

Tuesday, March 23

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Last March, a visit with friends from Wilmington was thrown into a tailspin as the University system for which they both worked suspended in-person classes and went totally online. They finished the visit scrambling to coordinate with their departments and figuring out how to help students. We watched how they had to adapt, and as they left we settled into the new normal.

Months later, watching a report on the challenges people faced coping, I wondered why it was not affecting Wayne and I in quite the same way. I quickly realized our normal changed three years before COVID-19, when we received Wayne's Alzheimer's diagnosis. At that time our independence came to a screeching halt; he stopped driving, I stopped working, and we became joined at the hip 24/7, something that had never been part of our lives or marriage. By the time COVID-19 hit, we had gone through the stages of frustration and grief others were now experiencing. What was new was accepting help that was offered – before it dawned on us we needed the help.

Through these experiences I either learned or was reminded of several things...

- When a gift is offered, don't be prideful; accept it and savor it. Gifts given in love are God's tender mercies
 - *The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.* Psalm 34:18
 - *O Lord don't hold back your tender mercies from me! My only hope is in your love and faithfulness.* Psalm 40:11
- Trust God. I am not very trusting. Sometimes it takes a conscious effort for me to trust anyone or anything, but God is worthy
 - *Then he said to his disciples, "Why can't you trust me?"* Luke 8:25a
 - *Jesus overheard and said, "Don't be upset. Just trust me and everything will be all right."* Luke 8:50
- Don't sweat stuff. Tell God what you need (He already knows), and be honest with God. It relieves your stress, and He wants you to talk to him. Sometimes my prayer has been, "Oh, God; Oh, God; Oh, God."
 - *Don't bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need. This is not a cat and mouse game we're in...And don't you think the Father who conceived you in love will give the Holy Spirit when you ask him?* Luke 11:10-13
 - *...That's why I urge you to pray for absolutely everything... Remember it's not all asking...* Mark 11:22-26
 - *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 through wordless groans.* Romans 8:26
- And sometimes you just have to cry.
 - *You're blessed when the tears flow freely. Joy comes with the morning.* Luke 6:21