our heart/mind/soul. When we take the time to spend with Jesus, we will be able to face our problems with His strength instead of our own. We will be able to have a calm in our lives because we have a personal relationship with Jesus. We take the time to talk with him and allow Him time to speak to us too. Then we will have the strength to live life, even one which includes a brain injury.

Pray and thank God for His son Jesus who is with us giving us the ability to face and deal with our problems.

Pray and thank God for being there and for all He has done and is doing on our behalf.

Pray and ask God to recharge our battery given us the power we need to meet the demands of life.

Day 17

2 Corinthians 4:6 (New International Version)

For God, who said, Let light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

March 17th is a day to wear green. It is a day in which you can show pride in being Irish. Saint Patrick's Day will bring many images of how the day is celebrated in our community. Did you know that Saint Patrick was not Irish? He lived in Ireland twice, once by force the other time by choice. The first time Patrick went to Ireland was as a slave. He was taken from his homeland by Irish slavers and sold in Ireland. He finally escaped from his slavery and returned home. Years later as a priest in the church he chose to go back and take the Gospel message to Ireland. Patrick chose to take God's light to the world which enslaved him. Patrick believed in our verse for today – that God's light could shine in darkness through Christ.

His light shines in our heart/mind/soul giving us knowledge of God and Jesus. God gave us light, beginning at His creation. He wants us to know Him and to know His son Jesus. He shines His light into our heart/mind/soul. What is the light He shines? Paul tells us it is the light of knowledge. Knowledge of God and Jesus allows us to realize our need for God to live in our lives. When God lives in our heart/mind/soul we become a beacon bringing the light of God to others who are in need of His light in their lives. That was why Patrick went back to Ireland. He went back to let God's light shine and penetrate the darkness which existed in the land which held him in slavery.

Patrick allowed the light of God to shine through him. He made a great impact on Ireland. With God's help and His light shining through us we will impact those around us. We can let His light shine so others can see how God is with us helping us handle our lives. We can bring hope and understanding to others who are coming to terms with life with brain injury. Support Groups allow us to get the help and understanding we need. They also allow us the chance to help others who need to know that living with a brain injury need not stop someone from living a meaningful life. A support Group allows us to become a role model, to bring enlightenment to others about life with a brain injury. I am very thankful for my role models I have had.

Green is a special color in the celebration of Saint Patrick's Day. Green is also a special in bringing light to living with brain injury. The ribbon which represents Brain Injury Awareness is green because it represents the new life and the growth, we experience in our rehabilitation process. The ribbon stands for the journey we must travel living a life with a brain injury. I wear a ribbon and a green wrist band every place go. I want to do my part in bringing awareness about brain injury to every one around me.

Saint Patrick let the light of God shine in Ireland. We must let His light shine through us. Children sing the song "This Little Light of Mine." The message of the song is simple but one we must take to heart. We need to let the world see and to know God. His light can shine through us into the lives of others

Pray and thank God forgiving us His light.

Pray and thank God for the support groups and role models who are help us and our families has we live with brain injury.

Pray and ask God to help you let your light shine in your community.

Day 18

1 Chronicles 28:9 (New International Version)

And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you for ever.

He gives instructions to his son Solomon to be the same. David had served God with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind. He knew that his son was to carry on the work God wanted done in Israel and Solomon would need these qualities to succeed. David has learned and he wants Solomon to know that “If you seek him, he will be found by you.”

With the instructions given Solomon are good one for us to follow. We need to serve God wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind. Wholehearted means 100% of our heart/mind is to serve God. When we give God 100%, we give Him the control of our lives. David wanted Solomon to give God total control of his life. David had learned this fact the hard way when he chose to rebel earlier in his life. A willing mind points to the idea that we make the choice to give God the control of our lives.

By giving God control of our lives, we are showing our trust in God. We trust God to show us the right choices for our lives. We trust God to provide for our needs. We trust God to give us the strength we need to deal with life with a brain injury. When we give God wholehearted devotion and a willing mind we are giving ourselves to God.

God knows when we hold back on giving Him 100% devotion. David tells Solomon “The LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts.” God knows our heart/mind and the motive behind our way of thinking. He knows what is in our heart/mind and the why behind our actions. There is no fooling God. Human parents know when their children try to hide something. God sees within our heart/mind, and He sees us for who and what we are. No one else can see the true us but God.

Too many people try to deceive the world and themselves about who they really are. God knows who we truly are. David knew this fact and wanted his son to understand it. David gave God control over his life. David wanted

Solomon to give God 100% control of his life to prepare him for the task that God had for him to do. Even though we are living life with a brain injury, God has a task for each one of us that needs to be done. Only when we have given God control of our lives and given Him 100% of our lives can He use us to complete that task. Who is in control of our life?

Pray and thank God for the fact He know the true us and so He know how to help us.

Pray and thank God for taking control of our lives and for being a God who we can trust.

Pray and ask God for a understanding of the special task He has for us to do.

Day 19

John 6:8-9 (New International Version)

8 Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, 9 "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

A vast crowd of people follow Jesus to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee. John tells us “a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick.” Jesus asked his disciples testing them where they could find food to feed the great crowd. We are told that the number was 5,000. In reality the crowd was much larger than 5,000. When attendees were taken at this time of history only the men were counted. Women and children were never counted, that did not mean they did not have value.

Philip quickly told Jesus, “Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!” Philip was trying to show Jesus how vast a problem it would be to feed the crowd. Andrew spoke up, “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?” The boy’s mother packed him a lunch of five small barley loaves and two small fish. We tend to think in terms of how our loaves of bread we have today. The boy’s loaves of bread were most likely the size of our biscuits we buy in tubes of 10 from the stores. His two 2 fishes were the about the size of sardines.

The miracle we call the feeding of the 5,000 would never have happen if the boy did not share his lunch. He was not even counted in the number that was feed. The boy allowed Jesus to work through him by giving Jesus his lunch. The boy could have said to Jesus no this was the lunch his mother packed it for him to eat. The boy could have looked at his lunch and looked at the crowd and laugh telling Jesus no way his lunch would feed this crowd. The boy had chooses and he chose to give his lunch to Jesus. Jesus used his small lunch and brought about a great miracle.

We are just like that boy. We can hide ourselves away. Stay home afraid of people think and wondering how they will react to us. Many people that day on the shore of Galilee thought yea boy give him your lunch I am hungry and laugh at him. There was a time when anyone with disability was hidden away from sociality. Many who have a brain injury want to hide from the world. It

is a fact of life that there are curl people in the world. They do not represent all of humanity just the uneducated. If we hide from the world how will the world know the truth about brain injuries?

We are the most knowledgeable ones about living life with a brain injury. The boy shared his launch with Jesus and the crowd and made a different. Only when we share ourselves and the knowledge, we process we will make a different. The boy made a different when he got involved. It is our choice to be involved to make a different or hide. How will you decide?

Pray and thank God for His compassion for us and how He meets our daily needs.

Pray and thank God for the people who choice and made a different in our lives.

Pray and ask God to help us by giving the strength we need to make a different in our world.

Day 20

Exodus 13:14 (New International Version)

"In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.'

All thought out the Bible God gives instructions to Israel to remember. Moses is told that when the next generation asks the why they do this and that when it comes to their religious faith to tell them. Many of us do not know the why behind we worship as we do. We live in a world it is taken for granted that most every one can read. That was not always true. Many of the items which decorate the church were items use by the church to teach the Gospel story.

Many churches have 3 allies in their sanitary. The pulpit sets in front of the church in the middle of the center ally. Behind the pulpit is a cross hanging on the front wall of the church. In the days when only a few could read the sanitary told the Gospel story. The three allies stood for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The center ally stood for Jesus and leads to the pulpit. The first pulpits used by the church were coffins turn upright. The coffin spoke of the death of Jesus on the cross to baring forgiveness of sins. How many of us take note of our sanitary and the meanings of the layout?

God want His people to remember the works He had done in the past so they could trust Him for their future. The sad notes when reading the Bible is they forgot and turn their backs on God. You can say they had a memory problem. We know all about memory problems. A common thread we who had a brain injury no matter where the brain was injury is a memory problem.

I have a bad memory problem. I can answer a phone call and by the time I hang the phone up I have forgotten who call and who the call was for. I have a distal recorder that I call my memory. It works great when I remember to us it and to revere back to it. Notes are great if one remembered to read them. It is a problem we all had to find some means to help us. Israel had a memory problem. God was always trying to help them to refine the memory.

At times He had them to build an altar or moments as visual aids. A striates which we have adopted in our family. He had them celebrated the different times when God had done something great for His people. The Holladay's in the Bible were started not to have a party with lots of food. They were supposed to be a way for Israel to remember the great things that God had done for them. Even their home devotions time was sent up as a way for God to help them to remember. God had many ways and ideas to help His people with their memory problems.

It is hard and very flustering dealing with a memory problem. When I see someone, I know their face. I can even see how I know them, from where I work, the place they work at, the neighbor, and church. This summer I saw a man who I have known for 30 years but his name was erase from my brain. Many of us make a joke about our memory problems. A friend of mine when he forgets something will say, "You think I have a brain injury with a memory problem." We need to work on our memory. God found ways to help His people. God is there for us as well; we just must remember how God has taken care of us and go to Him in prayer.

Pray and thank God for his love for us seen in the way He is providing for us every day we live

Pray and thank God for the fact He cares about us and is helping us to deal with our memory problems.

Pray and ask God to give everyone who we have dealings with to be understanding about our memory problems.

Day 21

Ruth 1:16-17 (New International Version)

16 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."

Ruth's husband, brother-in-law, and her father-in-law had all died. Ruth along with her sister-in-law Orpah and her mother-in-law Naomi sent out on a journey towards Judah. Naomi told her two daughter-in-laws that they should return to their father's home. Naomi loved her daughter-in-laws and only wanted to do what was in their best interests. At this in history in the culture of the Mid-east the brother of the widow's husband married her to provide for her. Because Naomi had no other sons for her daughters-in-law to marry, she told them they should return to their father's home. Orpah took Naomi's advice and returned to her father.

Ruth wanted to remain with Naomi. Ruth understood that Naomi's life was going to be a harsh one and out of love for her she was not going to leave Naomi. Ruth declares, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God." Ruth chooses to take upon herself the caregiver's task out of love for Naomi. That is the reason behind our families taking on their role as our caregivers. It is because of their love for us they gladly take upon themselves the task of helping us who have become a person with a brain injury.

I know my wife has been told by several well-meaning people that she should just place me in a nursing home. She out of love tells them no, she will do everything she can to provide for me at home. Some do not have that choice, their loved one needs around the clock trained nursing care. They would love to have their loved one at home. Because of love for the person with a brain injury left them with no choice. The best thing of them is a nursing home. They just do not leave them and walk away. They are there for them, spending many hours with their loved one. The family heart is broken; the desire to have them at home never goes away. God only knows the tears that are shed for their loved one that no longer sleeps in their rooms, set in their favored chair, or set down to a meal around the family table.

Year ago, when living in Wauneta Nebraska I got to know a lady in the local Nursing Home. One day she was crying and wanted to talk with me. It was almost Mother's Day and she had not seen her daughter and granddaughter for 5 years. She wants to see them but did not have much hope that this year would be any different. I did not know what to tell her. I did not know if her family would remember and come to see her this year. I spent time and just listen to her and then I prayed with you. Before leaving to go home I talked to the staff about this ladies' family. I was told that her daughter and granddaughter lived just 3 blocks from the home. They told me that the daughter had told them she just did not have the time to come and see her mother.

I praise God that not everyone is like her. It hurts the family to have to put a love one in a nursing home. They would love to have them at home share the joys of home life with the family. I glad many because of their love my family has take upon themselves the tasks of doing everything in their power helping me to have a normal home life as part of the family. You the families/caregivers are the Ruth in our lives making a different in our lives. I want to thank you for all you are doing for all of us who have a brain injury at home and in nursing homes.

Pray and thank God for everyone in your family.

Pray and thank God for the Ruth's in your life who is standing by at your side helping you to face life.

Pray and ask God to help the families who must put their love ones in a nursing home. Ask God to be with them giving them strength they need for it hurts them to see their love ones there and not at home.

Day 22

Psalm 143:5-6 (New International Version)

5 I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands

have done.

6 I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.

God's love and care for the world has been felt and seen through out history. "I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done." The Bible is the stories of God's love and His care for us. We need the miracles and the stories of God to become part of our long-term memory. So, we meditate on His works by spending time studying the Bible.

By reading the Bible and gaining understanding of God lead us to praise His. In Sunday school we learned and teach young children to sing, "Praise Him, praise Him, all you little children God is love. God is love." The message is not just one for children, it for every one of us. "I spread out my hands to you," we left our hands in praise.

The question is asked of us, how can you praise God and living a life dealing with a brain injury? God did not cause our brain injuries but He with us helping us to deal with our lives. It is only through prayer of my wife and other I am alive today. The fact that I can think and able to write this book is because of God's love and care for me. I should still be in a coma. It is through God's grace and an answered to the prayer that were left up to God that I am as good as I am. No matter the state of our wellbeing we could be worse.

I know were in the brain is injury took place effects what shape and disability we must face every day. No two brain injuries are alike. Why some we have a mild brain injury and other have a server brain injury? There are many questions which can not be answered. By studying the Bible and seeing how God had worked for His people in the past and seeing how God is working now in our lives, we can give praise Him.

"My soul thirsts for you like a parched land." Knowing God's love and care for us makes our soul/heart/mind want more of God in our lives. Droughts come and the land, the plants, the trees, and the flowers wither and die without

water. Rain comes and the land is renewed. The presence of God in our lives, working in and through us, we grow in our knowledge and understanding of God. Our soul/heart/mind sings “More about Jesus would I know, More of His grace to others show; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me.” Because our soul/heart/mind knows God, we can pray and ask God to help lift our hands in praise to Him even living a life with a brain injury.

Pray and thank God for the way He has shown His love for us by taking care and helping us everyday.

Pray and praise God for being a God who touches us to the very depth of our soul/heart/mind.

Pray and ask God to help us as we face the hardship of living a life with a brain injury.

Day 23

Luke 18:1-5 (New International Version)

1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' "

The Parable of the Persistent Widow is the story of someone who would not give up. Luke tells us, "Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up." Life is not always fair. Problems and difficulties are a part of life. Andrae Crouch's "Through It All" talks about how we could know that God could solve our problems and show us His love if we never had any. It is only in times when life is hard that we grow in our spiritual life with God.

Living life with a brain injury is a hard and troublesome time for us who have one. It is not fair that we must endure the pain and sufferings it brings to us and our families. I could not control the circumstances that lead to me brain injury. I did everything right, but I still have a brain injury. Many if the just used a helmet or seatbelt would be living without a brain injury. My seatbelt did not stop me from having a brain injury, but it keeps me alive and give me the chance to have a life.

The women in Jesus' parable kept going back to the Judge to plea her case. He gives in and makes sure she had justice not because he thought she desired it. He gave her justice just to stop her coming before his court. She would not give up. We must not give up. We need to push ourselves to beyond what is easy and comfortable. There is never a grain unless we push ourselves to make a grain.

In therapy I was told that I was push to hard. I was never happy. I wanted to achieve a high-level high for myself each day. I was just stubborn and would not give in to the voices which were telling me it was ok for me to remain where I was in my struggles for as much as a normal life I could reach. Even today I push myself physically and mentally resulting in growth in my

recovery. Our brains might be injured but we still have our mind intact, and it needs to be exercised daily.

Jesus wanted the disciples to have the minds set to never give in to keep doing the job that God had for them. When you read about the lives of the disciples you take note that they took this lesson to their heart/mind. They remain true to their task and remain true to God. No matter what life throws at us we need to remain faithful. Paul writes in Romans 8:38-39”_For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Never give up just pray.

Pray and thank God for the way He is taking care of us and is providing for our needs.

Pray and thank for the problems we have faced in our past that has made us to grow in our spiritual walk with God.

Pray and ask God to help us as we face problems to give us the strength we need and the help to exercise our mind and our bodies.

Day 24

Deuteronomy 30:6 (New International Version)

The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.

Moses wants the people of Israel to have a heart/mind/soul like God's heart/mind/soul. He wanted them to have the ability to love God with all their heart/mind/soul. Moses understood that all of them need to have a heart/mind/soul like God to be able to live and to have a life with meaning. He knew that this desire could not stop with one generation but had to be passing on to next generation.

It is God who touches our heart/mind/soul giving us the ability to love Him with all of our heart/mind/soul. Love Him with all of our heart/mind/soul give us life. God's way is simple; it is man who has tried to find another answer to live. All we must do is what Moses told his people love God with all of our heart/mind/soul and live.

What dose it means to love God with all of our heart/mind/soul? We are to love God the same why He loves us. Think about how God has shown His love to you. Remember the times in your life when the only thing you had to relay on to see you through your problems was God's love. God's love is real, and I have experience it in my own life. His love made all the different when problems manifested themselves. We are to love Him in the same way He loves us.

God has never asked someone to do that which they could not do. If tells us to love Him with the same maser He has shown us love, then we can do it? It has nothing to do with having the problems of a brain injury as part of our lives. It might seem to us at times that the problem of dealing with a brain injury controls our lives at time. Yes, there are times it dose demand a lot of our time. Life is more then our brain injury. Loving God with all our heart/mind/soul give us the ability to live life.

In the early stages of our brain injury, life did stop and went at a slow pace. All our focus was need. God was there helping and loving us. There are times in life when we are press for time, circumstance dictate the amount of time we

spend dealing with them. Even in those harked times and harsh circumstance we still can love God with all our heart/mind/soul.

Life put a lot of demons on us. It is only when we are too distracted and do not take the time to spend with God, talk to Him, nor go to His house for worshipping Him we have problems. The danger is in such time as these within our life can stop loving God with all our heart/mind/soul.

Pray and thank God for being God, one who love us, one who has our best interest in His heart/mind.

Pray and thank God for all the time He was there for you in life.

Pray and ask God to help us never to be too distracted with our problems that we forget to spend time with Him.

Day 25

Acts 18:24-25 (New International Version)

24 Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.

Apollos was a Greek Jew from Alexandria. He had vast knowledge of the Scriptures. The Scriptures at the time in history was made up of the Old Testament. Apollos had some knowledge of Jesus and saw Jesus for who he was. His knowledge only went to the time Jesus was baptism by his cousin John. He had no magazine, no newspaper account, and no Fox's News to give him the up-to-date information about Jesus and the events in Israel.

Apollos used what knowledge he had and been teaching what he knew about Jesus. Priscilla and Aquila two of Paul's traveling companions heard about Apollos taking him under their infused explained to him the way of God and give him a deeper knowledge about Jesus. Apollos took the knowledge he gains from them and preached the gospel. He became a very well known though out of church. He was ranked up there with Paul and Peter as one of the key leaders of the church of that day. It is believing by some that he wrote the book of Hebrews.

Apollos gain knowledge and he shares the knowledge he received with others. He saw and started a minister drawing upon the knowledge he proceeds. We process knowledge of God and living a life with a brain injury. We could have done with out the personal knowledge of a brain injury, but we have it. What are we going to about the knowledge we process?

The avenge person dose not know nor do they think about brain injury. I never gave it a thought before I became a person with a brain injury. I am a fan of the TV show Star Trek. One of the epodes called Spook's Brain; you will hear the question asked of Captain Kirk, "Brain, and brain, what is brain?" When I was told I had a brain injury I wanted to ask Brain injury, brain injury, what is brain injury? It was only when I was face with living life as a person with a brain injury, I started to learn about it.

The knowledge I gain though studding about brain injury and living with

one made me what to do something to help other not to have to live life as I must live. Having a better understand about the large task of informing others about brain injuries just makes my desire to teach them greater. It just likes our Knowledge of God and Jesus. The more we understand them the greater is our desire to tell other what they have done for us personally. In cases of our knowledge of God and Jesus, and our knowledge of brain injuries we are driven to share with others.

The human nature which we all process becomes at war with our desires to help others. We see our weakness, our disability, and have no faith in our abilities to make a different on those around us. Priscilla and Aquila saw what Apollos had to offer God and encourage him. We never see ourselves as other see us. They can see and believe we can make a different. Other and God has faith in our capabilities. Is it not time that we have faith in ourselves?

Pray and thank God for the Priscilla's and Aquila's of our lives who has been there for us.

Pray and thank God for the fact He believes in us and has faith that we can make a different in our world.

Pray and ask God to help us as we share the knowledge, we process about Him and the knowledge we process about brain injury.

Day 26

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a (New International Version)

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails

The Love Chapter is how we refer to 1 Corinthians 13. Paul gives us a beautiful insight to the understanding what love is. Hollywood version of love is distorted. The problem we have today is too many people's idea of love is formed by what they have seen on TV and in the movies. To see a wonderful example of a real deep love, we just need to look at the actions our family/caregivers.

“Love is patient, love is kind.” Our family/caregivers if they did not process patient before we had a brain injury, have patients now. I stretch my wife patients almost on a daily basis. I know it is not easy on her to see me struggle with even the simple task. Memory problems alone try the patient of our family/caregivers. Having patients helps one to be kind.

“It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.” Pride led to many of our downfall in life. I do not want your help; I can do it myself. How many times have we said that, or head said to us? It is not an ego boosting event being in a hospital, nursing home, or even home care when as an adult you are force to accept the reality of not being able to the simple task for yourself. 50 years old and I was forced to have to be treated as a newborn baby. You had to be spoon feed, given baths, I even for a time I had to wear dippers and have them change by an aid. Family/caregivers must not pride stop them from doing what is right for them, the family, and the person with a brain injury.

“It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.” It is only when we allow our human nature to manifest itself in our heart/mind we become rude, self-seeking, and angry. We have no memory problems remembering the wrong someone did to us. We must like have forgotten what was done to us, what was said to us, but we still remember the emotions it steered within our heart/mind/soul. With out loves infuses on

us we are filled with the desire to hurt and to get even for the wrongs we believe were done to us.

“Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.” Over the years I have heard too many saying, “they got just what they desire.” I have seen people even in the church take great joy when someone they envy has some great reversal of their well being. It is not very Christian of them to have those kinds of feelings in their heart/mind. When we allow God’s love to fill our heart/mind it gives us the ability to love everyone. When we have God’s love in our heart/mind we will not delight in our misfortunes. We will rejoice with them for every great thing that comes into their lives.

“It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” Paul now tells us what God’s love which we process in our heart/mind will do for us. Our families/caregivers process them in great qualities. The love we process will help us to protect those we love and those who come into our sphere of influences. It will give us the ability to trust. We have hope. I have seen it in the lives of the person and their family/caregiver the hope that something will happen to make their ability to cope with live with a brain injury a little better. That is a wonderful gift God gives us and it helps us to persevere our family, home and the one who has suffered a brain injury.

Pray and thank God for His great and wonderful love He has placed within our heart/mind.

Pray and thank God for the gift of life He has given to us indivisibly and as a family.

Pray and ask God to fill our heart/mind with His love and with the love we process make a difference in someone else’s life today.

Day 27

1 Samuel 1:12-15 (New International Version)

12 As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. 13 Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk 14 and said to her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine."

15 "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD.

Hannah on one of her family visits to the Tabernacle of God was praying. She had a need which many today can not understand. She was not able to become pregnant. In that time in the history a woman who could not have children was scorn by society. Hannah took her need to God.

Eli the priest took note of Hannah as she was praying. We note that she was praying in her heart/mind/soul. Her lips were moving but she did not vocalize her prayer out loud. We do not have to use audio words for God to hear our prayers. People do not have to respond the same way we do to pray to God. What we all must do is pray in our heart/mind/soul.

Eli when he saw Hannah thought she was drunk. We who must live with a brain injury know what it is like to be accusing of being drunk. Brain injury can mimic drunkenness. I carry with me a card I attend from The Perspectives Network (www.tbi.org). It does not relieve me of reasonability, but it helps to show authorities why I act in the manner I do. I would urge everyone who has to life with a brain injury to have one.

Hannah prays in her heart/mind/soul, some revere to it has praying in the spirit. It is when we are praying with every part of our being we touch the very heart/mind of God. God hears every pray we send Him with words or with out words. God know every motive behind our prayers. He knows when we pray out load if we are talking to him or just saying words to get the praise of men. What does it mean to pray to God?

When we pray to God we are talking to God. Couples, friends, family members and one who we are close with we talk with different then we do with those we do not know. There are those we can talk to about anything. We can share with them our deepest desire, wishes, and dreams. We know our secrets are safe with them. We know that they only want what is in our best inters so

we listen to their advice they give us. We trust them, they care for us even when we do something just plain dumb. We take great pride and having someone like that in our lives. God want that type of relationship with us.

We can have that style of a relationship with Him. We need to follow Hannah's example and learn to pray in our heart/mind/soul. Like all relationship it takes time to build that relationship we want with God. Think back to the relationship you have forged in our life. Was your best friend, the one who you share the deepest thoughts and dreams they type you have now from the start? Pray to God in our heart/mind/soul we will have that type of relationship with God.

Pray and thank God for all the people who are always there for us to share our deepest desires with.

Pray and thank God for being a God who we can have a real quality relationship with Him.

Pray and ask God to help us always to be able to pray to God in our heart/mind/soul.

Day 28

James 3:13-15 (New International Version)

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.

James the Less, the half brother of Jesus, the writer of the book of James asks a question, "Who is wise and understanding among you?" What a question to ask. Do you see yourselves as somebody who is wise and understanding? Does this fit the description of someone who know. James knew that wisdom comes from God.

In his own life James was not always wise. The wisdom he processed leads him and his brother to talk about having their older half brother committed. James was not a follow Jesus until sometime after Jesus ascended back to heaven. He alone with his brothers and sisters did not understand, they were confused about their brother Jesus' teachings and actions.

Wisdom true wisdom comes from God. The world thinks the wisdom it has to offer is just as good if not better then the wisdom of God. Paul understood this when he wrote, "For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength." Everyone who the world calls a genius and holds their opinions in such high esteem can not compare to God. God wisdom is a much greater and better wisdom for us to follow.

God's wisdom is made available to each and everyone of us today. As student at Olivet Nazarene University, I attend College Church of the Nazarene. It was because of one reason; Bill Damper was pasturing the church. His sermons, the way he brought depth to each text he chooses was something I marvel at. Bill Damper unknown to him became one of my role models. My way of speaking was formed by emitting three people's style and forming one of my own. Their example made a large impact on me personal. The three men, Bill Damper, Jim Diehl, and Dwayne Ray by sharing their wisdom and showing me how to do it, help me to become the speaker and the

person I become.

The three of them had a relationship with God and drew on the wisdom they learned from God to make an impact on me and other they had touch personally. I learn by spending time with these 3 men of God. We only learn to understand and come to process God's wisdom by spending time with God. We can and should educate ourselves about the different items of the world which impact our lives. I spend a lot of time studying and get a deeper understanding about brain injuries. God want us to be informed to help us and to allow us to help others.

Man is learning more each day about the brain. There is hope that many of the Acquired Brain Injuries will become an event that only happen in the past. Would not that be great medical science find away to stop some of those brain injuries from accruing? There hope that medical science could lower the effect of a Traumatic Brain Injuries. As great as medical science is there is a limit. They only can find out about how the brain work and how they might someday repairer the brain someday. God created man's brain.

Pray and thank God for His wisdom He wants to share with us.

Pray and thank God for the role model who were part of our lives pointing us to God the source of their wisdom.

Pray and ask God to help us to rely on His wisdom, because God know what is best for us. Pray to ask God to allow us to become a role model for someone else live that we can point them to God.

Day 29

Psalm 73:26 (New International Version)

26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Asaph a Levite and one of the leaders of David's choir wrote this Psalm. "My flesh and my heart may fail," Asaph notes how weak our flesh and our heart/mind and how it is prone to failure. As human beings we do not have the strength or the knowledge to successful 100% of the time. Try as we want, we are going to fail and most likely letting someone down who is counting on us. Asaph understood this fact.

As there been a time in your live where your "heart was in the right place" but what you were doing fail? The saying "heart was in the right place" is something people tell us knowing we meant to do something positive, but we could not do it no matter what we did. Failure is part of life. How do you handle your failures in life?

Failure for some gives them an ague to give up. Before I have only my brain injury, I had dyslexia. We know about dyslexia today and most schools have programs to help the children who have dyslexia. When I was in public school, I struggle to pass my classes. I knew I was smart, but I could not spell or write. When talking to my high school counselor about going on the college. His words still ring in my ears today. He told me that, I was "too dumb to go to college." I should "go and get a job as a janitor and be happy with my life." I went to college class were hard it took me five years to get a C in freshman comp to pass the course. I had the case to given up and drop out of college every time I fail that class. If I did, I would not have my college degree today.

There are times when failure happen in life one can not overcome. We do not have the knowledge to fits everything in life. Something just can not be repairer no matter how hard we try. There are times when thing is out of our control and someone else must solve the problem. We just must wait. We can not force someone to behave the way we believe how they will act or respond in any given situation. Then time just runs out before we can find the solution. It is in times like this we can understand Asaph was saying when he

wrote, “My flesh and my heart may fail.”

Asaph gives us the answer to handle these times is our life. “God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” God is the answer. When God touches our heart/mind/soul; He give us the strength we need to help us when things of out of our control. Every one of us needs God’s strength when brain injury became part of our lives. Life gave us something we had no knowledge to fully understand what was happening. Someone else was given the problem of making designs on our behalf. Life has change for us and we were just alone for the ride. In these times of life, we need the strength that God alone can give us.

Not only can we have the strength of God, but Asaph tells us that He is “my portion forever.” My portion is personal; it tells us that we can have God as part of our life forever. We might not be able to handle what life troughs at us but we can have God’s strength and know that He is a personal part of our lives forever. We need to turn everything over to Him. Like Asaph we know it is beyond our abilities to fix things, but God can and He can help us to exact the things we can not change. He is there for us forever apart of our lives.

Pray and thank God for Him being apart of our lives, helping us to handle the problems and difficulty we that happens to us.

Pray and thank God for the strength He gives us to live life even with the problems that might come our way.

Pray and God to help not to look at our problems we face until we look to Him and put our trust that He will help to face them and deal with them.

Day 30

1 Peter 4:10 (New International Version)

10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others.” Everyone has a talent they can share with those around them. Some believe they possess no talents, but they are mistaken. Talent is more than the ability to act, sing, or paint. Our society forces on those who possess talents to entertain us but there are other types of talents we can share.

What is your talent? One of the sad parts of a brain injury, it can attack the brain in a vital part of the brain that controls somebody's talent. I have a friend Mark who had a tumor removed on the lower right side of his brain. Before his brain tumor he played in a band; music was a large part of his life. The gift of music and the ability to share that gift he possessed was removed from him. I know he misses playing in a band and would love to be able to share that talent with the world. That one talent was taken from him, but he still has talents to share with the world.

Mark might be able to share music with the world around him, but he has other gifts that are a vital part of his interactions with others. He knows a lot about computers and is willing to help others to solve their computer problems. This is a talent and I know those who help appreciate the help he renders them. Mark also has a wonderful way when he talks to people that makes them feel comfortable and helps them to open up to be able to share with a group. He had been a wonderful blessing to have in our local support group.

There are many talents we possess we can share. Some know how to fix items around the home and the car. A mechanic has a gift that has a great impact on the world around him. When you watch one from the window that gives you an opening to the shop, you can see those who are virtuosos when it comes to our car. The same holds true for those who are plumbers, electricians, carpenters, seamstresses, cooks, doctors, and the list goes on and on. Each and every one has some type of talent they can share, and a brain injury does not have to bring an end to our sharing our talents.

In the 1970's a saying was used by many of the Christian teenagers, "The only ability God asks of you is your abilities." That was what Peter was addressing our abilities to use the God-given talents we possess; to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." We have a responsibility to use our talents and having a brain injury is no excuse we can use when dealing with God.

Many are afraid to share their talents. They are afraid that others will laugh and make fun of them. Many fail to see their talents as a talent they must share with others. There are many excuses we feed ourselves trying to justify to ourselves why we are not sharing with others and making a difference in their lives. That is the truth, and it goes for both, the ones who are living with a brain injury and those who do not live with a brain injury.

Pray and thank God for the talents we still possess and can share.

Pray and thank God for those who share their talents with us.

Pray and ask God to help us to discover the talents God gives us and the means to use them to make a difference in the lives of those around us.

Day 31

1 Corinthians 2:16 (New International Version)

16"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Have the ability to know the mind of the Lord. Man has dream of that form the dawn of time. Philosophers and Theologians have talked about this topic with no set answers. Paul in verse 7 writes, "we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. We speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began." God's wisdom in the very mind of God hidden from man Paul tells us He wants man to have it.

God wants you and me to know His wisdom, to know the very mind of God. When we have accedes to the mind of God then He can instruct us on the way of God. We can have instructions on how we are to live and please God in this life. He will instruct us on the life which waits for us in His heavenly kingdom. When we know the mind/heart of God we know God. When we know God then our instruction really can begin.

Verse 10 tells how we can know the mind of God. "God has revealed it to us by his Spirit." How is that possible that God reveals His mind by His spirit? "The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God." It seems to us that Paul is writing in a circler thought or a riddle. Man has not before the coming of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost the means to know the mind of God.

When the Holy Sprit came he brought with him the gift to be able to know the very mind of God. Only a Christian can process the Holy Spirit and know the mind of God. To have the Holy Spirit in ones life opens up the mind of God for us to know. Verse 12 Paul give us more insight on this process, "We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us."

It is impossible for man in his own wisdom and by the knowledge he has as a man to know the very mind of God. It is the Spirit, the Holy Spirit which opens our minds/heart to the mind/heart of God. Only then can we understand what God has freely given for us. What has God given to us? Life and a hope for our future is given to us by the other person of the trinity Jesus.

“But we have the mind of Christ.” As Christians we can not just know the mind of God we can process the very mind/heart of Jesus. What was the most inter most desires of Jesus’ mind/heart? They were to do the will of his Father, to do God’s work, and to remind faithful to God’s calling for his life. Paul tells us we have the mind of Christ. With Holy Spirit help and with having the mind of Jesus it become a simple task to know the mind/heart of God. Do you know Jesus and have the mind of Christ? Do you have the Holy Spirit in your live as a guide?

Pray and thank God for the fact we can know the very mind/heart of God.

Pray and thank God for the life we have in Jesus and His gift of the Holy Spirit to be our guide in know what God wants of us in this present world.

Pray and ask God to allow you a deep and meaningful knowledge of His mind/heart and then help us to imply the knowledge we learn to our lives.

Pray for those who live with a brain injury.

Our heavenly Father we left our voice to you
We praise you with a thankful heart and an open mind
We thank you for all the love you have shown us
We thank you for all the help you have given us
We praise you for being a God who has been taking care of us.
A God who is even now providing for all our need

I ask you to be with everyone who must live a life with a
Brain Injury and all it brings into their life.
I ask you Father to help us who must live this life
To make a difference within this world
May we show the world and help them to understand
Our brain might have been injured but we still have
A mind that is intact and we are someone
Who you can use to be an important part of their lives

We thank you and we give you all our heart/mind/soul
Use us Father to reach our communities for you and
Enlighten them about you and life with a brain injury.

Amen



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On 9-11-2004 Steve was in a one car accident on his way to work. Steve received a severe Traumatic Brain Injury. He and his wife Barbara attend the First Church of the Nazarene in Canton Illinois. Today Steve is an Artist, Author, Speaker, Survivor of a Severe Traumatic Brain Injury and Brain Injury Awareness Advocate.