

Devotionals – “That’s My Story”

Living Parables

By Gary C. Meyer

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FOREWARD

This devotional book contains true life experiences of Gary C. Meyer of Shakopee, MN. Gary worked in the electronics industry from 1957 to 2001. He worked as an electronic technician, an airline radio mechanic, a radio broadcast announcer, station engineer, test equipment sales engineer, service manager, and a vocational instructor in computers and electronics before partial retirement. After retirement he continued to teach industrial seminars in metrology for several years. More important than all those positions is a decision made in the summer of 1956 to receive the promise of I John 1:8 to receive the gift of salvation and serve the Creator of the universe. Humorous and serious events make up the time span called life. The ability to laugh at ourselves is a trait that keeps us young and sane. These stories come from real events in Gary’s life over the past 80 years. The purpose of this devotional guide is to bring us all closer to the one who created us and sustains us as we honor Him. To Jesus Christ, my savior, I dedicate this book.

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Day 1

The Peddle Car

During the early years of my life at the ripe old age of about 5 my dad, Julien, was running a Fix-It Shop in White Rock, SD, in the very northeast corner of the state. Part of his fixing skills included work on automobiles as a result of his training at the Hansen Auto School of Moorhead, MN, and practical experience on a farm near Rosholt, SD. Dad fixed up a peddle car which I proudly drove up and down the sidewalk in front of the store. Memories of the little car are still with me as I have that car in my garage today. My brother who was two years younger than me also remembers that car but in a different light. Although my recollection of the incident is gone, I have been told that I ran him down and injured his foot in the collision. Whether the event was a true accident or a deliberate attack on a sibling, I do not know, but have been reminded of the event by brother, Dannie, several times during my lifetime of 78 years.

Perhaps there have been times when you have been “mowed down and run over” by another Christian. The injury was not soon forgotten and it's remembrance continues to surface time and time again. As little children in the faith we are crippled and waste away as we dwell on the injury and not on the one who can provide the healing. How does that healing come? If we are injured, we are instructed to ask for forgiveness of the one who hurt us. If we are the driver of the peddle car, we are instructed to ask forgiveness for the attack or accident as the case may be. In both cases our focus must be on Jesus Christ who is willing to forgive us, if we ask him.

Day 2

The Garage Pit

During my high school days in Benson, MN, we lived in an old house on Atlantic Avenue located on the south side of the tracks that ran through the middle of town. Behind the house was a double garage with doors that swung outward. The doors were locked from the inside and the garage was lighted from an extension cord plugged into an outlet inside the house. Arriving home very late one night with my dad at the wheel, I was asked to go in the side door of the garage and open the main garage door allowing my dad to put the car in the garage. I opened the side door, tried the light switch, and found no power for the lights. My dad being a mechanic had dug out and cement lined a pit about 5 feet deep in the garage to work on cars. As I proceeded toward the main doors in the dark, I walked into the open pit and landed on my feet about 2 feet from an open drum full of oil. What a shock to the system! With only a slightly skinned hip, I crawled out of the pit and opened up the garage door where Dad was patiently waiting and wondering what took me so long. From that time on, the cover for the pit was meticulously put in place.

Like the dark open pit, Satan often sets the trap for us by placing temptation before us, and watches as we take the fall. Have you ever noticed that Jesus who is called the *Light of the World* can keep your path illuminated and prevent the fall? The key is to keep that upstairs extension cord plugged into the heavenly source of power through a life of prayer and fellowship with our heavenly Father. (John 8:12 - When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.")

Day 3

A Shocking Experience

In the summer of 1950 my dad and I became licensed by the FCC as amateur radio operators. Dad always encouraged me to build electronic kits which led to my own design of radio transmitters. My "ham shack" as radio rooms are called was located in my bedroom on the second floor of our Benson, MN, home. Transmitter designs of the 1950s were based on radio tubes that required high voltage power supplies. One such design required me to change coils in the back of a transmitter to switch from one frequency to another. One day I failed to turn off the high voltage while reaching inside the transmitter to change coils and a bright blue arc burned into my arm as I contacted a high voltage capacitor. The next thing I knew, I was picking myself up off the floor on the other side of the room. I really got a charge out of that! My wound healed, but I still have that scar as a reminder of my carelessness. Perhaps you have been careless in your Christian life. You may have reached into areas that have placed a scar in your life. Don't dwell on that event but bring it to the Healer, Jesus Christ, who is waiting with open arms. He is familiar with wounds and scars even to the point of death. Ask for His forgiveness and use the scar to remind you of His great love.

Day 4

Father-in-Law Liked Me Best

My wife, Joyce, grew up on a farm near the little town of Quamba, MN. In the early years of her life she did not have many of the things we consider necessities today such

as running water, electricity, and an indoor bathroom. School homework was accomplished using a kerosene lamp on the kitchen table. Nature calls required wading through winter snow banks to the cold outhouse facility. When I met her in 1957 the electricity had been installed and the living room now sported a new television set. Being a city boy I always had electricity; the first residential TV in Benson, MN, although reception from Minneapolis/St Paul was about 80% on a good day; and indoor plumbing. I guess Joyce's dad, Herman Erickson, felt sorry for the city boy as the outdoor facilities were very cold and frosty in the winter. After a few visits he installed an electric heater and lights in the outhouse which I appreciated. You can call me a whimper but I think Joyce's dad liked me best. Like Herman, our heavenly Father cares for His own children and supplies all their needs. The warmth of God's love and the light of His wisdom belong to those who receive His Son, Jesus Christ, as His gift and live according to His Word. The scriptures tell us, "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth liberally to all who ask". Experience His love today.

Day 5

That's No Bull

This story was shared by my late brother-in-law, Stan Erickson, regarding individuals that he knew. Stan was a well-read farmer who challenged me in many theological discussions during his lifetime.

Farmers sometimes do not have the right tools to do a job and must become inventors and designers to accomplish their goals. One such goal was to load a bull into a trailer for transportation to another location. My brother-in-law, Stan Erickson, of Quamba, MN, relates the following story. Farmer Ed Oslin had a bull that was too large to fit through the back door of the trailer. Ed and the local trucker, Harold Radtke, came up with the idea of lifting the bull above the trailer and lowering the bull from the top of the trailer. To accomplish the project the bull was placed in a sling, the sling was attached to a rope that was placed over a pulley normally used to raise hay bales into the barn's hayloft. Two horses were harnessed to the other end of the rope providing power to raise the heavy animal. The plan seemed to be going very well until the bull let out a beller. The beller spooked the horses who took off on a run, raising the bull to the upper hayloft door. When the bull hit the pulley, he was pulled into the hayloft and deposited upstairs. The surprised lift operators below had no way of getting the bull out of the hayloft and ended up butchering the animal.

Perhaps you have been elevated to a high position by worldly standards. You have taken the credit and boasted of your hard work or cunning ways. A nice house, a new car, and a healthy bank account seem to give a sense of security. Be advised that when we hit the top there is the danger of a fall if we try to take the credit. The Bible tells us that all of these things will pass away but that which is given to the Lord is stored for eternity. Jesus asks us to give Him all that we have including our lives and that's no bull.

Day 6

The Rock

A few years ago our grown daughters, Brenda and Connie, decided to go camping at Golden Gate State Park in Golden, Colorado. They arrived at the campsite and set up their tent in the rain. A horrible downpour, forced them to sit in the car for awhile where they talked and watched the rain storm. It was pouring so hard they couldn't cook, so they drove into town to get some food. The street was starting to flood, but they managed to navigate through the waters. As they were driving back to the campsite, cars were

flashing their headlights at them. As they slowed down and rounded a corner there was a giant boulder in the middle of the road. God saved them from the rock of destruction. As they arrived back at the campsite, they realized that the tent was missing. Looking down the hill behind their site, they spotted the tent in the ravine. It had slid down the hill in a mudslide. In the process of retrieving the tent they noticed that one tent pole had broken in the tumble down the hill. Lacking the proper tools, they located a nail file to fix the pole. The tent was a six-foot dome tent and Brenda could not reach the top. Brenda asked Connie to get her a chair. Of course being in the middle of nature, chairs were not a handy item. Brenda then pointed to a huge boulder and shouted to Connie, "Bring me that rock!!". Connie just laughed as it was a rather large rock and she had no way of moving it. Brenda's adrenaline was pumping, and she went over, picked up the rock and brought it to the tent. Brenda reports, "The pole got filed down with the nail file and all fixed. All our stuff was soaked, but we stayed anyway. We took walks with our umbrellas to lookout point, but couldn't see much as it was pretty cloudy. We used our umbrellas as shelter for our grill for the remaining days of camping and ate in the rain. It continued to rain for our four days of camping. We had a wonderful time just being together despite the circumstances".

From this event you can see that rocks can be destructive or useful. Jesus was tempted by satan in Matthew 4 to "change these stones into loaves of bread" but Jesus refused. Satan tempted Him to jump off the temple because the angels would keep His foot from striking a stone but He refused. Jesus is the Rock of Ages, our solid foundation, who can lift us up (more than upper tent level) to heavenly places where we can dwell in the sunshine both now and forevermore.

Day 7

Beautiful Music

During my early days I was exposed to music growing up in a home where my mother played piano and my dad played violin and saxophone. When I was in the fourth grade my folks enrolled me in piano lessons with a very strict teacher by the name of Miss Roseland. I spent many hours with my friend, John Thompson, playing his compositions designed to make me a piano virtuoso. "How strict was she?", you ask. Another friend of mine, a few years my superior, who was weight gifted was at one time pushed off the piano bench for making numerous errors in his performance. Stories like that made me practice, practice, practice. My performance was also occasionally rewarded with my individual fingers being pounded on the correct piano keys until they were shortened by several millimeters and I learned the correct fingering. Examination of my fingers today reveals two hands with short fingers. I learned both the treble clef and bass clef.

A popular saying appears on a plaque in my office. It says, "Life is like a piano. What you get out of it depends on how you play it." The music of our spiritual life depends on the practice we put into it. The Bible tells us that physical exercise profits a little; however, our spiritual life depends on a daily exercise of living in fellowship with the one who can keep us on the right keys. Fellowship with the heavenly Father through study of God's Word and communication in prayer is not easy work, but keeps us spiritually fit. Submit to the One who keeps us playing on the right keys and the music will be beautiful.

Day 8

Crackerjack

I had the privilege of knowing all four of my grandparents plus two great-grandmothers and one great-grand father. One of the pleasant memories was visits from my Grandma

and Grandpa Louis Meyer. My brother Dannie and I would look out the window waiting their arrival. Something special always happened when they arrived. Whenever they came to our house my brother Dannie and I would receive a box of Crackerjack. The caramel covered popcorn and peanuts were great, but the best part was the prized toy located inside the box. If the prize was not on the top, we had to dig through the edible portion until we arrived at the valued toy. The joy of the toy lasted for a period of time but soon wore off as other interests intervened.

What do you consider your most prized possession? The apostle Paul said that he considered all things a loss compared to knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection. (Phil 3:8 - I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ). This should be our goal as well. Jesus gave His life on the cross, raised Himself up, and ascended into heaven to prepare a way for us to follow. The scriptures tell us that "No man cometh unto the Father except by me". Jesus should be the prize that causes us to anticipate His arrival. In the mean time we should be digging through everything else in life to claim our prize. This will give us a Crackerjack of a life.

Day 9

The Killer Sheep

Sibling rivalry is a common problem in many families. Arguments and skirmishes between brothers and sisters often result from the lack of real or perceived attention from parents. My wife, Joyce, grew up on a farm between Mora and Quamba, MN, with her older brother Stan and younger sister Jeanne. Stan and Joyce were required to work alongside their dad bringing the cows into the barn, milking cows by hand, feeding the stock, field work with the tractor, tossing hay bails, plus taking care of the chickens, gathering eggs, picking green beans in the garden, weeding the garden, and helping in the kitchen. According to Stan and Joyce, Jeanne was the favored sibling as she did not have to do field work, barn work or much inside the house type work. Jeanne was given a pet sheep that she could pamper and enjoy. The two older siblings devised a plan that would take care of the pampering and enjoyment. They would fight and rough house with the sheep when Jeanne was not around to the point where the lamb became a rough player. Anytime Jeanne came out of the house (often headed for the outhouse) the killer sheep would run at her full force and knock her down. Dad could not figure out why the sheep was so aggressive and eventually had to dispose of the animal. To this day, Jeanne has no recollection of the event. Maybe she got knocked down once too many times.

Jesus Christ is known as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Man roughed up the Lamb before He was nailed to the cross. Man still roughs Him up today by continuing to sin against Him. The difference is that Jesus did not become a killer lamb who turned against man but a Savior for those who roughed Him up. For those who confess their sins and receive His gift of salvation, the living Christ forgives those sins. (Rom 10:9: If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.)

Day 10

Improved Morals?

During my senior year in high school I was appointed co-editor of our high school annual along with classmate Ramona Loen. Many hours were spent developing picture layouts,

placing the correct names under pictures, coordinating advertising, interviewing teachers, researching backgrounds, and writing text and captions. The work required great attention to detail. Sports are always a big part of the annual and 1954 was no different than others. In spite of the close scrutiny of text and pictures there is always the possibility of something going wrong. Following sign-off of the project, that “wrong” item was discovered, but too late. It was only a typographical error, just one word, and only one letter. Under the picture of the cheerleaders displaying their brand new uniforms was the caption, “New uniforms added higher MORALS to our cheering sections”. The intended word was MORALE. I am not sure what the previous outfits looked like, but from our verbiage it would appear to have previously degraded the morals of the spectators. I have seen many cheerleading outfits over the past years and don’t doubt the implication.

Christians are to live lives that present a high moral standard and provide a high morale to those who are of the household of faith. Scripture calls us to be encouragers and to build up one another in Eph. 4:29 and 1 Thess. 5:11. Scripture also cautions against withholding good from those who deserve it when it is in our power to act (Prov. 3:27).

Day 11

Wrestling

During my high school days I participated in sports on a limited basis trying out basketball, tennis, and wrestling. My favorite sport was wrestling and I became a member of the team that competed with other high schools in the same conference. Our coach, Mr Orr, trained us in the art of mat tactics, take downs, go-behinds, reversals, bridging, and pinning your opponent. My brother Dannie who was two years younger also became interested in the sport which presented me with a challenge. Because we were in the same weight class, we often had to wrestle each other to determine who would represent the team at the local meets. High school wrestling was (and still is) much different than the professional wrestling that we watched on television. One day we were both in the backyard of our home in Benson, MN, where I told Dan that I had a new wrestling hold to show him. Being a trusting brother he gave me permission to show my hold whereby I picked him up and body slammed him unto the lawn. Fortunately there were no broken ribs but it sure knocked the wind out of him. Sorry, brother.

Competition is good if it helps us to improve in the domain of our interest. Competition is sometimes devastating in the Christian domain. God created us and brought us into the body of Christ to contribute and build up others, not to tear them down. Have you ever wished that you could sing like someone else, preach like your pastor, encourage like your deacons, organize like your business manager, or evangelize like your outreach pastor? God has given each of us a gift. Our job is to find the gift and integrate that gift into the body of Christ. Don’t try to compete but let Jesus work through you for His glory.

Day 12

Stuck on a Stump

The saying, “Families that pray together stay together” has been written on many a plaque expressing a truth that has proved true for us. Let me introduce another saying, “Families that fish together pray together”. My wife, Joyce, and four daughters (Vickie, Connie, Sherrill, Brenda) enjoyed camping in a 9 x 12 foot tent or a borrowed pop up

camper during their grade school and junior high days. One camping trip found us at a campsite near Park Rapids, MN, next to a man-made lake that was full of pan fish. We rented a boat and ventured on to the lake with fishing poles and drop lines in hand. The water was so clear that a fish finder was not needed to locate the sunnies. I was kept busy baiting hooks and removing the sunnies from their hooks. It was decided at one point that we should move to a new location. I started rowing until the boat decided not to move. Looking over the edge of the boat I discovered that we had come aground on top of several stumps of trees that had been cut. The stumps were just below the water level. Six people in the boat must now rock the boat back and forth until we could break loose. We managed to break free and go back to camp for a great fish fry. Since that time Joyce has no love for either fishing or boating.

Jesus called his disciples to be fishers of men. (Mk 1:17) “And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men”. Many of His apostles were simple fishermen without a degree in evangelism and perhaps reserved in their contact with other people. Their charge was to testify as to what they saw and heard. Jesus comes to us with the same instruction and a promise. (Mt 10:32-KJV) “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven”. Don’t miss an opportunity to share your faith with someone today. Happy fishing!

Day 13

Woodchuck with a Close Shave

During my lifetime I have owned a number of used cars. One of my favorites was a brown 1977 Cadillac Brougham. The car was parked in our yard for several weeks as we had been using another vehicle for transportation. One day I fired up the 8 cylinder machine to hear a noise under the hood that sounded something like flap-flap-flap as the engine rotated but the car did not start. I jumped out of the car, raised the hood and peaked inside to see a large woodchuck staring back at me. Apparently the animal had a good taste for the high class Cadillac fan housing. We were both startled to the point that he headed for the fan housing compartment and I slammed the hood and jumped back in the car. Cranking the engine again I heard the same flap-flap-flap noise and the varmint fell to the ground and headed across the yard. I could see that he was very dazed and had a very close shave across his back.

Like the woodchuck we to can place ourselves in an environment that can be detrimental to our spiritual well being. Temptations may come our way to entice us into surroundings that we cannot handle. Each person is different. An alcoholic placed in a location full of liquor is subject to temptation and a fall. A drug addict placed in the presence of drugs is in danger of a fall. The gossip placed in the presence of other gossips is tempted to play the one-upmanship game. The book of James tells us to flee from all appearance of evil. We need to get out of the Cadillac housing into a safe place before we also get a close shave.

Day 14

Who Gives This Woman?

January 25, 1958, is a date to remember. It was a cold, stormy, icy night in Quamba, MN, when my wife, Joyce, and I entered into the covenant of marriage. Wedding days are always busy with last minute preparations. Many of those preparations were taking place on the farm where Joyce grew up. Mom and Dad Erickson were getting dressed for the grand event after working on the farm all day. Joyce had to arrive at the church early for last minute preparations and decided to take her mom with her. I was to arrive about an hour later to complete preparations on the groom's side. The roads were extremely slippery due to an ongoing ice storm in the area. My mother, dad, brother Maynard, and sister Janet had traveled the distance from Benson, MN, and many other relatives arrived safely. I jumped in my car, a 1950 Pontiac Silver Streak, and headed for the church. Upon arrival Joyce asked me, "Where is my dad"? I had left him at home alone on the farm about 2 miles down the road. It was back into the Silver Streak, back to the farm, and a completed rescue mission for the man who would give away the bride. The father of the bride having a good sense of humor forgave me.

The Bible refers to those who are born again as the bride of Christ. He is waiting for our arrival. God rejoices over the one who becomes one with Him through His son Jesus Christ. (ISA 62:4) "As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you". You may have at times forgotten your heavenly Father but He has never forgotten you.

Day 15

Planning a Christmas Program

A Christmas tradition carried on in the Meyer family has been the planning and presentation of a family Christmas program that was given on Christmas Eve. This activity was given to the children of the family to come up with ideas. This tradition has been carried on for about the last 70 years. The Julien Meyer family lived in Bellevue, Nebraska, when I was in the 3rd grade and my brother, Dannie, was in the 1st grade. My grandma and grandpa Meyer from South Dakota were visiting us for Christmas. Dannie and I were in the process of planning the annual program when we had some major disagreement. The disagreement ended up in an outright brawl including a fight that raised our voices, caused a wrestling match, and ended up with a lot of sobbing. My grandpa came into the room to inquire what all the commotion was about. "What is the problem?", he asked. We replied between sobs, "We were just planning the Christmas program". Grandpa Louis saw the humor in his grandsons' situation. So much for Peace on Earth and Good Will Toward Men.

A hard lesson to learn at any age is the idea of compromise. Things that seem important to us can often be set aside for the sake of peace. It is not always easy to set aside our differences simply for the sake of peace but it is an attribute of the person who cares more about the other person than getting one's way. We should be firm in the basic tenets of our faith but agree to disagree with the nonessentials. Are you known as a peacemaker? (Matthew 5:19 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.)

Day 16

Happy Trails

During my high school days I joined the Boy Scout troop in Benson, MN, under the leadership of Mr. Skala. Part of the scouting experience included summer camp at Wilderness Camp near Park Rapids, MN. I always enjoyed sleeping in tents, eating in the chow hall, playing games, participating in crafts, and shooting on the archery range. The highlight for me was the summer we spent riding horses on the trail, cooking out, pitching tents, and sleeping in the wilderness. The horses were trained to follow each other on the trails. My most memorable time was the challenge of crossing a river on horseback with water about half way up the horse's body. Each horse followed in single file. My horse crossed without any problem but the saddle cinch had become wet and that posed a problem. As my horse proceeded up the slight incline, the saddle slipped underneath the horse and I went tumbling into the brush. With some help from the guide we managed to restore the saddle to the upright position. A painted pony ridden by my buddy, Tubby, decided he liked the water and lay down in the middle of the stream soaking all of Tubby's gear. I guess I didn't have as much of a problem as my friend.

Do you sometimes get burdened down with the problems of the day? If you look around, I'm sure you will find someone else with much bigger problems than yours. We may often need help from our heavenly guide, but the scripture gives us some instruction that we are also to help others who need help. Galatians 6:2 says "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ". Who can you help today? Help by praying and help by doing.

Day 17

The Easel

Our granddaughter, Becca, was attending college at Iowa State in Ames Iowa in the fashion merchandising program. As part of her assignment she was to participate in a fashion show to which she invited her parents, aunt and uncle, and her grandmother and me. The show went well and we were very proud of her accomplishments. Before returning to Minneapolis, the entourage decided to stop for breakfast the next morning in a small step-up-to-the-counter and order establishment. As we approached the counter to order we all looked at the neat menu hand-written on a small framed blackboard mounted on a 3 legged easel. I decided what I wanted to order, turned around, and bumped the easel thus knocking the menu board off the stand. Out of the corner of my eye I could see the menu board heading for the floor. Quickly grabbing the top of the frame, I was so proud that I had prevented a disaster; however, the frame disintegrated causing the board to crash to the floor, and left me standing with the top of the frame in my hand. I retrieved the pieces very quickly and started to reassemble the menu. The girl behind the counter had seen what happened and promptly replied, "That's OK. Just set the board on the floor against the counter". A roar of laughter from my family continued for about a half-hour as we drank our coffee. I have since been admonished to stay away from all easels at any cost.

Our lives are sometimes like that. We see things falling down all around us and we want to salvage what is left. In our own efforts we try to fix the problem when all we have to do is lay the problem at Jesus counter and let him take care of the maintenance. The Bible

tells us in I Peter 5:7 (KJV) "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. ". If you knock down an easel, let Christ pick up the pieces. He loves you.

Day 18

Meyer Family Singers – Prison Notes

During the summer of 1975 a pastor friend of mine in Waconia, MN, invited our family to come to their church to present an hour long concert. He knew that our family was musical but we had never given a full hour presentation. I accepted the challenge and mustered the family (my wife and four daughters) to start practicing with solos, duets, trios, and instrumental numbers. This humble beginning developed into a part time weekend ministry of gospel music concerts in several churches as the girls grew into and out of their teenage years. An invite also came from the Chaplain of Sandstone Federal Correctional Institution, Sandstone, MN. During the next few years we provided about 14 concerts at that facility and got to meet many inmates who we later shuttled to buses in the Twin Cities with a couple staying at our house overnight after they were released.

One of the memorable concerts in Sandstone was the time I was sitting at the piano with my back to the front row of inmates. During the concert I noticed a note had been placed on my piano bench. During the announcements break by the Chaplain, I opened the note and read, "HELP! I AM BEING HELD AGAINST MY WILL". I turned around and glanced at the front row as they all broke into a silent laughter.

Maybe you feel that way in your spiritual life. You are being held captive. I have some good news for you. Luke 4:18 says, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free". Jesus came to not only present the good news but to be the good news and provide us with an escape route from the bondage of sin. Call on Him and He will answer your note.

Day 19

The Wedding Night

Our wedding was a wonderful event conducted by the late Rev. Harold S. Johnson of Quamba, MN. Many friends and relatives had traveled under adverse road conditions to attend. After the wedding, Joyce and I boarded our Pontiac Silver Streak looking forward to heading out to a point unknown. The snowstorm looked extremely bad and we decided to drive the 2 miles back to the farm for the night. The car also made some terrible noises as we picked up a little speed. We spent the night at the farm. With the dawn we discovered that Joyce's brother, Stan, had covered our headlights with black shoe polish and placed stones inside the hubcaps to create the simulated mechanical problem. The weather was really bad with poor visibility but Stan's added pranks made it look even worse.

Sometimes the circumstances of our lives may look worse than they really are. Our surroundings may seem to be dark and we anticipate the worst conditions. Matthew 11:27 says, "Come unto Me, all ye who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest". You

have an invitation to bring your problems to Jesus, trusting Him to carry the burden and give you rest. God will fight your battles and give you the victory if you place your faith in Him. Let Him remove the blur over your eyes and the noisy circumstances around you.

Day 20

My Mother and The Buffalo

Do you believe in signs? Do you obey them? You surely have seen them: Keep off the Grass, Wet Paint, Do not Enter, Employees Only Beyond This Point, etc. Two of our daughters, Connie and Brenda, who were living at home, joined my wife and I to take a trip to the Black Hills of South Dakota. Their mother, Joyce, had taught them to obey signs but sometimes the old “Do what I say, Not what I do” adage comes up. Such was the case on this trip. Traveling through Custer State Park, one of the highlights is to view the wild buffalo that are free to walk on the roads where your car is located. The challenge to “mother photographer” was to get good photos of the roaming creatures. Right beside the car was a large sign that said, “Stay in your car – buffalo are dangerous”. As we stopped a few hundred feet from the herd, Joyce grabbed her camera, opened the car door, and stepped outside to get a better shot. Daughters Connie and Brenda said, “Mother get back in the car. Those buffalo will charge at you.” After a few photos she got back in the car without incident but the daughters (especially Connie) would not let her forget the disobedience. As we arrived at one of the local tourist traps, Connie purchased a stuffed fluffy buffalo to remind her of our trip. When Connie sees a buffalo today, it reminds her of her mother.

The Bible places many signs in our path to protect us from the dangers of this world. James sets up the sign: “Abstain from all appearance of evil”, yet, we get out of the car and take the risk of being trampled by evil. We may want to get a better look but it gets us into trouble. James says, “Temptation comes from the lure of our own evil desires. These evil desires lead to evil actions, and evil actions lead to deathWhatever is good and perfect comes to us from God.” (James 1:15-17) Don’t be buffalo’d by disobedience but pay attention to the signs about us.

Day 21

The Attitude Adjustment

The year was 1959. My wife, Joyce, and I married a year earlier, had rented a basement apartment near the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, ND, where I was enrolled as a student in Electrical Engineering. The older couple who owned the home lived upstairs and was very strict on what could be done and not be done in that apartment. For example, we were not allowed to install any light bulbs above 40 watts and the TV could not be turned up to any level after ten pm that would disturb them when they went to bed. Joyce had an old Royal typewriter that she used to type up my school reports which they complained was too loud after they went to bed. I did install a 60 watt bulb in one lamp for better vision on the old typewriter. When we came home after a weekend away the bulb had been replaced with a 40 watt bulb.

One day the attitude of the landlord changed drastically. The rear leaf spring in my 1951 Pontiac had broken and my brother-in-law, Stan, shipped one to me from a junkyard in Mora, MN. It was delivered to the top of the stairs inside the door of our Grand Forks, ND, basement apartment and left there for pickup. The upstairs woman came storming

down the stairs, pounded on the door (only Joyce was home) and asked what the item was. She had tried to move it and couldn't lift it. She insisted it had to be moved. Joyce trotted up the stairs, picked up the leaf spring with one hand and walked back down the stairs. From that time on our landlord brought us cake and even provided a baby gift for our first expected child when we left at the end of the semester.

Sometimes a display of our "spiritual" strength can affect the attitude of those around us. Where does that strength come from? Nehemiah 8:10 states, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Rejoice in the Lord and receive your spiritual strength for the day. The Lord can change your attitude.

Day 22

The Identity Crisis

Young children sometimes have difficulty describing the relationships of their mother and father's relatives especially when there are multiple grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. My mother's parents were Frank and Mabel Anderson. My dad's parents were Louis and Carrie Meyer. As young children, it was hard to remember the names for us so we came up with a unique way of distinguishing between the two. Each set of our grandparents had a dog, one named Pal (on the Meyer farm near Rosholt, SD) and one named Nellie (on the Anderson farm near Wheaton, MN). The two sets of grandparents became known as Pal's grandma/grandpa and Nellie's grandma/grandpa. The problem was solved and the identities were newly defined.

There is one other identity that needs to be known and never changed. The apostle Peter addressed the religious leaders of his day when they asked how a lame man had been healed. Acts 4:10 records his words, "Then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed". Today's world may be going to the dogs, but there is a name that brings comfort and peace to those ready to accept it. (Acts 4:12 – "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved"). Many recognize Him as the son of Mary and Joseph, a carpenter, good man, a prophet, or a leader of men. Let us recognize Him by His real name, Jesus, savior of the world.

Day 23

The Mighty Hunters

One of my early remembrances of the mid 1940s around the age of 10 to 12 was our family trips to my Grandpa and Grandma Meyer's farm about 6 miles south of Rosholt, SD. It was always fun to watch my grandpa go to the barn and milk the cows and feed the cats directly from the spigot. Of course we had to try the same thing and ended up with milk on our faces. On one of our trips my brother Dannie and I had gained the right of passage to hunting privileges when we received our brand new Red Ryder BB guns. There was a large barn on the farm with a huge hayloft that was stocked with hay for the cattle and a whole flock of pigeons that offered a hunting opportunity for the two mighty

hunters. On a few occasions we were able to knock down a number of birds that did not go to waste. Grandma knew how to clean the birds, remove the BBs, and fix the “squab” for a nice meal. They were mighty tasty.

I was reminded of the story in Exodus 16 about God’s daily food provision for His people as they traveled through the wilderness to the Promised Land. They wanted MEAT! Exodus 16: 11-15 “The LORD said to Moses, ‘I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.’ That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread (Manna) the LORD has given you to eat.” Sometimes we too may grumble instead of thankfully receiving what the Lord has for us. Thank Him for His provision.

Day 24

My Little Red Radio

My dad, Julien Meyer, an elementary school principal and 6th grade teacher in Benson, MN, enjoyed getting his students involved in science and technology. He had a special love for radio that stemmed from an early exposure to broadcasting and receiving in the 1930s when his dad bought him parts to build a broadcast transmitter which he put on the air to broadcast over short distances. This was just before the FCC came into existence and regulations ensued. The tradition was passed on to me when I was in the fourth grade. One Christmas my Dad had put together a “kit” radio from scratch placed in a small wooden box painted red. The kit required me to follow a diagram and connect the various parts together using wire and installed clips. If the parts were not properly connected the radio would not work. The heart of the radio was a small crystal that contained a wire called a “cat’s whisker” manually moved around on the crystal to tune in a station. We were able to tune in KWLM in Willmar and WCCO in Minneapolis at night. This was perhaps the start of my lifetime career in electronics and communication.

The apostle Paul reminds us that the church is like that radio. There are many parts that need to be connected together correctly. *Ephesians 4:*¹¹ *So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,*¹² *to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up*¹³ *until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.* All these components are tuned together by the one who supplied them.

Day 25

Out of the Mouth of Babes

Many years ago a good friend of ours, Cyril Bundy, from our church passed away. We attended the funeral service to pay our respects. We still have contact with all the children. During the reviewal time, prior to the service, I observed several of the small grandchildren lined up in a row trying to look into the casket. They were talking about grandpa and expressing their thoughts about him. As I came up behind them, trying to

soften the blow of losing a loved one, I said, "It looks like grandpa is taking a nap". One of the little boys whips around and in a very stern voice says, "NO, he's dead!". I guess I was put in my place.

Death for many is something that is difficult to face but it is inevitable. The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27 "Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment". Many people fear judgment from a just God who knows everything about them; however, there is no need to fear Him if you have a loving relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. Verse 28 tells us, "so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him." Trust in Christ by entering this relationship and live for Him today.

Day 26

Rocking the Renault

During my lifetime I have owned many used cars. Some of these vehicles have required frequent and/or resourceful maintenance due to limited finances while supporting a family of 6. In the 1970s I purchased a used French car, the Renault Model R10 (built from 1965-1967) with a rear mounted engine and large front trunk. The four door model was billed as a family car. I would add that they are talking about very small families. We would stuff 4 kids and a dog in the back seat with mom and dad in the front. When we stopped for gas people would stare as 6 of us plus a small dog came out of that small vehicle. The car had a stick shift that was literally a 2 foot stick attached to a ball on floor that shifted the transmission. It developed an intermittent starting problem attributed to a couple missing teeth on the flywheel that engages with the starter. I developed a work around starting method that involved putting the car in gear, keeping my foot off the clutch, and getting the entire family to rock back and forth inside the car while turning on the key. The gear would engage and the car would start. I suppose observers thought we were rocking to the music but we were just starting the car.

Starting the car involved the cooperation of the entire family. This is the kind of cooperation we should see in our churches; All people sharing God's love with those around them and supporting the efforts of those who are followers of the Lord. I am reminded of the chorus about an effort to show the world that Christianity really works, "They will know we are Christians by our love". John 13:34-35 says, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Christ loved you so much that He gave His life for you.

Day 27

Hard Buns

No, this is not a story about firming up that back area used for sitting. It is a story related to baking. My wife, Joyce, is an excellent cook and usually a great baker in the kitchen. I could testify to that fact after being married for a year and having gained about 40 pounds. Bakers usually have some specialties in pies, cakes, cookies, or breads. Joyce's specialty is cookies, making several hundred at Christmas time for many years. Have you

ever noticed that one failure is often remembered while all the other successes are forgotten when they have been consumed? One such incident occurred when Joyce made some buns for dinner many years ago. The buns were so hard that it was impossible for us to bite them. Because dogs can chew through rawhide bones, we decided to give them to our boxer/lab mix named Mike who was leashed outside. Joyce looked out the window sometime later to observe Mike digging individual holes in the dirt and burying the buns one by one. He probably did not want to embarrass her or thought the ground might make them softer with time.

As we think about our own lives I am sure we can identify our failures. The Bible tells us in Phil 3:12-14: *“Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”* Those who receive and follow Christ have a future with benefits that are out of this world. Let's press on toward that prize.

Story 28 May Baskets

As a kid you probably participated in the activity of May 1st of hanging May baskets on a friend's door, ringing the doorbell, and waited for them to come and chase you. After I was married, Joyce and her brother Stan introduced me to May Basket Hanging that was taken to a whole new level. It was customary among the cousins to carry out the tradition during the entire month of May. Typically the early evening was used to meticulously set up a strategic plan of action as to who would drive to the location (primarily another farm), time of attack, who would deliver the basket to the door, and occasionally checking to see if the destined party was going to be home without being detected. The next step was a trip to the grocery store to buy some treats to fill up a grocery store bag to be used as the May basket. Groups up to twelve people may car pool together, any night in May, to deliver the goods. After the package was set on the doorstep all the participants would scatter and hide in the woods, in sheds, in the barn, in a corn field, or climb up trees. The targeted person would need to catch and tag everyone in the group before we left the premises. The stories are too numerous to share here but a good time was had by all. On one occasion Stan's cousin, Elddy (a target), even hid in an outside shed waiting for someone to attack on a suspicious night. This ended up with Elddy chasing another cousin, Vernon (in this upper 60's), for a couple miles down a country road in the darkness until they both ran out of breath. This activity was not for whimps. Sometimes you would hear a loud screech as someone ran into a barb wire fence in the dark of the night. I can remember the time I got chased by a skunk after hiding behind a wood pile. I was apparently invading his territory.

All this activity reminded me of the night Jesus was betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. His disciples fled in every direction and did not want to be caught. Judas was the first to leave Him with a betrayal that leads to His arrest in the Garden. Jesus responds to His captors in Mark 14: Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? ⁴⁹ I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be

fulfilled.” Verse 50-51 describe the disciples reaction, “⁵⁰ Then they all forsook Him and fled. ⁵¹ Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his* naked *body*. And the young men laid hold of him, ⁵² and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.” Are you one who flees from the Lord or do you stick around when the going gets tough? Jesus will never leave you or forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5)

Day 29

Another Renault Problem

You may recall my story about “Rocking the Renault”. This vehicle seemed to have its share of problems. I was using the car to drive to my job at Honeywell in Hopkins, MN, where I worked for 6 years as an instrumentation technician repairing and calibrating electronic equipment. One evening as I was driving back to my home in the Glen Lake area of Minnetonka, I was going through my turn one block from home when I shifted down one gear and to my surprise the shift rod broke off in my hand. There was no way to do any more shifting. As I rolled up to the garage I stepped down the clutch with one foot and placed the other foot on the brake. There was no automatic garage door opener so I blew the horn at my wife in the house. Joyce yelled, “What do you want?” I held up the broken handle out the window and said, “I can’t shift the car”. I later had the rod welded back onto the small ball on the floor and all worked well.

Have you ever wanted to change something in your life but can’t seem to shift gears? Often we need some outside help to do that. Perhaps you want to become physically fit and realize that you need a personal trainer. To become spiritually fit you may need to replace that missing link of daily conversations with the Lord that we call prayer. The Bible commands us in *I Thessalonians 5: (16) Rejoice always, (17) pray without ceasing, (18) in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

Day 30

The Talking Head

The Lord has blessed Joyce and me with four wonderful daughters. They were all born within a 6 year period and became close to each other as they were growing up. Each one has distinct personality traits. Some walk sooner than others and some talk sooner than others. It was the case of our two older daughters, Vickie (#1) and Connie (#2) that demonstrates this case. Vickie had not spoken many words but always had an inquiring mind with her utterance of “what’s that?” and a problem saying her name. Connie developed a little larger vocabulary and used it quite extensively during her first couple of years. She apparently realized that she was talking a lot. One day while staying at her Uncle Stanley’s home in Quamba, MN, as a toddler, she walked up to his recliner, peered over the top of the arm rest with her big blue eyes and said “Uncle Stanley, What do I do with my talking head?” Stan howled in laughter and never forgot the quote.

Sometimes many of us may talk too much. I have heard it said that God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason. If someone has fallen in sin or even appears to be guilty of sin we like to beat up on them when really they need our love and support. Sometimes we just need to be a good listener. If you’re a student of the Bible you know the story of

Job and his so called three friends who were slow to listen and quick to criticize. The friends thought Job's loss of family and possessions was caused by sin in his life. God gave those friends some advice: Job 42 (7) After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has." Let's be quick to listen and slow in our criticism and then be truthful.

Day 31 Potential Danger

During the days of raising four daughters within six years of age my wife, Joyce, would often need to shuttle them to doctors, dentists, and shopping trips while I was working. To accommodate the larger family I had purchased a 1960s Plymouth Kingswood station wagon. Joyce was transporting all four children on Penn Ave in Bloomington, MN, near the Southtown Shopping Center. She had stopped at a red light, waited for the light to turn green, and then proceeded through the intersection when all of a sudden good sized delivery truck ran the red light and hit her on rear panel of the wagon, puncturing a hole in the gas tank and dumping about 20 plus gallons of gasoline on Penn Avenue. The impact also ripped off a large steel bumper on the delivery truck. This was before the days of cell phones, meaning she had to locate a phone at a local business to call the local authorities. They told her to just exchange driver's license and insurance information. When they found out the vehicle was sitting in a puddle of gas, police and fire trucks were on the scene in about 10 minutes. No one was injured in the crash.

Every generation seems to follow a similar scenario. Many turn to God only when there is an emergency in their life. I have heard them described as a "fox hole" Christians. World War I and II students know what this means. Life may seem to come crashing down on them, their gas tank is drained, and they have no place to turn. Potential threats of danger lie all about us and we need to be prepared to meet them head on. The threats are not only physical but spiritual as well. God's Word tells us to be prepared. I Peter 5:8 says "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Spend time with God's Son Jesus Christ before the truck hits you.

Day 32 A Slippery Slope

I tip my hat to all who have lived through a Minnesota winter. The environment can sometimes be dangerous to our health. Such was the case many years ago when our four daughters were all in grade school. An overnight ice storm glazed the yard and sidewalk of our Minnetonka home with a solid sheet of ice. It was a school day morning when mom and dad had prepared the four kids for their cold walk up the block to catch the bus. After finishing my morning breakfast, I said good bye to the family, and proceeded out the door to work unaware of the hazardous ice conditions. Before I knew it, my feet were in the air, my brief case flew away, and I landed hard on my head. The shock seemed to

knock me out for a moment and when I came to my senses I was able to get up on my knees to discover that blood was running down my face. I started crawling back to the house on all fours. My wife, Joyce, had just looked out the window and panicked at my condition. She rushed out the door in her robe and immediately landed on her back end and started to slide down our sloped sidewalk as I watched her go by me. We both managed to get back into the house where we informed the daughters they were not to go out of the house. After a trip to the hospital and seven stitches in my head, we were able to resume our somewhat normal lives.

Maybe you have slipped away from a life that you started with Jesus Christ some time ago. Did you know that Jesus is pursuing you to return to His family. He emphasizes that fact with a parable about sheep. Luke 15:³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. You can run but you can’t hide. He loves you so much that He won’t let you go.

Day 33

Which One is the Mother?

I love old people. As a matter of fact I am becoming one of them. During our time of raising our four daughters we played and sang as a family in several nursing and retirement homes. Did you ever notice that as many elderly people age they start to talk louder and louder? This is understandable as the hearing starts to go. One Sunday morning the family was assembled in front of the congregation at the Jones Harrison home in St Louis Park, MN. The four girls and my wife were all standing together in a row and getting ready to sing. They were being observed by a row of elderly ladies in the back row. One of the mature congregants turned to her neighbor and in a loud voice you could hear her comment, “Which one is the mother?”. This comment made my wife, Joyce, feel very good but I am not sure about the other four as they started to giggle. Undoubtedly, some of the confusion was probably due to aging eyes as well.

Ecclesiastes 12:1-8 describes the aging process in a poetic manner. Here is a short quote about strength, chewing, and hearing from that passage:

“When the guardians of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, And the grinders are idle because they are few, and they who look through the windows grow blind; When the doors to the street are shut, and the sound of the mill is low; When one waits for the chirp of a bird, but all the daughters of song are suppressed; ...”

Thank the Lord for your hearing and protect what you have left. Turn down the ipod and stereo volume and listen for the Lord’s voice.

Day 34

A Fresh Cup of Coffee

Most of my relatives on my dad's side of the family grew up and lived in the Northeast corner of South Dakota. Dad was raised on a small farm just South of Rosholt, SD. He had one sister who lived on a farm in the area with her husband, Bertel Malm, until he passed away. Myrtle then moved into a second story apartment located in the town of Rosholt. It was a beautiful day for a drive from the Twin Cities to Rosholt. Arriving in town early, Dannie and I decided to get some breakfast before going to visit our Aunt Myrtle. The town has a few businesses and basically one place to get a meal, the Corner Bar/Restaurant. We were served a nice breakfast by a young waitress who obviously was not happy working on this weekend. Being the only customers in the place we had to summon her to get service and attention during the meal. My request after a period of time was to dump out the cold coffee in my cup and replace it with fresh coffee. She then took my cup and dumped the remaining coffee out on my empty breakfast plate, filled my cup, and walked away. We were so dumbfounded at the action my brother said, "That killed her tip completely". My response was that I thought it was so entertaining that we should leave a generous tip for the entertainment. We at least had a good laugh over our breakfast.

In the experiences of life you may have noticed that there are people who treat you like you don't exist. We sometimes treat the Lord that way as well. He desires to have you talk to Him in prayer and serve Him willingly with a "loving servant's heart" but we only call Him when we need something. He loves you and wants to be recognized. I Cor 1:9 tells us that, "God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord". Your calling as a Christian is to be in fellowship with our Lord. Have a fresh cup of coffee with Jesus today and recognize the presence of others in your life.

Visit the Rosholt, SD, website at <http://www.rosholtsd.com/index.htm>

Day 35

Horsing Around

During my teenage years I joined the Boy Scouts in Benson, MN, under the leadership of my shop teacher and scout master, Mr. Skala. One of the scouting activities I always enjoyed was a one week stay at Wilderness Camp with our troop near Park Rapids, MN. One year I signed up to ride a horse for the entire week. We would ride about 20-25 miles per day. A chuck wagon with all the food and supplies followed along with the trail horses. The activity earned me a merit badge in horsemanship, although you might question the award when observing one event. Part of the trail required us to cross a stream that came up about half way on the horse's belly. After crossing the stream I had to negotiate a steep upgrade in the terrain. The cinch for my saddle around the horses belly became wet and loosened up causing the saddle to slip under the horse as I went up the hill. I toppled into the underbrush and my horse continued to follow the other trail horses. One of the leaders retrieved my horse, tightened the cinch, and helped me get back in the saddle again.

In our walk with the Lord we may get thrown off the saddle and need someone to help us get back on track. The Bible tells us that there is a “someone” who is ready and willing to help us. That someone is God’s own Son, Jesus Christ. Paul gave a final greeting to the Corinthians as he left their presence. (II Corinthians 13:11) “Finally, brother and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you”.

Day 36

My Wife on the Roof

My wife, Joyce, was raised on a farm and subjected to a lot of outdoor activities including milking cows, cleaning barn, driving tractor, picking berries in the wild, and weeding the garden. After we were married she continued to perform the outdoor events as well in spite of her asthma. One of those events included cleaning off the roof with a shovel of our two story home in Minnetonka, MN, after a big snow storm. One day Joyce was standing on the peak of our roof when a neighbor walked by on the road and shouted, “What are you doing up there?”. Her reply was, “I’m learning how to fly!”. I don’t know if he believed her or not. On another occasion the roof was quite slippery under the snow and she slipped and slid on her back end right to the edge of the roof, ending up sitting in the rain gutter with her feet dangling over the edge. Somehow she managed to climb back up the roof and re-enter the house through the upstairs window that we used for roof access.

This could have been a catastrophic event but God had other plans for her as He has for each one of us. God sends His angels to protect us when we are faced with potential death situations or seemingly impossible problems.

Psalm 91:10-12 gives us a promise that, “¹⁰ **no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.** ¹¹ **For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;** ¹² **they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.**” The next time you face a trial in your life remember that God is watching over you.

Day 37

My Socks are Wet

Several years ago I enjoyed a summer family retreats at a cabin on Pebble Lake near Fergus Falls, MN, that was owned by the family of my son-in-law, Denny Tjaden. Our daughter, Vickie Tjaden, also joined us at this favorite fishing spot. One year on the fishing opener Denny and I were getting our fishing gear together in the dark on the dock when Denny noticed his boat was moving away from the dock. The only way he could reach the floating vessel was to jump into the cold dark water and head for the boat. He managed to secure the boat back to the dock but was very wet and cold. We both took a lot of teasing from our wives when we got back to the cabin later on. Denny removed his extremely wet socks and dried them over a railing. As a remembrance of this event I usually supply him with a new set of dry socks on his birthday.

There may be some events in your life where things seem cold and dark around you. The only solution to solving the problem is to step into the dark uncomfortable situation with

a faith that trusts the Lord Jesus Christ. Let him recover your life and secure you to the Heavenly Father who is secure and never changes. He has invited you in 1 Peter 5:7 to “Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you”.

Day 38

Home Sweet Home

Joyce and I were married in January of 1958 and as newly-weds, we needed to find some affordable housing. Our first home consisted of a 28 ft. by 8 ft. wide trailer home purchased from my parents. This provided some mobile housing attached to the hitch on my 1951 Hudson Hornet. We first pulled the home to Grand Forks, ND, where I had been going to school. At the end of the spring semester in 1959 we moved the trailer to Shakopee, MN, and parked it in the Valley View Trailer Park. During the next two years two daughters (Vickie and Connie) arrived as we continued to inhabit our cozy domain. The living room was turned into a nursery, with a kitchen in the middle and our bedroom at the end of the short hall. As they grew, one of their favorite pastimes was running down the short hall, sliding the last couple of feet on a loose rug and slamming into the closed bedroom door. Their mom tried to discourage this activity as I was sleeping in this bedroom during the day and working the late night shift at Northwest Airlines as a radio mechanic. Can you imagine trying to keep two toddlers quiet in an 8x28 foot area? We all survived and rejoiced all the more in our first stationary home, a 3 bedroom Rambler, in Bloomington, MN. This house looked like a mansion to us.

We too often become restless and want to move about in our Christian lives. The world around you may seem to be closing in but I have good news. God has given us direction in His instruction manual, the Bible, how to deal with this situation. Psalm 46:10 states, “Be still, and know that I *am* God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! John 14:2 also says, “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. God has prepared a mansion for us to enjoy at the end of this residence. We may feel “boxed-in” on this earth but wait, there’s more. Honor God and His Son, Jesus Christ, on this earth and He will honor you at your next location. By the way, the rent is free and no house payments are required.

Pictures: Our first mobile home and second mansion in Bloomington, MN.

Day 39

How I Met Your Mother

During the summer of 1956 a team of 4 young people came to Benson Baptist Church, Benson, MN, to present some evangelistic services. I attended one of those meetings and made a commitment to follow Jesus for the rest of my life. The commitment prompted me with a desire to serve others and make known the gospel message. During the same summer this team also conducted meetings at the Quamba Baptist Church, Quamba, MN, where my wife-to-be attended and she also became acquainted with the same group. The following year 2 members of the team would no longer be available. Joyce and I were recruited to become new team members with Janie and Charlie both from northern

Minnesota. We were to meet in Minneapolis to make preparations for the coming year, working with young people in metro churches. Charlie and I had rented rooms in a home on Pleasant Avenue, our first meeting spot. I was the last to arrive. There I saw a beautiful young lady dressed in a tan dress with a black floral design leaning up against a large elm tree on Pleasant Avenue. I think this was a match made in heaven.

Do you believe in love at first sight? There is someone who loved you right from the start. Listen to what the scripture tells us:

1 John 4:10-12 : “¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son (Jesus) as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” Demonstrate your love for God today by showing some kindness to another person.

Day40

A Whirlwind Romance

The year was 1957. I had moved to Minneapolis to join three other individuals in a gospel team. One of those individuals was a beautiful young girl from Mora, MN. Over the course of the next few months a relationship developed between us and I proceeded to win her heart. To support our lives during this time Joyce had taken a position as a secretary with the Lewis Bolt and Nut Company near the University of Minnesota campus and I took on a job as a radio mechanic (electronic technician) at Northwest Airlines installing and troubleshooting radio and navigation equipment on aircraft. Joyce worked a regular day shift job (8-5) and I worked the night shift from 8 pm to 4 am. This complicated our dating (except for weekends when we were busy in several churches) and schedules to see each other. My routine was to go to work at 8 pm, get some breakfast after work around 5 am, head over to Joyce's apartment and take her to work around 7:30 am, go home to my apartment and sleep during the day. The rigorous schedule was fueled by a love for one another. To make a long story short, we met in July 1957, engaged in October, and married in January 1958. 57 years later the rest is history.

Over the years I have observed that the degree of love often determines the amount of time you spend with another person. Love can be measured in terms of time. Jesus said, “Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.” (John 14:21) Are you spending time with Jesus? I love that old hymn, “Take Time to be Holy, Speak oft' with the Lord”. How about taking some “time” to be with Him today.

Day 41

Going Together, Enjoying the Trip

A saying that you often see on a plaque in a bookstore is, “The Family that Prays Together Stays Together”. I would like to introduce another one, “The Family that Sings together Stays Together”.

During the early years of our four daughters becoming teenagers I was challenged by a pastor friend in Waconia, MN, to come to his church and present an hour of music in 1976. As I got off the phone, my wife, Joyce, asked me, “What did you agree to now?” I mustered the family together to form the “Meyer Family Singers” and begin putting a program together. We had been singing for our own enjoyment for a few years but we now had opportunity to share our music with others. The lineup consisted of myself

(singing tenor and piano), Joyce (singing lead), Vickie (singing and violin), Connie (singing alto and guitar), Sherrill (singing and violin), and Brenda (singing plus saxophone or bass guitar). In the following years, the family gave many gospel music concerts in churches in MN, SD, and WI plus 14 concerts at the Sandstone Federal Correctional Institute. One of the memorable moments happened at a concert in Quamba, MN, (where Joyce and I were married) when we were singing a song called, "The Family of God". One of the phrase went, "Going together, Enjoying the trip", when the leg of Brenda's chair was too close to the edge of the stage causing her to plummet down a 2 foot drop unto the floor with her bass guitar. She held up her guitar in the air and said, "It's OK". Knowing she was not hurt, this became a humorous image whenever we sang that song again.

I am reminded that the Family of God is one who should be living in harmony with one another. We all have a special God given talent that he expects us to use for the uplifting of others. All talents need to be blended together to make a joyful noise to the Lord. If one falls done, we need to get them back up on the stage and join the chorus. Psalm 100:1 "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. ² Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. ³ Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture..."

Day 42

Stereotyping Fosters Fear

During the late 1970's and early 80's our musical family was invited by the chaplain of the Federal Correctional Institute in Sandstone, MN, to present a gospel concert at the facility. The first time our four daughters who in their young teens (or approaching teenage) anticipated going inside they were fearful and crying because of their preconception of what might happen to them inside a prison. The fear was enhanced as we went through security. The sound of clanking doors, inspection of purses and bags, examination inside musical instruments and a sound system for contraband added to the anxiety. Once through the enclosed gates we were met by several prisoners who carried all our instruments and equipment, including a two 75 pound speakers slung over their shoulders, to the chapel and watched us as we went through our setup process. By the end of the hour long concert and many accolades from the inmates, all our girls were asking, "When can we come back again?". We returned about a dozen more Sunday evenings over the next months. This resulted in many other experiences that I will share in other stories.

Have you ever been fearful to do something the Lord has asked you to do? Your fear may come from an inner feeling that you are not equipped for the job. Maybe your fear comes from a perception of the environment you are asked to enter or people in that environment. Two Bible verses come to mind:

(KJV - 2 Timothy 1:7) For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (KJV – Matthew 28:20) ... and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Do you feel called to a task by God? Remember these verses. If God gives you a job to do, He will go before you and empower you to carry out His plan.

Day 43

Revenge of the Bunny

Our family lived in Minnetonka, MN, for 42 years in a home with a 1 ¼ acre wooded lot that required mowing about ¾ acre of grass. The first few years I mowed the property with a walk behind power mower. As I got older and maybe smarter I bought a riding lawn mower that made the chore a little more pleasant. Sometimes the lawn would become somewhat long and it was difficult to see what lurked in the grass. Mama rabbit had buried her nest and hidden her babies in the tall grass in a shady area under a pine tree. As I mowed through the area, as I had done many times before, baby bunnies were flying everywhere as they were picked up and propelled by the mower. Yes, there were casualties and I noticed one that had an injury at the base of one of his ears as he went running into the woods. Fast forward a couple of years and I noticed a grown rabbit with a cut ear often sitting at the end of the sidewalk as I walked to the garage to go to work. I'm not sure what he was thinking but my wife, Joyce, said that he was planning his revenge. From that day on I kept an eye out for him in case she was right.

We may sometimes act like Joyce predicted about the bunny. Someone has hurt us and the natural tendency (called human nature) is to strike back. We want our revenge on the person that committed the act and caused us grief. A Bible concept that we should consider before retaliating is stated in Romans 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will

repay, says the Lord.” This is God’s commandment and promise, not a suggestion. It is a hard lesson to learn but totally worth the effort if you are a follower of Jesus Christ. Don’t let your wrath or the wrath of another person control you. God does not break His promises. I must have been forgiven. The bunny never attacked.

Day 44

My First Try

I was the first born in a family of 4 siblings. Each child has a different personality and set of traits. On a cold Minnesota December night in my home town of Benson, MN, my brother, Dannie, was marrying his high school sweetheart, Arlene Simonson. My father and mother accompanied me and my wife, Joyce, to the wedding. We took off our overshoes, hung up the coats on the church coat rack, and attended a beautiful wedding. Following the service my dad went to the parking lot to warm up the car as we only had a few blocks to go home. My mom, Joyce, and I went to the coat rack to get our coats to prepare for the cold outside. In haste I put on my overshoes while being observed by my mom and wife. Joyce chuckled as she comments to mom, “Look at your son. He has his overshoes on the wrong feet”. Mom looked at her and said, “What did you expect? He was my first try”.

Even though we may not be perfect, there is one who is perfect. His original creation described in Genesis caused Him to step back, observe the result, and claim, “It is good”. Genesis 1:31 “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.” Even though man messed up this creation, He never withdrew His love for us and sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to prove that. Check it out in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Thank Him today for this wonderful gift and strive to be more like Him. God loves you.

Day 45

The Fix-It Man

My dad, Julien J. Meyer, was an elementary principal and 6th grade teacher for many years in the Benson, MN, school system (1950s-60s). He was also known as a person who could fix things from mechanical gadgets, toasters, automobiles, broadcast transmitters, radio receivers, tape recorders, and much more. This ability enabled him to open up a “FIX-IT” shop in White Rock, SD, during my pre-school years. His background comes from being raised on a farm in South Dakota during the depression area when money was tight for “new” things and repairing the “old” was a way of life. During his teaching years he also perfected the art of crocheting and made some beautiful doilies that adorned the house. Dad was willing to try anything including art and painting. I have one of his paintings of the Minnesota State Capital on my office wall that shows his dedication to the state of Minnesota. My one memory of a fix-it project gone bad was when he decided to mend a tear in one of his trousers. With needle and thread in hand, still wearing the trousers, he stitched up the tear and sewed his trousers to his long winter underwear. He probably turned future fix-it jobs of this nature over to mom or at least removed his trousers.

Webster's dictionary defines the word "Fix" to Mean:

- a) to make (something) whole or able to work properly again
- b) to deal with or correct (a problem)
- c) to attach (something) in such a way that it will not move

Remember that God is the real "Fix-it" man. He wants you to bring Him your problems. He can fix them and make you work properly again. The secret is to attach ourselves to Jesus Christ who is not only the Savior but also the sustainer of life.

Psalm 55:22 – *"Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved"*.

Day 46

Beware of Falling Trees

Our home in the Glen Lake Area of Minnetonka, MN, was our dwelling place for 42 years from about 1965 – 2007. The 1-1/4 acre lot was surrounded by trees that were originally planted by a care taker at the Glen Lake Sanitarium during the days of the polio epidemic. Some of the trees were very old, rotting, and needed to be cut down. My brother-in-law, Stan Erickson, a farmer from Mora, MN, had come down to take out a specific tree planted next to the garage. Stan had dropped several trees in his life time and was very skilled at cutting down trees. This operation required the tree to be dropped precisely away from the garage and down my 100 foot driveway located about 15 feet from the house. For a little added protection, Stan tied a long rope to the tree as high as he could reach and instructed me to guide the tree down the driveway by pulling on the rope when the tree would start to fall. A notch was cut in the tree to direct the fall and Stan began the finishing cut. As the tree started to fall, I started to run down the driveway, pulling on the rope with all my might, when suddenly I slipped and fell. I rolled down a short incline at the side of the driveway as the tree came down. The tree was exactly in the center of the driveway with branches spread out on both sides. Stan's booming voice could be heard, "Gary, are you OK?" I had survived and emerged from the numerous branches, looking like some creature coming out of the black lagoon in my long brown coat. Holding up my hand with the OK sign assured Stan I had made it.

To me this was an example of God's protection in the face of calamity. You can probably think of instances in your life where His hand of protection was evident. The Bible tells us in Psalm 5:11 that there is a place of protection for those who seek shelter in the right place. "But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them that those who love your name may rejoice in you." God's protection was with me that day. Are you taking refuge in the Lord today? He has an open invitation to turn to Him, rejoice in His name, and receive His protection.

Day 47

The Rescue

An activity that I enjoyed many years ago was going fishing with my son-in-law, Denny Tjaden. Our favorite spot was their family cabin on Pebble Lake in northern Minnesota.

We caught many Panfish and spent time trolling for Northerns. Denny brought his boat and motor that provided hours of pleasure on the water. On one occasion we were out in the middle of the lake and the motor decided not to start. That posed a problem as we had forgotten to bring along the oars and had no source of propulsion. Realizing that the sun was setting and darkness would soon be upon us, we started yelling at our wives, Joyce and Vickie on shore to get us some help. They looked around on the shore and found the neighbor's peddle boat parked next door. Commandeering the vessel they peddled out to our location, tossed us a rope, and towed us to shore. The rescue mission was successful.

This reminded me of a story in the Bible about some sailors (namely, Jesus disciples) who had gone out fishing when a great storm arose on the Lake of Galilee. The boat was tossed around and they had no way to navigate to shore. They shouted over the storm to wake up Jesus who was sleeping through it all. Jesus simply rebuked the storm and said, "Peace, be still", and there was a great calm. (Mark 4:35-41).

Day 48

A Diet of Waffles

During the early years of marriage I discovered that my wife, Joyce, was a wonderful cook. She had grown up on the farm and learned how to cook for threshing crews from her mother at a very young age. It was evident that I enjoyed that trait a little too much as I gained about 40 pounds in our first year of marriage. As we started to have children, Joyce developed a number of medical problems over the years including a few miscarriages, a still born daughter, gall bladder surgery, yellow jaundice, diabetes, and more that put her in the hospital many times. This resulted in dad having to do the cooking. I did get quite good with a can opener but had a specialty of making waffles using a blender recipe. Apparently I had a lot of practice at this delectable dish as one day the response from my daughters was, "When is mom coming home from the hospital? We can't eat many more waffles."

This reminds me of Moses leading the Israelites through the wilderness on their way to the promise land. God provided manna from heaven every day to sustain them on their journey but they got tired of the same food day after day for forty years. Moses is recorded in Duet 8:3 (ESV) saying, "And He (God) humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with **manna**, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord". God speaks to us through the Bible. This is a food that we also need to partake of every day. Take time to read it. Our spiritual survival is dependent on believing His words. I don't think my waffles were as nutritious as the manna but they did help us survive. My cooking skills have improved over the years.

Day 49

It's Only a Game

I grew up in a time when there was no television, no cell phones, no computers, and no internet. For many of you reading this story it may be hard to imagine such an era because you have grown up with all this technology. For those who are a little more mature in age, we have had to adapt to these surroundings. My granddaughter, Rachel, was one of those who started out using computers in grade school when DOS was the operating system. She is now teaching elementary education in Japan. You may even ask,

“What is DOS?”. I learned the “Disk Operating System” (before windows) along with her when she was in the first few grades of school. I was amazed at her knowledge as I sat down one day to play a computer game with her. To start the game she went to a DOS prompt, typed in the name of the program and instructed me in the operation of the game controls.

As the game progressed I pretended to become really upset as I was making some mistakes in the execution of commands. She turned to me and said, “Now Grandpa, don’t be so upset. It’s only a game”.

I think this world would be a better place if we would apply this principle to our living. We sometimes become so upset with the circumstances around us and take it out on others. I am not saying that life is a game that doesn’t matter but take time to laugh at yourself once in a while. Lighten up. There are some benefits to injecting some humor into your life now and then. Proverbs 16:24 says, "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." Instead of reacting in a negative way use some “pleasant words” instead. We are told here that it is good for both our spiritual and physical well-being. When you are in the midst of a struggle remember the old saying, “This too will pass”. By the way I ended up teaching computer technology for 13 years in a technical college.

Day 50

Sleep Well Tonight

Discipline of children is the responsibility of parents. Mom and dad working together to help the youngsters grow up to be self-sustaining, productive individuals with the required skills to not only survive but flourish in the world they have been given. Part of that training comes from a quality education. Success at this endeavor also requires the proper amount of sleep to be alert for the next school day. Our 4 daughters slept in 2 bedrooms upstairs during their school days. Mom and I would try to get them to bed at a decent hour but four giggly girls within talking distance could often be heard downstairs as well. Sometimes footsteps could be heard as they moved around. One night we had all retired for the night but Joyce could hear that the motion upstairs had not yet settled down. Joyce asked me to go up and stop the commotion. Standing at the bottom of the stairway, I yelled up the stairs to them to get back to bed and stop talking. It stopped for a while but after a few minutes Joyce could hear a lot of giggling going on. She got up and found the girls at the top of the stairway giggling and looking down at dad who was propped against the wall in a standing position, sound asleep. Her commands got us all back to bed.

According to statistics there are millions of people who have trouble sleeping at night. This could be due to worry, physical pain, bad habits, stress, insomnia, nightmares, and more. The Bible has a lot to say about sleep. Two verses that caught my eye. First, Proverbs 3:24: “When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet”. Second, Psalm 127:2: “It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep”. Jesus demonstrated His faith in the Father’s protection when He went to sleep on the boat in the middle of a violent storm. Whatever storm of life you are going through, trust in the Lord for protection and sleep well.