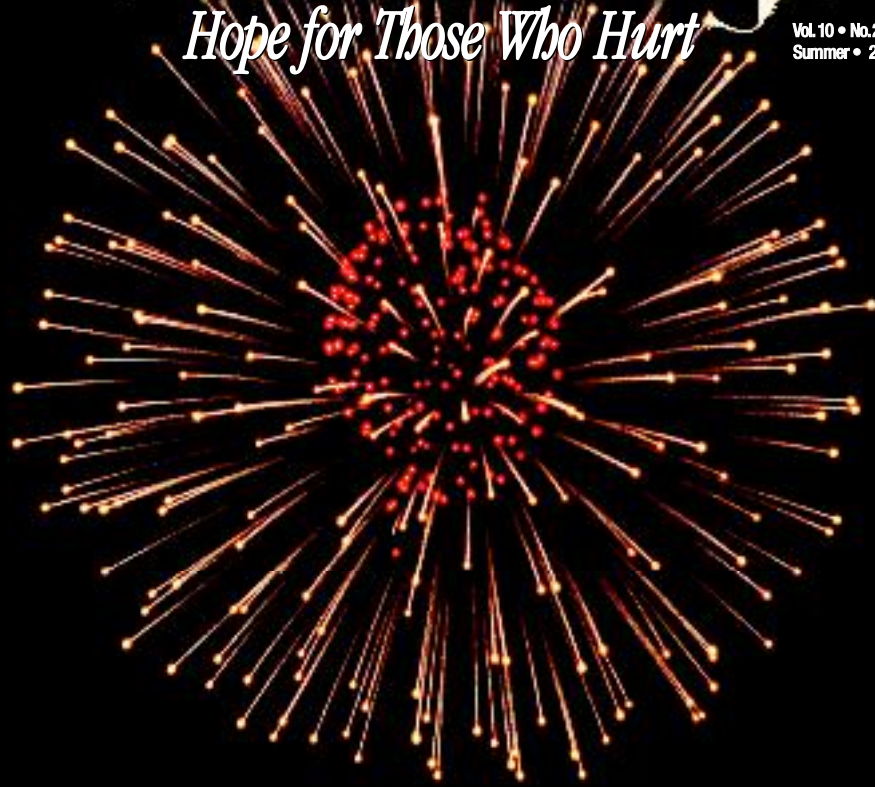


the Encourager[®]

Hope for Those Who Hurt

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Treasures in the Darkness

A PUBLICATION OF DAVE DRAVECKY'S OUTREACH OF HOPE

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I WILL GIVE YOU
THE TREASURES
OF DARKNESS,
RICHES STORED
IN SECRET
PLACES, SO THAT
YOU MAY KNOW
THAT I AM THE
LORD, THE GOD
OF ISRAEL, WHO
SUMMONS YOU
BY NAME.

ISAIAH 45:3

WELCOME

Dear Friends,

On that shocking day in Montreal when my left arm snapped in mid pitch and I tumbled to the ground in a crumpled heap of pain, I felt a surprising sense of peace and inner calm. From one perspective that day was a tragic setback to the months of intense rehab and training I endured to make my “impossible” comeback to Major League baseball. Yet strange as it seems, I didn’t feel that sense of loss.

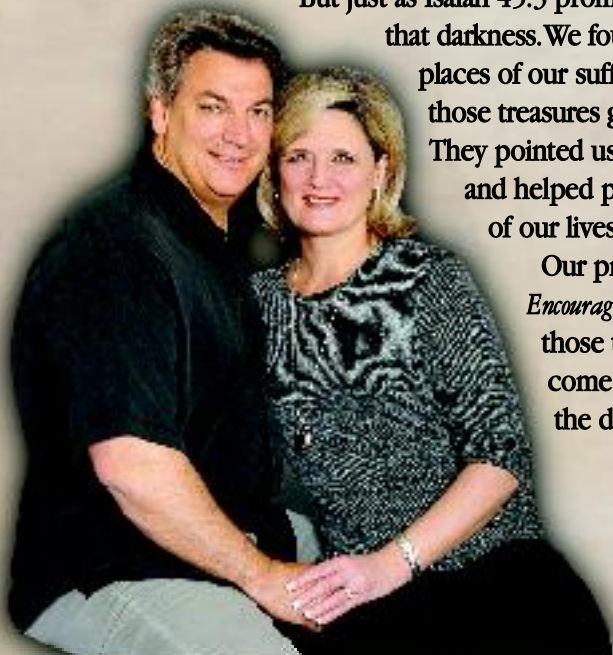
Although I nearly passed out from the pain, I had the sense that God wasn’t finished with me. Despite the uncertainty my new injury raised, I knew without a doubt that God was beginning a whole new chapter in my life. I had no explanation as to why, I had no specific knowledge of His purpose, but I knew that something much bigger than baseball was about to unfold.

The path I was destined to walk was no picnic. I never could have imagined the darkness of the valley that path would take me through. For two years I faced periods of pain and crushing disappointment as the tumor returned and my arm refused to heal. Jan suffered from exhaustion and depression. After my arm was amputated, I sank into depression as well.

The darkness of those days affected every part of our lives. The pain, sadness, confusion, and seeming endlessness of our struggle at times overwhelmed us.

But just as Isaiah 45:3 promises, Jan and I found treasures in that darkness. We found riches stored in the secret places of our suffering. Like markers on a trail, those treasures gave us hope and urged us on. They pointed us, indeed led us, to God Himself and helped prepare us for the new chapter of our lives.

Our prayer is that this issue of *The Encourager* will help you discover some of those treasures so that you, too, will come to know God better—even in the darkness.



THERE IS TREASURE IN THE DARKNESS!

by Jan Dravecky

When Dave and I first began to experience the injuries and illness that eventually led to the amputation of his left arm, I thought God would miraculously deliver us. I expected us to emerge in a few months as victorious examples of what God could do for those who followed Him. I never imagined our journey through that dark valley of suffering would last for years.

As the weeks stretched into months and then years, I became consumed by our suffering. I tried harder and harder to have a “normal” life, but I was powerless to change our situation or to understand what God was doing. As I became weaker and more exhausted from trying to “fix” everything by my own efforts, I became increasingly desperate for relief.

I wasn’t looking for any “treasure” from God. Deep inside, I was fighting God and felt completely shut off from Him. When people suggested that God might be doing something wonderful in our lives, I got angry. I knew only that I was drowning and wanted out! But in spite of my bad attitude, in spite of the things I was doing in the wrong way, in spite of my overwhelming depression, God was still at work within me. There were indeed treasures in the darkness, and He would be faithful to give them to me.

About one year after Dave’s comeback, I was in the deepest throes of my depression. From my perspective, everything was very, very black. I couldn’t make myself do anything, go anywhere, or see anyone. The three people I had depended upon most for support were Dave and my parents, but Dave was undergoing radiation treatments and had nothing left to give, and both of my parents had died. Dave’s parents were doing all they could to help us, but inside I was losing the battle. I felt totally helpless, hopeless, and alone.

That’s when I discovered the first treasure God had for me. And I wasn’t even looking for it! In fact, I was ready to give up everything and walk away from God. But when I tried to walk away, I couldn’t. Almost to my surprise, I realized there was nowhere else I wanted to go. I was just like Peter, who when Jesus asked His twelve disciples if they would desert Him, answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:68, 69).

When I realized I truly believed those words, I was thrilled! My faith was real! What a treasure! Even when I was at the end of my rope and ready to run away, I couldn’t do it because I truly believe that God is the only way to eternal life and there is no hope apart from Him. Learning that my faith was real brought me great joy and gave me hope when nothing else could. That treasure was the turning point in my experience of suffering.

Although I hadn’t realized it, suffering had tested, refined, and strengthened my faith. I discovered, as 1 Peter 1:3-7 says, that faith is far more valuable than

gold. That discovery renewed my hope and inspired me to search the Scriptures to see what God had to offer.

I have to admit, however, that my motivation for searching the Scriptures at that time was not very pure. I wasn't seeking truth; I just wanted relief from my pain. Instead, I found hope in the midst of my pain. So many times a nugget of truth came just when I was at the end of my rope, when I had no more strength even to look for hope. The hope those truths of Scripture brought to me became my greatest treasure in the darkness, my lifeline in the midst of pain. I was still in the valley of suffering, but I had learned there were rich treasures there also.

The treasures God gave me in the darkness continue to bless and enrich my life today. When God met me in the darkness, I learned that He is faithful and can be trusted. It is such a relief to know that He will care for me even when I don't have the strength to care for myself. Because He is in control, I don't have to be. For someone who tends to try to please everyone and "fix" everything, that is a great treasure!

I know that no matter what I may face tomorrow, God will be faithful. I know that far greater treasures than I can imagine await me because God gave them to me in the darkness when I wasn't even looking for them!

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.... In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1 Peter 1:3-7

**TREASURE IS NOT SOMETHING I EXPECTED TO
FIND IN THE DARKNESS. ALL I WANTED
WAS TO FIND A WAY OUT!**

JAN DRAVECKY

A TREASURE PREPARED IN THE DARKNESS

An outgoing and gregarious teenager, Michelle Dacus was president of her school's Christian Club and active in her church. She looked forward to graduating from high school and heading off to college where she planned to prepare for a future in social work. But just weeks before graduation, excruciating kidney pain sent her to the emergency room. For the next six months, Michelle's life was dictated by trips to the ER, catheters, and kidney infections.

This was not Michelle's first encounter with pain and suffering. When she was just eighteen months old, she had an advanced, life-threatening cancer that engulfed several of her internal organs. For four years, doctors tried to arrest the cancer without harming those organs. It was a delicate balancing act, and much of her treatment was experimental. Doctors told her parents that she probably wouldn't survive. Yet Michelle survived those difficult years and credits her recovery to "the doctor's wisdom and the Lord having a plan for my life."

More than a decade later, however, Michelle's life was again threatened, this time as a result of the experimental treatments that once had saved it. She needed major surgery to rebuild and repair several damaged organs. Surgery was scheduled for the winter break of her freshman year in college.

Although Michelle did not know how long or difficult her recovery might be, she remembers the drive to the hospital. "I was at peace and ready to get everything taken care of. I knew that God was going to come through and be faithful once again."

After surgery, she remembers seeing her mom's tears of relief. And she can never forget the pain. "It was as if I had lightning bolts running through my legs. It hurt so much I didn't want to move a muscle." The surgery had stretched the nerves in both of Michelle's legs, leaving her nearly paralyzed and in constant pain. "It was the most severe pain in my entire life," she says. "I would just lie there, crying. My Mom would rub my legs day and night trying to soothe the pain."

The darkness continued closing in. Instead of returning to college after Christmas break, Michelle returned to her bedroom. For the next three months she lived in pajamas, unable to walk. She was on such strong pain medication that she was barely able to eat. Her weight dropped to 86 pounds. "I was completely helpless. My Mom had to do everything—even brush my teeth. I had

a walker in my room, and with my Mom's help I would practice standing up and leaning on the walker. It took every ounce of energy I had just to do that. There I was, a lively 18-year-old who was supposed to be in college and I could barely get out of bed. I just couldn't believe how far down I'd gone."

Like many others who have walked a similar path through suffering, Michelle desperately wanted to feel God's presence during those dark months. She wanted to focus on God's Word, but she was too weak even to hold her Bible. She was in too much pain to read. "That was such a hard time mentally and emotionally. I knew God was doing something, but I didn't know what and I couldn't feel His presence. But I knew He was there and working."

God knew exactly what He was doing. Years before, He had prepared a treasure for Michelle that would help her through the overwhelming darkness. Michelle's only memory of her battle with childhood cancer is a brief moment in a hospital isolation room. "I was only two or three years old, and I remember being alone in a very quiet room. I could see my parents on the other side of the glass and I wanted to be with them. I put both of my hands on the glass and looked at my mom on the other side. She put her hands on the glass opposite mine and whispered, 'I love you.'"

Michelle considers the memory of her mom whispering to her through the glass to be a gift from God. "God might have given me that memory because that's how He is. He's right there, on the other side of the glass. Even though we can't feel or touch Him, He is there."

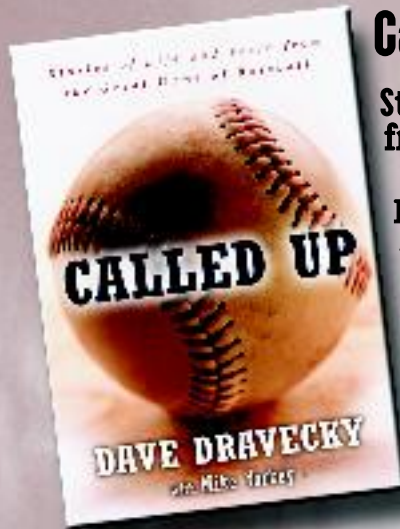
Just as she saw her mother on the other side of the glass so many years before, Michelle sensed God whispering to her, "I'm here with you, and I see your suffering. This is in my hands. It will not last forever."

That image was a priceless treasure that gave Michelle hope. "My natural tendency was to lie in bed and never get out. But the image I had of God saying, 'Push through, this isn't going to last forever,' gave me hope. I knew that God was with me, so I knew that the pain was either going to end or I was going to go home with Jesus." That treasure gave her a glimmer of hope that no darkness could overcome.

NOW WE SEE A DIM
REFLECTION, AS IF WE
WERE LOOKING INTO A
MIRROR, BUT THEN WE
SHALL SEE CLEARLY.
NOW I KNOW ONLY A
PART, BUT THEN I WILL
KNOW FULLY, AS GOD
HAS KNOWN ME.

1 CORINTHIANS 13: 12 (NCV)

Timeless Treasures



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**Stories of Life and Faith
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Dave Dravecky retells classic baseball stories from yesteryear and draws on his many on-the-field experiences to illustrate that God doesn't waste any pitches when it comes to teaching us something about Himself and His Word.

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FOR THE JOURNEY

Wisdom

IF SUFFERING ALONE TAUGHT, THEN ALL THE WORLD WOULD BE WISE,
SINCE EVERYONE SUFFERS. TO SUFFERING MUST BE ADDED MOURNING,
UNDERSTANDING, PATIENCE, LOVE, OPENNESS AND THE
WILLINGNESS TO REMAIN VULNERABLE.

ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH

GOD WILL NOT PERMIT ANY TROUBLES TO COME UPON US, UNLESS HE HAS A SPECIFIC
PLAN BY WHICH GREAT BLESSING CAN COME OUT OF THE DIFFICULTY.

PETER MARSHALL

BECAUSE I HAVE TASTED AN INFINITESIMALLY SMALL PART OF WHAT JESUS SUFFERED
FOR ME, I KNOW THAT WHEN I STAND BEFORE HIM I WILL BE ABLE TO WHISPER,
"THANK YOU, THANK YOU JESUS." SO IN A SENSE...
OUR SUFFERING PREPARES US TO MEET HIM.

JONI EARECKSON TADA

THANK THE GOOD GOD FOR HAVING VISITED YOU THROUGH SUFFERING;
IF WE KNEW THE VALUE OF SUFFERING, WE WOULD ASK FOR IT.

BROTHER ANDRÉ

THESE LAST YEARS HAVE BEEN AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY OF BELIEF AND DOUBT, TRUST
AND FEAR, RAGING QUESTIONS AND SIMPLE FAITH....I HAVE AT LEAST COME TO KNOW
ENOUGH ABOUT GOD THAT WHEN I DOUBT HIS LOVE, I HOLD TO HIS WISDOM.
WHEN I CAN'T UNDERSTAND HIS JUSTICE, I CLING TO HIS MERCIES. WHEN I
WONDER ABOUT HIS FAITHFULNESS, I CHERISH HIS GRACE. WHEN I FEAR HIS
SOVEREIGNTY, I BOW TO HIS HOLINESS. AND IN THAT MY HEART CAN REST.

VERDELL DAVIS

WHEN IT IS DARK ENOUGH, MEN SEE THE STARS.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

IN THE LIFE AND PASSION OF CHRIST WE SEE MOST CLEARLY THAT SUFFERING IS THE
WAY GOD HAS CHOSEN TO BRING REDEMPTION TO A FALLEN WORLD....

IT IS BECAUSE OF CHRIST THAT OUR SUFFERING IS NOT USELESS.

IT IS PART OF THE TOTAL PLAN OF GOD.

R. C. SPROUL

TREASURES GLEANED IN THE DARKNESS

Michelle Dacus had confidence that God was with her and was working in her life, but making it through each day of her recovery from major reconstructive surgery was a struggle—to put it mildly. Her doctors had no idea how long her debilitating leg pain (see “A Treasure Prepared in the Darkness” on page 6) would last. They couldn’t even promise that it would get better. As a formerly active and energetic 18-year-old, she simply could not imagine a life of constant pain, around the clock medical care, and never being able to walk again.

As she faced the harsh reality of her situation, Michelle remembers asking the Lord what possible purpose her pain could serve. When she received no discernable answer, she resigned herself to trusting God no matter what. She remembers praying, “Lord, I’m going to have to trust You because if I get angry, my spirit will be worse; I’ll be empty. I’m choosing to trust You to work in my life even when I have no clue as to what You’re doing.”

Then the darkness completely overwhelmed her. Michelle was hospitalized with a life-threatening infection. For seven days she battled a 106-degree fever. She was packed on ice and put on powerful medications. “Being in the hospital again was my low point,” Michelle explains. “I just had a sick feeling of ‘Lord, where is this going?’”

When her fever broke, Michelle went home, but in her heart she was ready to go home to heaven. “I said to the Lord, I just give up. I surrender. I am ready just to be with You. I remember praying, ‘just take me home.’ I felt that if I woke up in the morning and was still on earth, I would be disappointed.”

The next morning, Michelle woke up—in her bedroom. But something was different. She actually noticed the rose her father had placed on her nightstand, something he had done many times during her illness. “Up to that point, the flowers seemed like just another reminder of my sickness. But I smelled this rose, and it smelled good. I felt as if the Lord was saying to me that this was a turning point, a new beginning. That morning I knew in my heart that God had chosen to keep me going.”

Slowly, Michelle began to heal. When she was strong enough to read the Bible for herself, she remembered a card that her Sunday school teacher had given her before the surgery. Curious, she looked up the Isaiah 45:3 Scripture reference written inside. “As I read it, I just started weeping. It was as if I could hear the Lord speaking directly to me, ‘I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by name.’ When I read it, my heart was restored. It was as if the light came on.” That very morning she began recording in her journal all of the riches and treasures God had given her in the darkness.

When she was finally strong enough to go to church for the first time, Michelle received even more treasures from the hand of God. “I walked down the aisle with my walker and every family in our church was clapping. Then, as I was looking at the bulletin, I saw that we were going to sing my favorite hymn, ‘It Is Well With My Soul.’”

I just cried. It was such a gift to stand with my walker and sing to God:

*When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.**

Being able to worship Him at that time affirmed everything. I had known of God's faithfulness in my head, but that morning I discovered I could sing that hymn from my heart."

Today Michelle carries in her journal a written testimony of God's faithfulness during her illness, and she carries those treasures in her heart as well. "The greatest treasures God gave me in the darkness aren't tangible," she explains.

"I can look at my body and see that God healed it, but the treasures in my heart aren't visible. I want everyone who goes through the darkness to know that they can receive these treasures, too.

"Being in the darkness gives us a special opportunity to find a place of contentment with the Lord—even when everything in life is upside down. Often we can't see the treasures when we're in the midst of the darkness. I know I didn't. But, if we can endure through Christ's strength, He'll give us a treasure that will outlast the riches of the wealthiest man on earth. The riches of earth will perish. We cannot take them with us. But the treasures gleaned in the darkness of suffering are eternal. I'll take those treasures with me for the rest of my life—and into eternity."

*Words to this hymn written by H. G. Spafford near the site at sea where his four daughters drowned in a tragic accident.

What will we do in the midnight of our need, when the light of life is gone, when our personal cupboards are despairingly bare? If we have come often to God in the sunshine of our lives, our anxious feet will find the familiar pathway, even in the darkest night. Though blinded by disease, though hounded and hindered by doubt, though confused by life which seems out of hand, we can find our way to God intuitively because going to Him has become second nature, a way of life.

Richard Exley
The Other God



TREASURE HUNT

Sometimes treasure comes to us unbidden, surprising us in the shadows of darkness. At other times, we find it because we seek it.

During her cancer battle, Barbara made a practice of seeking treasure. Every night when she put her head to the pillow, she searched for the treasures of that day. Some of her favorites were the prayers of the children with whom she worked and the acts of love and kindness she received from family and friends. She considered her nightly ritual, which she called “treasure hunting,” to be a necessary exercise in sanity.

Barbara is just one of many seasoned treasure hunters who have gleaned gems of hope as they have wandered through the shadowlands. The treasures they find come in many different forms. Perhaps the following highlights of treasures they have discovered will inspire you to look for the treasures that cross your path.

THE TREASURES OF PERSEVERANCE, ENDURANCE, AND PATIENCE

Megan was cruising the fast lane of life when cancer slammed on the brakes. Rarely able to leave her house, she found herself locked in a holding pattern while the world sped by, but she didn't complain about her confinement. Instead, she was amazed by all of the new things God was showing her in the slow lane. She had discovered the comforting sound of rain on a windowpane and had gained insight and comfort from hours spent reading the Scriptures. Her suffering enabled Megan to discover what she had been too busy to notice and began to infuse her life with the characteristics of perseverance, endurance, and patience.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

James 1:2,3

THE TREASURE OF JOY

One day, after emerging from her journey through clinical depression, Jan Dravecky sat at her dining room table sipping a cup of tea and gazing out at the mountains. As she watched, she noticed the pine trees swaying in the breeze and the bright flowers blooming on the deck. Suddenly she “had a sense that I had experienced this day before. Then it dawned on me. This day reminded me of the day I was sitting at my dining room table several years before, in the depths of depression, the day when the Lord told me to let go, the day He promised He would show me a joy I'd never known. As I recalled that promise, I realized that the joy God had promised me had become part of my everyday life, a joy that comforts the soul.”

Weeping may go on all night, but joy comes with the morning.

Psalms 30:5 (NLT)

THE TREASURE OF FRUITFULNESS

Dave Dravecky would rather be where he is today than where he was before cancer. “During and shortly after my battle with cancer I couldn’t have said that honestly; the good hadn’t yet come out of the bad. Now I can say that cancer has been a blessing in my life. . . . I do not say this lightly or boastfully—I say this as one who has been humbled by pain and uncertainty—I would not be the man I am today if I had not been forced to fight cancer. I’ve still got a long way to go, but I have grown in ways I never dreamed possible.”

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.
Hebrews 12:11

THE TREASURE OF A STRONGER FAITH

During the years Sally DeReu and her husband, Wayne, lived in the darkness of his life-threatening cancer, Sally saw their faith grow richer and deeper. “It isn’t that we had strayed away from God, but we kind of took Him for granted. Instead of coming to God just on Sundays, we learned we needed Him everyday, not just once a week.”

These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold.
1 Peter 1:7 (NLT)

THE TREASURE OF HOPE

Joni Eareckson Tada’s suffering as a quadriplegic has turned her eyes toward a hope that cannot disappoint. “Broken homes and broken hearts crush our illusions that earth can keep its promises, that it can really satisfy. Only the hope of heaven can truly move our passions off this world—which God knows could never fulfill us anyway—and place them where they will find their glorious fulfillment.”

But we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.
Romans 5:3-5

NOTE: Look for more treasures to be found in the darkness in the next issue! If you have found treasures in the darkness that you would like to share, email them to info@OutreachOfHope.org. Please limit to 500 words.

Quotations from Jan Dravecky, *A Joy I'd Never Known*; Dave Dravecky, *The Worth of A Man*; Joni Eareckson Tada, *Heaven Your Real Home*, all published by Zondervan.

A CANDLE IN THE DARKNESS

Prayer Guide for Treasure Seekers

Prayers offered for those who suffer are a bit like lighting a candle in the dark. Even the smallest flicker of light can push back the darkness to yield treasures of hope and joy. Unfortunately, we often don't know how to pray for friends and loved ones—or even ourselves—when we face suffering, but the Word of God gives us abundant instruction and insight. Here are just a few examples:

STRENGTH TO ENDURE: “I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need” (Philippians 4:12-13 NLT).

WISDOM: “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given him” (James 1:5).

DISCERNMENT: “Be assured that from the first day we heard of you, we haven't stopped praying for you, asking God to give you wise minds and spirits attuned to his will, and so acquire a thorough understanding of the ways in which God works” (Colossians 1:9 THE MESSAGE).

SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT: “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who has no one to help him up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

A TRUSTING HEART: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

HOPE IN GOD'S LOVE: “I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. . . . nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39 NLT).

GREATER INTIMACY WITH GOD: “I keep asking that the . . . Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know him better” (Ephesians 1:17).

Lord, I want to come to you with open hands, but my heart keeps crying out for life the way I knew it. So I'm afraid I have come to you with my fists tightly clenched, holding in the emptiness. Help me to loosen my grip on what was, and bow before your goodness and your faithfulness. Help me to trust that the meaning in the yesterdays of my life will surely be surpassed by the meaning in my tomorrows because you are the source of all meaning. And with you, the best is always yet to be.

VERDELL DAVIS

STRAIGHT TALK FROM DAVE

WHAT WAS THE MOST UNEXPECTED TREASURE YOU DISCOVERED DURING YOUR TIME OF DARKNESS?

One cloudy, grey day several months after the amputation, I was driving the car. I wasn't in a particularly bad place, but my feelings pretty much matched the weather. I was struggling to make sense out of all that had happened to me during the previous few years and wasn't coming up with any answers. I had achieved my dream of becoming a Major League pitcher, but a diagnosis of cancer in my pitching arm rocked my world. First there was surgery that promised to end my career, then my amazing comeback, then—just a few days later—my arm broke in mid-pitch, then another break, recurrence of the cancer, more surgery, radiation, infection, and finally—no arm.

I knew I could trust God, but I had begun taking a hard look at myself. I wondered where my life might be headed. No arm, no career—just where did God want me to go?

Through the gloom of that day, a song came over the car radio and caught my ear: “First I want to thank You Lord for being who You are, For coming to the rescue of a man who’s drifted far, For calling me to be Your son and calling me to serve, Lord the way You’ve blessed my life is more than I deserve.”

Somehow that song touched my heart right where I was. As it continued, I broke down and cried: “Let me be the evidence of what Your grace can do, To generations struggling to find themselves in You, May they come to know the love of God, May their eyes be made to see, Give me the opportunity to share the truth that sets them free!” That was it! That simple song was a reflection of my life and where it needed to go. It perfectly expressed the vision in my heart, a vision I had not yet been able to see.

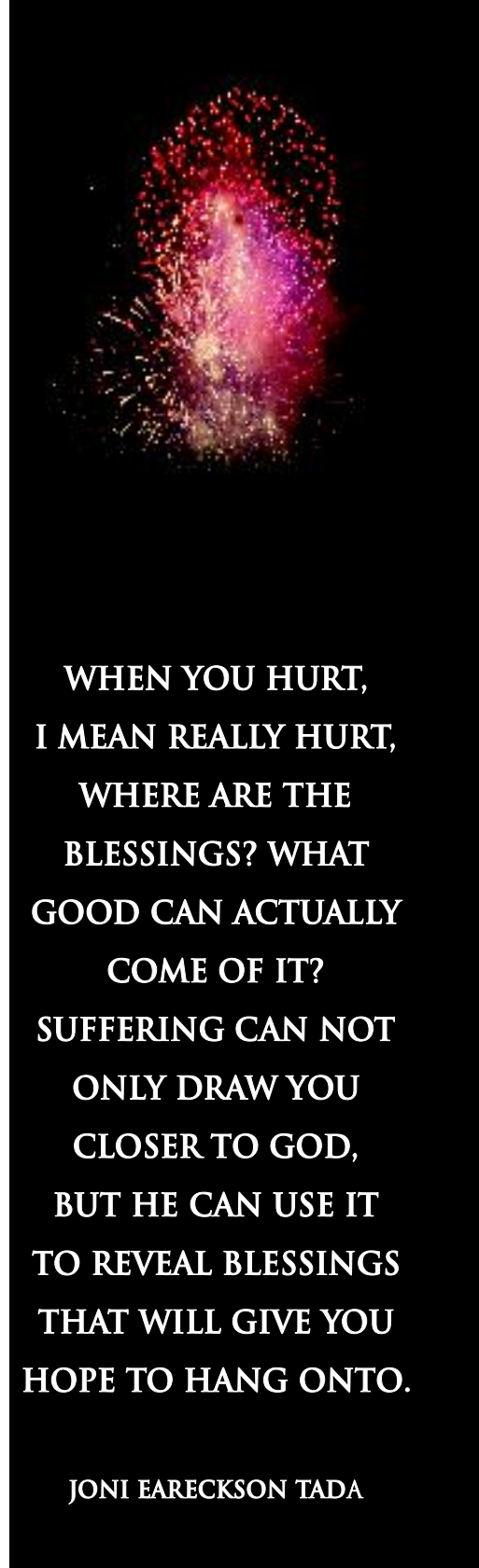
I never expected to cry from a song, but I prayerfully and tearfully joined in the chorus: “This is my prayer, Lifted to You, Knowing You care even more than I do, This is my prayer, Lifted in Your name, Your will be done I humbly pray.”

I haven't heard that song for years, but the memory of it takes me back to that grey, rainy day when God broke through the fog and gloom and reminded me of my heart's deepest desire—for my life to reflect Jesus, no matter what. What a treasure!

Prayer written by Bob Hartman, John Elefante, © 1990 Lehsem Music, LLC

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WHEN YOU HURT,
I MEAN REALLY HURT,
WHERE ARE THE
BLESSINGS? WHAT
GOOD CAN ACTUALLY
COME OF IT?
SUFFERING CAN NOT
ONLY DRAW YOU
CLOSER TO GOD,
BUT HE CAN USE IT
TO REVEAL BLESSINGS
THAT WILL GIVE YOU
HOPE TO HANG ONTO.

JONI EARECKSON TADA