



## **It can be a transforming experience!**

A lady at Catholic Charities spoke with me yesterday as I handed her a flyer about our upcoming “Caring for the Caregivers” event on May 13th. She said she is half way into the journey as caregiver. At the May 13th event we will look at the four stages of caregiving, a progressing need for increased care and what half way might mean.

As caregivers we may be focused on the increasing needs of our parent or spouse, but God may be focused on blessings to give us in this journey as well as His care for our loved one. We can be transformed by seeing God’s blessings and provisions in the midst of suffering and pain. What are those blessings and provisions?

The first blessing is a growing understanding that this responsibility might be more difficult than we thought it might be. God provides for us a special need for Him. He asks, “Will you put your trust in me?” He always wants us to trust Him, now it will be at a deeper level. Few of us are experts. We do not understand all these complicated pieces relating to physical, emotional and spiritual challenges. We need the wisdom that God gives when we ask Him. James 1:5

The second blessing calls us to re-examine the meaning and values of life. The losses and suffering our loved one experiences are losses we see, feel and share. We are given the opportunity to re-examine the things that will remain. Faith, hope and love are three that Paul describes in I Cor. 13.

The third blessing is prayer. I mean the prayer for the one we love. While their bodies and minds may be wasting away, we pray for them and lift them up with our prayers. Those prayers help by keeping our attitude in a right relationship with God and the one we love. As one concerned caregiver shared the other day, we hear our loved one say they just want to die. We pray that death can be seen as being in the light of the presence of God and not just absent from the suffering of the body. Paul talks about his body wasting away while his spirit is being renewed day by day. We pray that this will happen for the one we love. II Cor 4:16.

The fourth blessing can be an enriched reading of scripture. Scripture gives us the words of truth and life. Truth in scripture describes the sinfulness of humans and the holiness of God. The truth is God calling people to trust in Him and look to Him. Life in scripture is also a guide for us to know how we should live. Many of the feelings we experience as caregivers are described in the Psalms. The Psalms tell us what to do with those feelings. Trusting in God is a decision. Psalm 119:105

The fifth blessing is a transformation of our selves. Jesus spoke about the kingdom of God. It is a place of living that is beyond our earthly kingdoms of strife, injustice, suffering, false Gods, and financial distress. It is a kingdom that we see through spiritual eyes. Our bodies will die and decay, but our spirit will live on. By nature we look at life in a very limited, selfish way. Our minds have the capacity to change our thinking and scripture presents to us a way of seeing life through God’s eyes.

Scripture calls us to change both our hearts and minds. It is with our heart and minds

that Jesus calls us to follow Him. Whether we have been a Christian all our life or are new to the faith, placing our trust in Jesus and fixing our eyes on Him in our caregiving journey can be a life changing time of enriching our faith. The one we care about might benefit from our renewed faith and love. Rom 12:1-2.

May the love of Jesus, God's peace that passes all understanding and the comfort of the Holy Spirit renew your heard and mind.