

The following is an article written by Don McWhorter in a hospital room while sitting with his wife who was seriously injured in a near fatal car accident around 1970.

“Why?”

“Why?” is the most timeless and universal of all questions, as old as the first tear and as recent as the latest newscast. The answer to that complex and baffling question is in the Word of God, and that is one of the many reasons that Book is both timeless and universal. Why must there be suffering, sorrow, heartache, death, even among God’s own children? With the recent death of a dear father and the tragic automobile accident that injured my entire family, Jane so critically, I have thought about this question many times. When the accident occurred, we were on our way to our former home in Gadsden, Alabama to assist a dear friend in laying to rest the body of his mother, a Christian lady as close to Jane and me as our own family. We were driving slowly and carefully and yet someone took our lane and hit us head-on in a car travelling much too fast. Though I was insured, in case I should be guilty of injuring someone else, she had no insurance, not even a driver’s license. Two members of my family were nearly killed, and it will require at least a year for the recovery of Jane’s health. The head injury alone resulted in the fracturing of her skull in more than 200 places. Her arm, ribs, back, pelvis, and leg were broken. While we kept vigil in the waiting room of the Intensive Care Unit of Erlanger Hospital for more than a month as her life hung in the balance, there was ample time to wonder “Why?” And to the Word of God we continually went. May I share with you some of the conclusions reached?

1. *Suffering keeps this world from becoming too attractive.* Though our dwelling places here may have more permanent foundations than the Bedouin tents of our father Abraham, we are reminded that we are no less pilgrims and strangers (1 Peter 2:11). Woe to the man or woman whose life here on this earth is so pleasant that he forgets about heaven. But the affairs of this life are so ordered that this world soon loses its attraction. Most young people would like to live forever but by the time a man reaches his three score and ten he is usually happy he has been able to endure one life and is ready for something better. This world is too full of pain, grief, and heartache to be very pleasant or attractive for very long.

2. *Suffering brings out our best.* The common bond shared by families in the waiting room welded them into one concerned group. All lost many hours of sleep, all were uncomfortable, all were deeply concerned with their own problems and yet each was deeply aware of the other’s needs and did everything possible to make it easier for the others. At times I thought I could feel better if I could muster some hard feelings toward

the ones who brought this suffering upon my family. Probably under less trying circumstances these feelings could have come all too easily and yet as I searched my heart here I honestly could find no ill will. Suffering brings out our best. Jane has always been a brave and courageous woman. During this illness she has exhibited a remarkable courage, one that the doctors feel contributed immeasurably to her recovery. That ready smile was always there, and since, she has been able to talk a word of thanks and praise for all who have ministered to her.

And the best has been brought out in so many others who have shared this burden for us. For a month, twenty-four hours each day, there was always some dear friend in the waiting room to give me a chance to get some rest and to keep me company during those long, lonely hours. For a month breakfast was the only meal that had to be prepared at our house. Food was prepared and brought by the house each day by those who love us. While I didn't get to be home for many of these meals my mother and children, and on occasion, Jane's mother and father, thoroughly enjoyed them. During the week the entire family was hospitalized someone kept the children company in their rooms every day.

So many have been anxious to help share the tremendous expense I have incurred in all this. The hospital bill alone will exceed \$10,000. And then there are twelve doctors to be paid. Regardless of the expense they earned every cent and I gladly shoulder that debt. Many individuals and congregations are helping, and I know the Lord will provide a way.

Intellectually you know this is the way Christianity works and yet an experience like this serves to deepen the faith of all involved. Jane and I will never be the same and the fine congregation at Greens Lake Road has grown spiritually through this episode in a way they could never have grown otherwise. It has all been for the good.

(continued next week)