

## Chapter 39: The Man in the Battery Powered Wheelchair

### Life Application Verses:

**Romans 8: 26-27.** <sup>26</sup> In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; <sup>27</sup> and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.

**R**ecently, I stopped by the gas station to fill up my daughter's Toyota SUV 4Runner. I was actually driving it home after it had been serviced, and thought it would be the right thing for "Dad" to put some gas in the vehicle. As the pump began to go round-and-round, I was wondering at how much this SUV would hold and the pump kept going round-and-round on the number of gallons and dollars. It was one of those self-service stations where you are required to "Pay Before You Pump." I did as it



required and then what I paid was beginning to sound like not nearly enough. You see, I had a rare \$50 bill, and it was rare because we don't get them very often. We mostly deal with \$20, because we have sufficiency from our Lord. So, anyway, the pump just kept going-and-going and I was sure at any moment that the Energizer Bunny was going to hop out from behind the pump with his base drum and start playing—and going and going and going...!

Finally...the pump stopped at \$46.30. I ran inside and collected the vast amount of \$3.70 in change. I wondered how long it would be before I saw another \$50 bill!? Then again, my daughter is worth it all! I was doing Earthly Good and Praying for a Heavenly Minded attitude about the price of gas! I got over my attitude, climbed up in the SUV, started the engine wondering how much gas that just took—thinking it must have taken about \$1.00 to start that engine, and put the 4Runner in Drive. Just as I was about to make the turn toward the street, there in an electric, battery-powered wheelchair, was a man who had no right arm or leg. He was riding his wheelchair as if nothing was self-evident. At this point, I felt so much pity for him that the price of gas was not even an afterthought. What I felt was as the phrase in the Life Application Verse: "...groanings too deep for words." Have you ever had those?

You see something in your life that just makes you groan in your Soul and Spirit so deeply that words cannot even be formed to express what you are seeing, hearing, or living through? I thought about this man and wondered how he managed to live? How could he get around with only one arm and only one leg—yet, he was cruising pretty well as he made that left turn off the street. As I drove home, the groaning never left me and I wondered about the fairness of what he had to live with. What lesson can we take from these events in our lives?

The first thing that came to mind was to be grateful for my health. How could I translate this into Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good? Attitude. Attitude? Yes, when I have an ache and/or pain, I complain! When I go to the doctor, it's because I must! I try to get annual physicals, but I dread them like the need to have a crown for a broken tooth. I had surgeries years ago and they have given me the "White Coat Scenarios." Our health is not only a Gift, it is one of our most precious gifts and we should do everything we can to protect it. If that means exercise, healthier eating, and a bit more rest, then we must have a right attitude about our health. Our Earthly Good is to do what we can to promote good health for ourselves, our children, our spouses, our parents, our friends, and in places where we can be used up to minister as Heavenly Minded servants.

The second thing that occurred to me when I saw this man in the wheelchair was survival. His survival, his life, his support, his family. If he had a family, where were they? Was he alone? Did he need help? Was he lost and without salvation in Christ Jesus? No matter how I try to say it, I wanted to shout, "Someone needs to help this poor man!" Yet, I was driving off in a big SUV and thinking all these things about him, when in fact, maybe his survival depended on the help of others—like me! He seemed to be doing quite well in his power-chair, but was he living or just getting by—barely surviving? Who looked after him? Made his meals? As a Christian, as Christians in our cities and towns, how do we go about getting involved in the survival of ALL of our citizens in need. I think about that as I write this, wondering where he came from and where he was going. God forgive me, but You know his needs; how was he cared for? I've seen adults and children in physical situations that "...groanings too deep for words" are my Prayer. I feel as if I should stop whatever I am doing and go to this man and offer any help that he needs. Lord, is that the proper attitude about his survival?

The third thing I subconsciously thought about was all the need in this world? Like events in the news about children starving or being abused. Like those disabled who can't walk, talk, see, run, type on a keyboard, throw a skipping rock across a pond, and so many things we take for granted as a free nation. Why would I think of the need in the world? Because this man in the wheelchair was the epitome of so much in the years that I was in the Far East, Europe, and in the United States. There is just so much pain, hatred, and need in this world that "...groanings too deep for words" is the best I can do.

What are these groanings and what does God do to help us? I think God defined them for us in the Life Application Verses: "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*." For example, when we are so deeply moved (and I am speaking of the type of deep that is of Soul and Spirit), what do we say and how do we know what to say? God gave us the Spirit to help our weakness. When I saw this man, I was in a state of weakness because of the depth of sorrow, pity, and helplessness that we shared. Now, you need to slow down and read this with great care: what happened in those few moments in time was an experience we shared. I may be wrong, but I don't think that this man knows that he is the catalyst for the words that I am writing at this moment because of what we shared. I think that God put us in proximity of one another to teach **me** a lesson about caring and doing more for those around me that need help in so many ways. We shared an experience, but I am the major beneficiary. Have you ever felt that way?

How many times have you (or I) passed by someone in a wheelchair or who was being led by another person because of their affliction and felt this groaning? What did we do? Well, I ask you (and myself): did we pray for that person immediately? Did it move us to consider doing community service to help those less fortunate? For years, my mom worked at a nursing home as a volunteer. The stories she would tell made me so very sad, but I never volunteered. Is it a requirement to volunteer? No, I suppose not. But if our senses are disturbed by seeing someone in the dire straits as the man without the arm or leg and these events in our lives do not move us because of "...groanings too deep for words", *then why not?* Are we not

responsible to God to do as much as we can, to seek those who need us, to give unto others as we have time, talents, and abilities? Are we not truly our brothers' keepers in the eyes of the Lord? Should we not seek opportunity to help these individuals as much as time permits—even making time as our God in Christ opens doors of service?

In the City of Montgomery in which we live, there are some 320,000 people (Montgomery County). Imagine if you discount that by some 30% for children, underage youth, the elderly, and those who do not have means. Suppose that leaves some 224,000 who have various means, methods, and manpower to help those in the city who are so disabled that they need someone to help them do even the most simple things in life. Do we not have enough people that can share these duties across the potential individuals who are able to help them and have scheduled people so that there is someone available the majority of the week and weekend? Call me crazy, but I think that if we were to prioritize this need for those who are in such dire situations, I believe we as a citizenry would be more than able to help them in ways that would make a Heavenly Minded difference in their lives by our Earthly Good actions. I am not pointing the finger at you, Brothers and Sisters, because you know what that means: I have three fingers pointing right back at me. IN other words, it starts with me!

As I am sitting here in the wee hours of the morning (no joke!), I think about all the people just in my neighborhood that might have needs. Please understand that I am not, nor would I ever, consider anyone confined to a wheelchair of any type, less than a human being in need of our Earthly Good help or the Salvation of Christ Jesus. It's overwhelming to me when I think about that man in the battery-powered wheelchair, wondering where he lives and how he survives the daily routines of life that we take for granted so often. I think about the parents who care for their children who have all sorts of illness, disabilities, or mental issues. These parents care for their children round-the-clock, tirelessly working for the sake of that child. They give until giving hurts—physically, emotionally, and even Spiritually. Then there are the children who have ailing or aged parents. They, too, give until giving hurts. Where is God in all of this suffering—and what I am referring to here is the “groanings too deep for words.” Listen to these words again: “In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for

words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*" (Romans 8: 26-27).

As a Christian of ordinary study in the Holy Scriptures, as the vast majority of us are, I see these Life Application Verses as a Gift from God in this way: if we are committed to service of others, particularly someone who is suffering at various levels within the confines of this Earthly life, AND we struggle with our innermost feelings of heartbreak, crying out to God, helplessness in the moments of others' suffering—I think that God offers this as a means to help us with "groanings too deep for words." IN other words, when we just open our Hearts in the groanings of our Soul because that is the best we can do in our Human Condition and limitations, God adds to our 'Prayer that has no words.' I've—as many of you have—heard not to trust our feelings when it comes to our Salvation in Christ. It's not our Salvation that is at the heart of this discussion; rather, at the heart of this present-moment discussion is our most intense feelings of events that happen to us, whether that is seeing someone in a battery-powered wheelchair or a loved one in their final moments of life, or just confusion over daily issues that we face. We groan in the Spirit, yet we never speak a single word! Have you ever experienced these moments? I think so. I believe we all have, and God hears these unspoken words as He intercedes for us in the Spirit. I think God knows precisely what our unspoken groanings mean, because they flow out of Spirit, not out of our Humanness—yet it is our Humanness that prevents us from rising above the "groanings too deep for words" without the intercession from God in Christ.

Can you imagine how the unsaved deal with this in their lives? For whom do they turn for help in times when the "groanings too deep for words" happen to them? Think about this: if we have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior, God tells us plainly in His Holy MapQuest, The Bible, that we have become the sons and daughters of His. Remember these?: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1: 12-13: NASB). If we are the Sons and Daughters of a Holy God, and I mean this to say that we KNOW, LIVE, PRACTICE, EXIST, YEARN...to live as the Sons and Daughters of God in Christ, when our emotions go so deep that we cannot find the words, God steps in and

translates this to His Holy Language and He hears us in those unspoken groanings. Our “groanings too deep for words” don’t have to be ‘negative in nature’, they can be in Praise, Glorious Living, and Service to God. Let me tell you a short story: when I was stationed at Homestead AFB, Florida, I was working alongside the Marine contingent of our Security Group. They were just as Marine-oriented as those in the mud and jungles of any battle we have ever fought. At this time, I always placed Christian literature all over the building and I would see several of them reading these materials. One day, I was on a short break from my area, when a person approached me and asked me something that has remained in my memory to this very moment: this soft-spoken person stopped me and asked me if I was a Christian. No chit-chat, no introduction, just this: “Are you a Christian?” I nodded my head and said very quietly and reverently, “Yes, I am.” I never saw this person again in any of our workspaces. To this day, I believe that because of my Service to God in that place with all those hard-charging Marines, God sent that person—an Angel—to ask me that simple message to *demonstrate* “groanings too deep for words.” My groanings were not negative or of a broken Spirit, but one of Praise. I had no words to say, but my Spirit was Singing Praises that only God could hear and translate. I pray for that man in the battery-powered wheelchair and I thank God for yet another lesson in life that “groanings too deep for words” cannot express.

**Question of Curiosity:**

**Do you believe this:** “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1: 12-13: NASB). And you say...

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“Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?” – **Corrie Ten Boom** –

Should all the forms that men devise, Assault my faith with treacherous art,  
I’d call them vanity and lies, And bind the gospel to my heart.

– **Isaac Watts** –

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**My Prayer For You:**

God of All Things, who knows the Mind of God? Who among us can reason why we experience what we go through, from birth unto death? Yet, if we walk in Your Will and tread the Path that You alone can set before us, all things work together for You in Christ Jesus. I offer this Prayer for every mother, father, son, daughter, relative, or friend, who has ever experienced “groanings too deep for words.” My prayer is that we might know that when we live through these times, both the good and the bad, our inability to speak what we feel will be lifted up to You, before the Throne of Mercy, Grace, and Love for help in these times of need and to Praise You in times of the Glorious Unfolding of Your Power in our lives. We are in this world, Oh Lord, as we struggle to make the right decisions, to be Holy in Spirit in an unholy world, to acknowledge You as our God who gave us the Most Precious Gift imaginable in Christ on the Cross, yet He lives at the Right Hand of the Father. Hear our “groanings too deep for words” and Grant us the Peace of Heart to realize that our deepest emotions and hurts and Hallelujah’s are unspoken, but they are not Unheard God. We are all human, contained in this place of limitations, yet we have a Path to Salvation that You have provided. I Pray that these words might reach out to someone who is going through something in their life that rises to the level of “groanings too deep for words”, and that You would intervene and Grant them a Peace they have never known, to remind them—and all of us—that we serve a Risen Savior, Christ Jesus, and we serve a God who is un failing in Love, Mercy, and Grace. In Christ, I Pray, Amen and Amen.

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