

“I could be the ‘poster child’ ...”

Melanie’s true life story...

... High School cheerleader

... college student

... the demons she fought

... her memorial service.

Assembled and edited by

Richard R. Dymmel, Ed.D.

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An Adobe Acrobat file of this book is available at our ministry website, **www.CrimsonWhite.org**

Possible titles (not yet finally decided):

“I could be the ‘poster child’ ...”

Melanie’s Quests / Paths / Her Story

This is the story of Melanie Manley

Cheerleader... College student (Elon University) ...

Seeking - college, acceptance, more

Fighting “demons” of alcohol and drugs, and fighting real demons

Wanting “more,” wanting peace, wanting Jesus

Dying

Remember the movie title, “Saving Private Ryan”? How about **“Saving Melanie”**?

This “book” was assembled at the request of Melanie. She wanted me to help her “tell her story” so that others might not make the same mistakes she made and make the good choice she eventually made.

One of her “good choices” was shortly after we met and she decided to subscribe to a publication I write. She stayed on our mailing list and that is partly how we stayed in contact over the years from her being in my freshman Statistics class at Elon University until she called me several years later and said, “I want what you have...” Then she made the ultimate good choice that changed her eternity.

You can go to our web site, www.CrimsonWhite.org, and (a) find an Acrobat (. Pdf) free download of this book, (b) read about the “Crimson & White Connection” publication and several years of back issues to see the kind of stuff we write, and (c) a few other articles stored there.

If you find the “Crimson & White Connection” interesting, it’s free to subscribe. We send either hard copy by “snail-mail” or will email you a pdf file. (Several pastors and Youth Leaders get the email version, print it, and make copies to distribute. I’ve had a few pastors tell me they have used my stuff in their sermons.

A “subscription form” is on the next page. You can fill in and send it, mail me a note with the information, or email me the information. (If you are under 18, we ask that a parent or guardian sign the form, too, approving your subscription. – We often talk about morals, values issues, sex, relationships, alcohol, etc., etc.; “hard issues.”)

We hope to hear from you.

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C&WC started with 37 college students on a mailing list in the Summer of 1998. That quickly grew to over 200. Students now number just under a hundred. Adults of all ages read the C&WC now. Now in 2014, we print and distribute over 800 hard copies and close to 100 go by email as far as Australia, Sweden, Brazil, Mozambique, and a couple more countries. Our latest expansion started with 1 prison inmate 7 years ago and now we place 250 copies in prisons in 17 states.

If you'd like to be on our mail/prayer list, and have the Crimson & White Connection mailed free to you, fill this out
and mail it to:

4401 Wild Oak Lane, Greensboro, NC 27406-8306

*** or email to Rdymmel@AOL.com ***

Under 18 requires a parental approval SIGNATURE* please.

☐ No thank you, remove my name

☐ Please send ONE SAMPLE ISSUE to evaluate

To subscribe, check 'Yes' below and fill in completely.

☐ Yes, Please send me the C&WC (signature) _____

☐ Check here to get the C&WC by email attachment and not by snail-mail.

***Under 18? Parental permission* :** _____

(We occasionally do "straight talk" about hard issues like sex, drugs, alcohol, dating, ...)

I've read the _____ issue, send the next one, please.

Please tell us how you found out about the C&WC. _____

Name _____

Home address _____

City, St. ZIP _____

Phone _(_____)_____

Home e-mail address _____

Birthdate _____

Are you a student?

School: _____

____ in the Fall or ____ now, I am in (what grade/year) ...

7 8 9 10 11 12 HSgrad. F S J S Col.grad. GrdSch PostGrSch

'at-school' address, if different, and you'd like it mailed there during the school year

City, St. ZIP _____

Phone _(_____)_____

School e-mail address _____

This is the simple “plan of salvation” from the Bible; the way to God and eternal life in Heaven. Jesus said (John 14:6, no matter what translation you look in, the verb may change from cometh, to doth come, comes, get to, but the message is the same) “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” There is no other “religion or way or path to God. You can’t “make up your own religion.”

It’s simple, but it’s not easy. The hard part is that He accepts you just like you are, but then He wants to change you into something so much better, and He asks that you – the “S” – submit to His plans and goals of a better life for you.

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Becoming a Christian: A-B-C’s

A – Admit that you’re a sinner. You just can’t meet God’s standard. The Bible says, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23 (also see 1 John 1:8).

B – Believe that Jesus was the Son of God and died in your place, took the punishment for you. The Bible says, “For God so loved the world (that includes you) that he gave His only begotten son (that’s Jesus) that whosoever (that’s you again) believes in Him should not perish (that’s saved from eternal death, Hell) but have eternal life (given eternal life with God, that’s “salvation” or to “be saved”).” John 3:16

C – Confess your sin to God. – The Bible says, “If we confess (own up to) our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleans us...” 1John 1:9.

S – Submit yourself to His commands and control, and **Serve** Him.

Want Jesus in your life? Pray this prayer: “*Lord Jesus, I confess to You my sin and need to be saved. I turn away from my old sin and place my trust and faith in You as the only way to be saved and go to Heaven.*” Now contact your pastor, or contact us at 1-336-674-7564, and say, “*I just asked Jesus to be my Lord.*”

An introduction

Someone once said, ‘Here’s a scary thought: What if the purpose of your life is to be a warning to others?’ – Melanie expressed a desire to “write a book” or something that might warn people of following her “example,” going down the road, making the choices she did.

I believe Melanie would have wanted to tell you two messages from her life...

She said to me in December of 2012, while lying in a hospital bed, “I could be the ‘poster child’ for what not to do in college. - Don’t do drugs and don’t do alcohol.” – Both of those contributed to killing her at age 29.

The second message I believe she would have told you is, ‘I finally came to understand that a necessity for life and the future is to accept Jesus and try to follow Him as best as I can. You need to do that, too, if you are to join me in Heaven. Want a place to start? I liked reading the stories in the *Egermeier’s Bible Story Book*. It’s an easy read of the stories in the Bible. Dr.D. had given me a two copies of that book over the years.’

Primarily, three of the men in Melanie’s life will tell her story here.

Roy Manley is her dad.

Chris McKibben is her friend and then fiancé during her last three years.

Rich Dymmel was her Math professor her freshman year at Elon University, 2002. – I am “Dr.D.” as Melanie and a lot of students called me. It was my idea for us to write Melanie’s story. I am the “moderator” assembling this. Well, actually it was first Melanie’s idea; she wanted to tell her story as a warning to others. Less than 12 hours before she ended up overdosing and lost consciousness, we talked about writing “her story” using voice recognition on my laptop, we wouldn’t have to “write,” just talk to the computer. “That would be cool! I’d like to try that,” she said. We are now trying to follow through on writing her story.

Subject: Encouraging Words: Your Daily Devotion

Date: 12/5/2013

From: newsletter@lists.christianitytoday.com

Today's Verse

From the [New Living Translation](#)

"But he rescues the poor from trouble
and increases their families like flocks of
sheep.

The godly will see these things and be glad,
while the wicked are struck silent.

Those who are wise will take all this to heart;
they will see in our history the faithful love of
the LORD."

Psalms 107:41-43

Encouragement for Today

Different kinds of distress are mentioned earlier in this psalm: being caught in circumstances (vv. 4-9); becoming prisoners of one's own rebellion (vv. 10-12); falling victim to natural disasters (vv. 23-32). Yet all were delivered when they cried out to the Lord. And the purpose of their deliverance was to praise God and publicly proclaim his goodness and power (vv. 8, 15, 21-22, 31-32). Can you see biblical history — and your own — in light of the faithful love of the Lord? What might happen if you shared some of these things with others?

—Diane Eble, author of *Abundant Gifts: A Daybook of Grace-Filled Devotions*

... The middle verses mentioned in the comment: "becoming prisoners of one's own rebellion (vv. 10-12)" -- made me think of people with addictions of drugs, alcohol, selfishness, money, whatever. They become trapped, "prisoners."

I remember a community college graduation speaker several years ago... He spoke of how he had gained wealth, power, as he rose to the top of the corporation; all his kids drove Mercedes cars, big houses... Then he told how his wife had divorced him, his kids won't talk to him... he had wealth, but he was broke in terms of relationships with people that mattered.

Psalms 107:10-12 (NKJV):

Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow

of death,

Bound in affliction and irons—

Because they rebelled against the words of
God,

And despised the counsel of the Most High,
Therefore He brought down their heart with
labor;

They fell down, and *there was* none to help.

Power, wealth... maybe more obvious
“prisons” are things like drugs and alcohol. The
end results are often not seen by many. Those
are “demons” that destroy lives, physically as
well.

Alcohol... even though they may know it is
damaging, may even have done severe damage
to their own body, they will continue to drink.
They may attend AA meetings and might even
have abstained for quite a while... or maybe it's
drugs.

Or, like one person I knew, they said they
were attending AA successfully, done rehab,
then from a hospital bed almost 2 years later, in
December 2012, they said to me, “They are
trying to get me on a liver transplant list. ... They
said if I take one more drink it might kill me.”
— Then beside their unconscious body in a
Critical Care Unit bed in March 2013, their
fiancé said that they had quit drinking in
November, 4 months ago, way too late. That was
part of what killed them. Drugs had also played
a part in the damage. She had literally killed
herself with the choices that imprisoned her.

— But, she had recently trusted Jesus for her
eternity and He released her from her
imprisonment and set her free to a new body in
Heaven.

We can make choices that may seem minor,
and then we become addicted – whether drugs,
power, money, alcohol, And only God can
free us.

I remember a Bible study where the speaker
said, ‘Sometimes God removes the problem,
sometimes He is with us through the problem,
and sometimes the solution is that He removes
us from the problem.’

Chapter 1

An “introduction”

Why a book about Melanie?

Chapter 2

Early, high school, cheerleader, eating disorder

Chapter 3

Elon University - campus life, conversations; intro to alcohol and drugs

Chapter 4

2006 - 2009. Stop out of college. Drugs and alcohol. Rehab. AA and MA. Hospitalized.

Chapter 5

2009 - 2012.

Chapter 6

2010 - 2013. Reconnect. A struggle to break from the past. “I want what you have.”

Chapter 7

2012.

Chapter 8

2013.

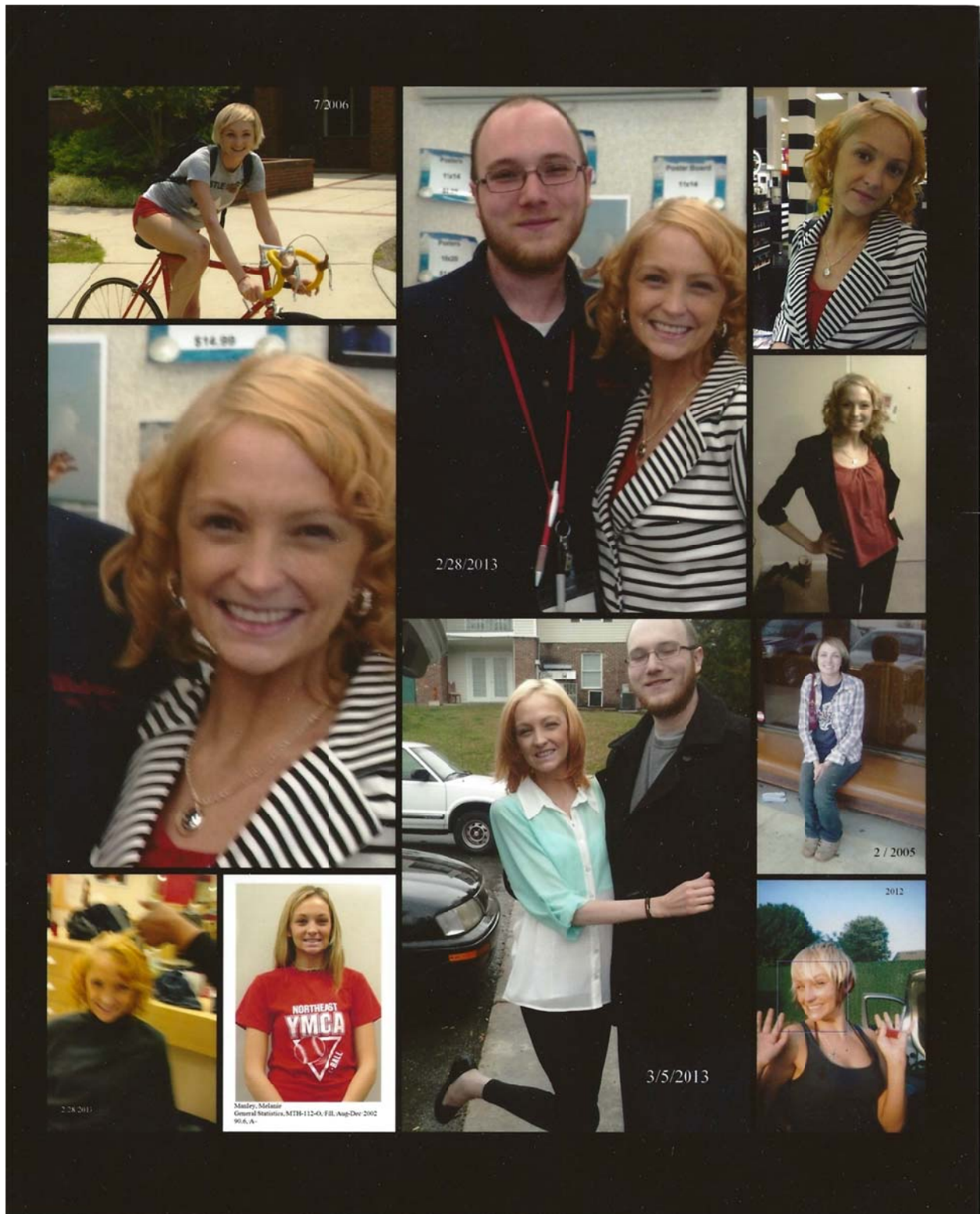
A Eulogy for Melanie (“A gathering of friends” at Elon University, 4/22/13)

Appendix

Several “daily emailed thoughts” ... Some specifically surrounding Melanie and messages that would be relevant.

The Pendulum (Elon University campus newspaper)

Ecstasy



Melanie Manley * * * March 1, 1984 — March 11, 2013

Chapter 1

I'll start. I am Dr. D, that's what Melanie called me. — It's an EdD, an Educational Doctorate, not an M.D. (medical) or ThD (theological). It's the same degree as Bill Cosby(!). (Maybe someday I'll be funny, rich, and famous, too! — Yea, right.)

Melanie wanted to tell “her story” to help someone avoid making the choices she did.

Tuesday, March 5th, 2013, in Chris and Melanie's kitchen. — She said, ‘I wish I could do something constructive and positive.’

Dr.D. said, “We should take you on a tour of college campuses to tell your story. Or maybe do a presentation, maybe a video. Or write a book. Or at least an article. If someone like me tells them, they will just write it off as coming from some old foggy. But if one of their own tells them, maybe a few of them might listen. You wouldn't have to actually even write it, I have speech recognition software on my computer and all you have to do would be to talk to it.”

Melanie said, “That would be cool! I'd like to try that.”

I think maybe it was Saturday, March 9th; I mentioned to Chris, her fiancé, “Do you remember the conversation in your kitchen last Tuesday about writing her story? In a couple of months maybe we could all get together and write a book telling her story.”

Chris said, “I think she'd like that.”

Part of the origin for this goes back to December 1st, 2012. ...

Marie, my wife, is about to be discharged after a hip replacement surgery and is walking down the hospital hallway, returning from the physical therapy checkout room, and just happens to glance in a door that just happens to be open and thinking she recognized the person in the bed says, “Melanie, is that you?”

“Yes it is, Marie.”

... (some conversation follows) ...

“Do you want me to tell Dr. D that you are here? (“Hipaa” and all that... patient privacy ... patient permission to tell anyone anything, even that they are in a hospital.) He is coming to pick me up in a few minutes.”

“Yes. Please do.”

When I arrive, Marie tells me, “I have good news and bad news. The good news is that I'm all checked out, packed up, and discharged, ready to go home. The bad news is that Melanie is here. She's just a couple rooms down the hall. And she'd like to see you.”

I go to see her.

Melanie tells me that she was brought into the hospital, again, the night before with a lot of abdominal pain again and four liters of fluid were drawn off of her abdomen (that's close to a gallon! of fluid...). She now weighed 80 pounds and is in a hospital bed. Her kidneys and liver are not working right. She looks terribly sick.

Among the things Melanie says in that conversation is:

“I could be the ‘poster child’ for what not to do in college. Don’t do drugs and don’t do alcohol.” ... “I don’t drink any more. They said my next drink could kill me.”

Remember, December 1st; she weighed 80 pounds that day.

It's only a couple weeks later that she was accepted as an "indigent patient" at Chapel Hill University Medical Center Open Door Clinic (I think that's the proper name of the place). – They accept one new indigent patient a day, and she got that slot one day. – When I took her, she could barely walk and got down the stairs from her second floor apartment with great difficulty. When we got to the clinic, there were wheel chairs outside the door. I got one and brought it over to the curb. She got out of the van and sat in the wheelchair. I told her, "Wait here. I'll park; and I'll be right back to take you in and we'll find out where to go."

When she got checked in and they started, I stayed with her until the doctor came into the room for "private consultation." I was with her when the nurse weighed her. I saw the scale. — 120 pounds. — She had put on 40 pounds of fluid in roughly two weeks! Her kidneys certainly were not working. Her legs and feet were swollen; she could hardly walk. Her legs and body hurt from the pressure from the accumulating fluid in the tissues. The only things that she could get on her feet were men's size 13 slippers. (I didn't ask where she had gotten them.)

Among the things the doctor prescribed was a heavy kidney stimulant. If that didn't start working quickly, the dosage would be doubled, then doubled again. – She was in serious physical trouble from possible kidney failure. – It did start to work after a week and her weight finally began to fall... slowly.

They also diagnosed her as "malnourished."

"Malnourished"?! - I've seen this girl eat! She's always hungry! - Every time I see her I bring food and she devours it. – Her body is not digesting and absorbing and using what she's putting in.

When we get back to her apartment, it takes her close to a full minute to pull herself up the stairs one step at a time. I have my arm right behind her, holding her, to make sure she doesn't fall. No strength; and exhausted.

Back in December of 2011 she was going to have surgery at Chapel Hill that – she told me – was to do a "micro-surgery" to stretch the bile duct from her pancreas so the bile / enzyme could flow into her digestive tract in the digestive process to digest food. She is malnourished because, even though she eats plenty, it isn't digested and absorbed. So she's to have this micro-surgery done.

Her dad told me later, after the surgery, when I tried contacting him because I couldn't get a response from Melanie, – phone, email, text, no response from any medium – that they had her sedated for pretty much the whole month of January after surgery. And he told me that what they ended up doing in surgery – apparently she was so much worse than what they expected – apparently so deteriorated and damaged internally, that they removed half her pancreas, part of her stomach, and part of her intestine.

All that was still radically affecting her ability to digest and absorb nutrition, even more so than before. One of the things she had to do was take a pill every time she ate anything, like about 6 times a day, to try to replace the pancreatic enzyme.

Long sedation is dangerous. – Doctors do everything they can do to keep patients from being sedated for long periods. Because after 5 hours of sedation for surgery, etc., the risk level for all kinds of complications, including mental damage, stroke, and other complications start increasing. (My ortho doctor wouldn't do both of my knees at the same time because I would have been "under" for at least 6 hours.)

The choices she had made in lifestyle over the last 8 to 9 years had taken a serious toll on her internal organs.

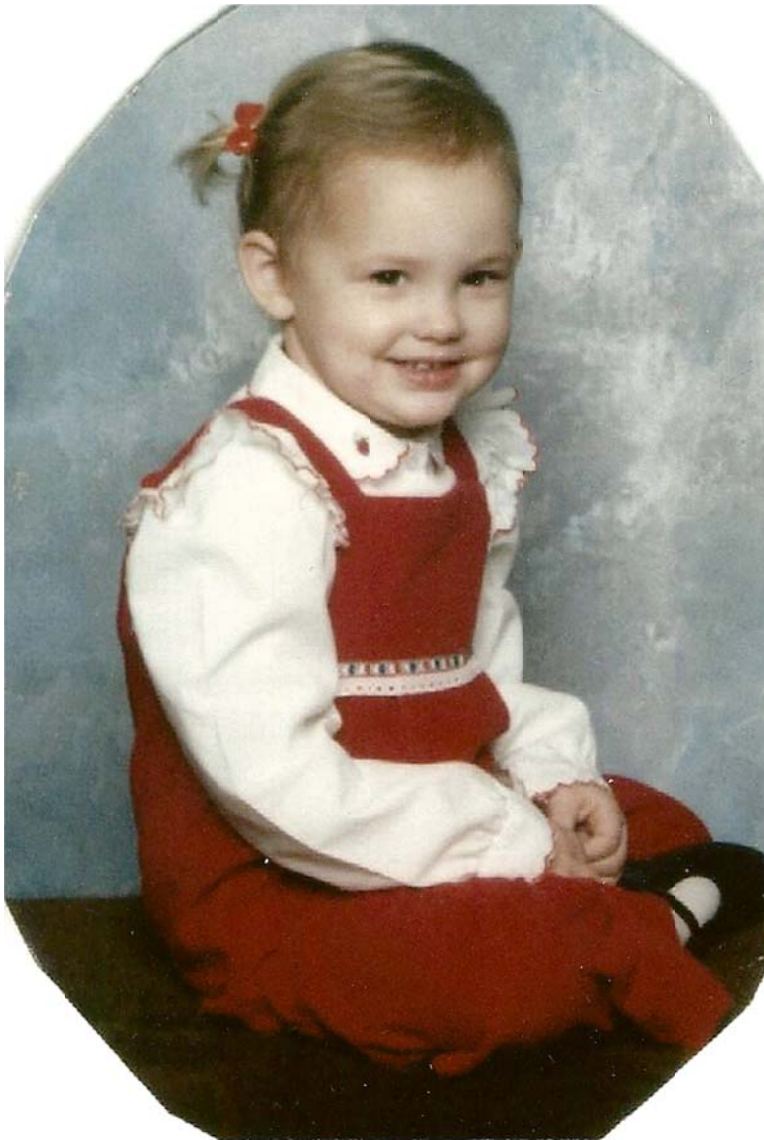
Her liver function was not good either, another toll from the lifestyle choices. The doctors at UNC Chapel Hill Hospital were suggesting she was a candidate for a liver transplant ... IF they could get her healthy enough.

How did she get here? Where did her choices take her?

Chapter 2, by her dad

From the beginning... Roy, her dad, will tell this part of her story.

Melanie Lauren Manley came into the world on March 1, 1984 in Durham, NC, the happiest day in the lives of her parents. From the time she was but a few months old, she smiled with her eyes in a special way that she had all her life. Her eyes were indeed the “windows to her soul.”



High school — Athletic; Cheerleader. Eating disorder.



High school cheerleader

Melanie grew up in Warrington, PA, graduating from Central Bucks High School.

Melanie was active in sports, theater, cheerleading, music, community service, and travel, making friends wherever she went. Her bright, cheerful personality really "lit up a room"!

In a message dated 4/9/2013 2:23:04 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, [Roy] writes:

... Regarding the book, I believe we may be able to to [do] something valuable. She did a student film in high school that won a Phila area competition, was shown in a local movie house, and was in the same league as college film makers and a few young professionals. Her film was striking, and if you haven't seen it, I'll be sure to locate a copy. I need to anyway, as most of my valuables are packed up. The professional health specialist/ anorexia / bullimea [bulimia] specialist at the Doylestown Hospital (she is in the film) asked for permission to use the film in her own continuing work at the hospital and in the community Melanie certainly had a lot to offer...

She went on to Elon University in North Carolina in August of 2002.



She “stopped out for a few years and returned to Elon University, stopped out, and returned a second time in 2011 to try to finish a BA degree. She was a senior, expecting to complete her degree requirements soon.



2010?

New Britain Baptist Church, Chalfont, PA

Melanie was engaged to Christopher McKibben of Rockville, MD.

Southeast Baptist Church, and then at South Elm Street Baptist Church, Greensboro, NC

She would attend with Dr. D. and Marie several times in her “early” college days, and again in her final months.

After suffering from a long fight, Melanie passed away on March 11 in Burlington, NC. We are grateful that she was not alone in her last hours, and that she was lifted up on the wings of the prayers of those that surrounded her.

Her family and friends are devastated by this untimely loss. Visitation will take place from 1-3 PM on Saturday, March 23 at Conner Westbury Funeral Home, 1891 McIntosh Road, Griffin Georgia. (770-227-2300) Services will follow in the Conner Westbury Chapel at 3PM, with graveside services at the family cemetery in Griffin.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Lynne McDaniel Manley. Survivors include her father, Roy Manley, brothers Christopher Jason Manley of Kingsland, GA and Kevin Matthew Mixon of New York City, uncles and aunts Jeff and Rhonda McDaniel of Opp, AL, Mike and Linda McDaniel of Leeds AL, Ed and Sandra Manley of Lexington, SC, and Ben Manley and Amy Schwab of Chamblee, GA, and many cousins and friends across the country.

Chapter 3, by Dr. D.

Melanie was 18 and chose to attend Elon University in Elon, North Carolina.

Melanie had said that “Things don’t ‘just happen.’”

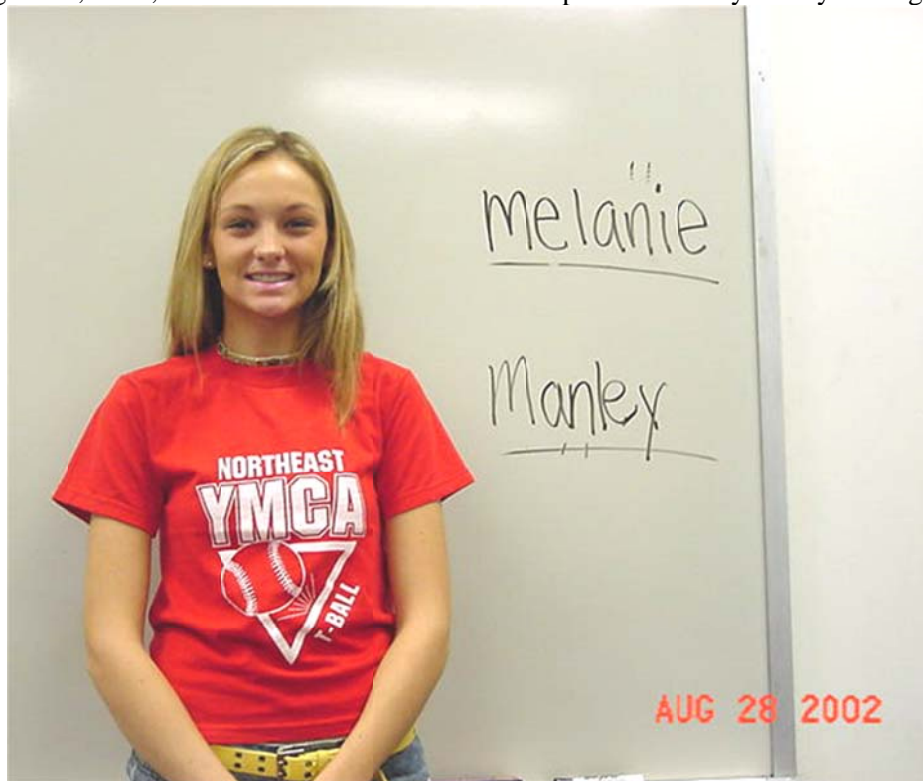
She has said, “I didn’t ‘just happened’ to choose Elon University. I didn’t ‘just happen’ to register for your section of Statistics. I didn’t ‘just happen’ to become friends with ‘Gabby’ who then ‘just happened’ to choose Dr.D. to interview for a paper we had to write.”

My being at Elon when Melanie ‘just happened’ to register for my class, where I had recently been hired as an adjunct teacher in the Math Department, ... it was a “God-thing.” I was way “out of my league.” Did well, I think, teaching those freshman level math classes. But my professional credentials were nowhere near the level of the regular faculty math professors. – PhD in math from Harvard, etc. – I think I was there for the sometimes spiritual mentoring, guidance, and counseling of a couple of students... like Melanie.

I read a quote, supposedly from Albert Einstein (maybe rightly credited, maybe not), “Coincidences are God’s way of remaining anonymous.” When Melanie said “things don’t just happen,” she was saying God set it up for a purpose.

Fall of 2002, August 28th to be exact, was the first day of classes. She started at Elon and she is in one of my freshman General Statistics class sections.

Another professor had suggested to me a method he used to learn the students’ names. – Take a picture of each student and arrange them as a seating chart. I started doing that at Elon. So Wednesday, August 28, 2002, I first met Melanie and this is her picture that day for my seating chart.



Part of first semester on campus at Elon is an “orientation class.” And part of that class is an assignment to interview one of your professors. Melanie and a friend she had made, Gabbie, Gabriel Raymond, decide to do the assignment together. Gabbie was in the same Statistics class section with

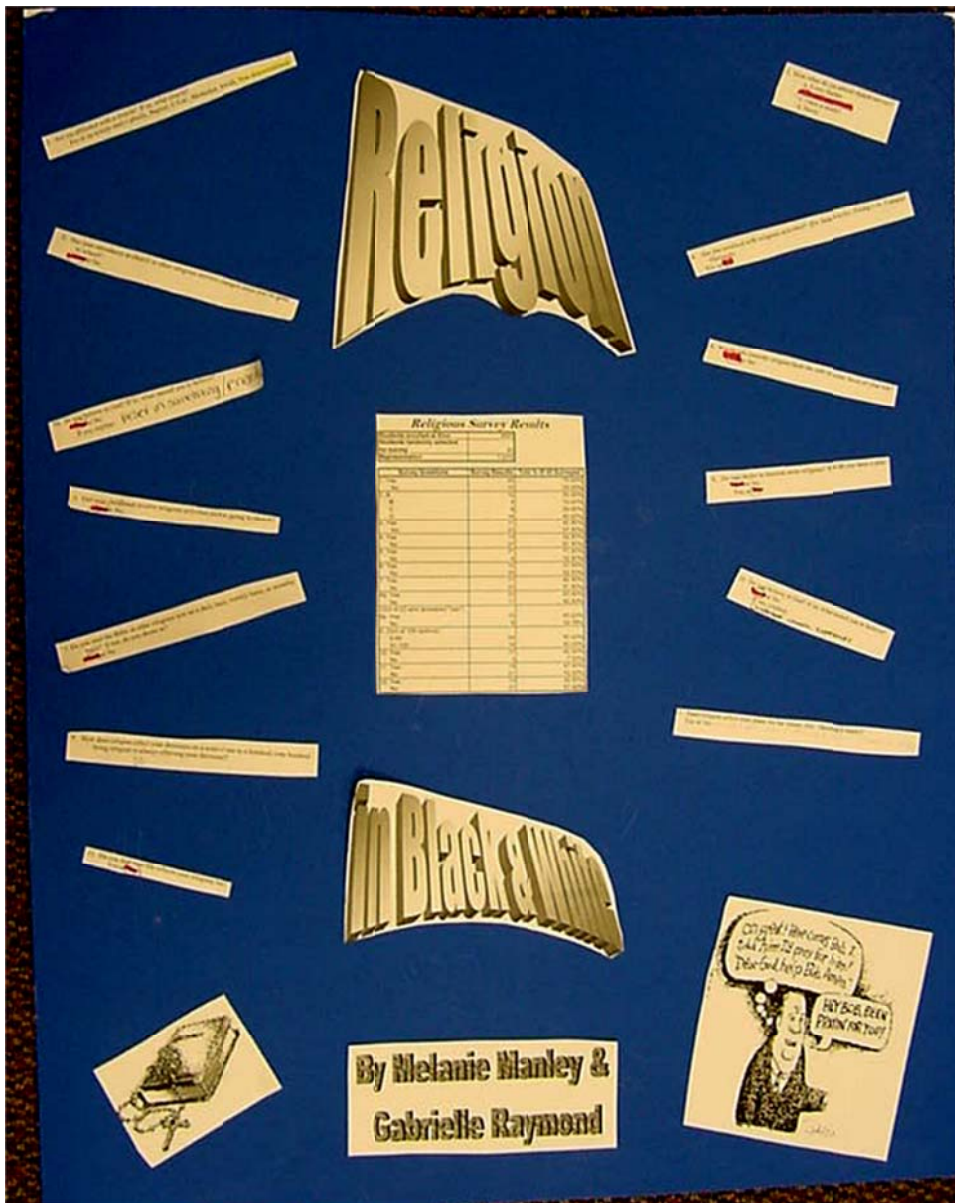
Melanie. After class one day they came and asked me if they could interview me for the paper they had to write. I agreed, and they came to my office.

Among the questions they were to ask would be about what I do off campus. – Since 1998 I had been writing a paper I call the “Crimson & White Connection” about morals, values, relationships, and the Christian life targeted at 14 to 24 year olds. Gabby and I started talking about “church,” about “Focus on the Family;” and Melanie said, “What’s that?” and Gabby said, “I’ll tell you later.” And “Adventures in Odyssey” and Melanie said, “What’s that?” and Gabby said, “I’ll tell you later.”

And shortly after that interview Melanie asked to get on my mailing list; 9/23/2002 is what it says in my database. That’s how I first got connected with Melanie’s life, and how we stayed connected for the next ten years.

Melanie was a bright student. I don’t know how she did in her other classes starting out at Elon, but she got an A– in my Statistics class. In a couple years she “fell apart” as a student – skipping classes, failing grades, etc., and eventually “stopped out. “Stopped out” because she eventually returned.

She and Gabriel Raymond did a survey project and presentation in the class about “Religion on campus.”



Over the next couple years on campus we started meeting once a week, Thursdays, for lunch and talked about all kinds of things. We'd meet at the Octagon Café, get lunch, and go to the adjacent Fireside Lounge in the Student Center building, find a quiet corner, highly visible, but away from some of the noise and hustle and bustle in the student center, where we could sit and talk over lunch.

A couple times Melanie would miss our lunch appointment.

One time I went looking for her and went to her dorm. Her room door was wide open. – “Melanie?” No answer. I looked in the open door and couldn’t see anyone. I found the RA’s room and asked, “Have you seen Melanie Manley? Her door is wide open but she’s not there. She was supposed to meet me for lunch.” She told me, “It’s not unusual. She sometimes disappears for a couple days at a time and nobody sees her. One time we went looking for her and found her hiding under her bed. And another time we found her on the floor in the corner of her closet with the door closed.” “Would you please check her room for me? I don’t want to go in there by myself.” “Sure.” And she went and looked in the room and couldn’t find her anywhere there.

Now, later, we’re getting clues as to what had been happening back then.

One day we met in the Fireside Lounge in the Student Center on campus. She turned the conversation to death. – A friend of her’s on campus had been removed from campus by her parents to a rehab facility. ... And she died there. Melanie said that the story the parents were telling and what was being said on campus was that it was because of an eating disorder. Melanie said, “But I know better. It was drugs and alcohol. That’s what killed her. She drank a lot.”

In that conversation, Melanie, knowing that my wife Marie worked in Critical Care / Intensive Care at the hospital, said, “I bet Marie sees a lot of people die.”

“Yes. And many of them have ‘interesting’ stories.”

“Like what? Can you tell me about any of them?”

“Well, one patient died and they did the shock thing and brought him back and he was terrified. He said he felt the fire of Hell and said, ‘Get me a pastor or a chaplain!’ Marie started to leave to call a Chaplain, but he wouldn’t let go of her wrist. He said, ‘No! Don’t leave me!’ So she called out to the nurse’s station for another nurse to call for a chaplain.”

I started to change the topic. But Melanie said, “And then what?”

“Well the chaplain came and talked with him.”

And I started to change the subject of the conversation again.

But Melanie said, “So what did the chaplain say to him.”

“The chaplain walked him through a plan of salvation.”

“What’s that?” Melanie said.

(Melanie had told me before that she had grown up in a Baptist church. I was puzzled that she didn’t know or hadn’t heard this before.) And I walked through a simple “plan of salvation” from the Bible ...

<p>“A- Admit that you are a sinner and that you can’t be good enough to meet God’s standard. B- Believe that Jesus, God’s Son, died and paid the penalty for your sins and that He rose from the dead. C- is to confess that you believe that. The Bible says that by believing on Jesus... John 3:16 says that ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes on him should not perish but have everlasting life,’ that’s eternity in heaven with God and not in Hell.</p>

– He apparently felt that he had literally felt the fire of Hell.”

Melanie paused and was very thoughtful for a moment, and then said, “I’ve never heard that. Or maybe I wasn’t paying attention when it was said in church.”

Melanie was also seeing a psychological counselor on campus regularly. After a couple years, I went to the counselor and said, “I know you can’t tell me about your conversations with Melanie; that’s confidential between you and her. But I’d like to tell you a couple observations, as an observer of Melanie, a couple things that she may not have told you, that may or may not help you understand some of what she tells you. And maybe things she doesn’t tell you. Can I do that?” “Okay,” and she listened as I told her about a few behaviors I thought a bit out of the ordinary that I had seen with Melanie, like the thing about her “disappearing” and being “found.”

Jump ahead to 2013 ... There was a news program on TV about the misuse of drugs for ADHD on college campuses and the dangers of that. For some students who do not have ADHD it will cause personality changes, disorientation, in addition to or instead of the intended effect being able to concentrate on their learning assignments. Better grades and concentration is the intended effect. College can be competitive and good grades usually require concentration. But the other things are sometimes the result.

I had recorded the program and then asked Melanie if she had ever done those drugs. She said that she had for a little while. That may have been part of what Melanie got started into, and might explain some of her behavior changes after her freshman year.

There was a weekend that Melanie was supposed to meet us at church on Sunday morning. She did not show up. When I called her, she said she couldn't find her car. She said she had loaned it to her friend to be the designated driver for a group of girls to go partying Saturday night. – Believable? Maybe. Maybe not. – I think Melanie was out drinking and the part about the other girl being the designated driver may very well have been true. – Part of the “alcohol on campus” / “underage drinking” that she got started into may have been what really happened that weekend. They used her car; she was part of the drinking; the other girl was the designated driver; and Melanie didn't know where the car was in the morning.

Chapter 4

From 2006 to 2012

Roy

& Chris?

Drugs, alcohol, ... pot, other drugs(?)

February 2011, Melanie called us. She said that she had “just gotten out of rehab, one of the best things for me.” ...Rehab Jan ? Feb ? 2011 “rehab” for (what) ?

She said that she was attending AA and MA meeting. — Working? Not working? (AA is Alcoholics Anonymous and MA is Marijuana Anonymous.)

She struggled with finances and student loans to be able to return to Elon and finish her degree. - She does get back to Elon.

We reconnect and I stop by and take her out to get a lunch.

Chris, her fiancé eventually moves to Elon to join her, and moves in with her, in an apartment she shares with 2 other girls. – Violating her lease, Melanie and Chris had to move. No contact from her for a while, again. (I think she was getting really sick.)

Hospitalized January 2012 for what turned into major surgery. No contact. Finally I called Roy and he told me of seriousness of the surgery.

“Liver malfunction” diagnosis Jan. 2012, yet... – “She stopped drinking in Nov 2012,” is what Chris told me later.

When they moved from E Haggerty Rd, Elon (Sept 2012) to Morningside Dr, Burlington, they “dropped off the radar” and didn’t tell me where they went. She didn’t answer her phone or respond to vm messages or text messages. Didn’t reconnect until Dec. 1 in the hospital, “by accident,” “just happened to.” Why the disconnect? Unexplained. I had been coming by and seeing them every Tuesday at the Haggerty Rd apartment, then they “vanished.”

At the end, when cleaning out the apartment, it seems to me that she had been really, really physically sick – bedside commode, etc. – Chris was taking care of her, she was really in bad shape, maybe didn’t want anyone to see her in the terrible condition she was in. – I told her that if I’d known I could have known how to pray for her; that I could have maybe comforted her by her knowing someone cared enough to visit, help with what they needed. They never talked about those months.

Chapter 5

2009 to 2012

Chris?
& Roy?

Melanie and Chris meet.

Melanie and Chris are engaged.

Living in PA in a house with some other people that are doing drugs, she told me. They leave PA and move home with parents in MD.

Engaged for 2 years, why hadn't they gotten married yet?

2/23/2011 – “I just got out of rehab. It is the best thing that has happened to me.” “Chris is so supportive of my efforts to stay cleaned up; he goes to my AA and MA meetings with me.”

I asked Melanie one day, maybe August 2012, “When are you two getting married?” She answered, “Ask him.” – Why was Chris holding back? Had he said, ‘When you stop drinking and doing stuff’?

Rehab... for?? Who paid for that?

What were all the drugs she had escalated to? - She had said once that she had tested positive for hepatitis. What kind? Drug use related?

Chapter 6 – Reconnecting with Dr.D.

2011-2013

A struggle to break from the past.

“I want what you have.”

2010

One day in 2010, I don’t “do facebook” but I do have an account and it has connected me to a couple old friends and students and others, I decided to look for Melanie there. I hadn’t heard from her in some time.

9/15/2010 – ran across Melanie on facebook and posted on her wall...

That's a certainly a different "red." I thought you looked great as a blond. You're still the name at the top of the list stuck in my speedometer. I still pfyed. Someday...

(“pfyed” was my “shorthand” way of saying “pray for you every day.”)

9/30/2010

Melanie Manley commented on her wall post.

Melanie wrote:

"thanks dr d, ive been tryin lots of different colors lately....and thanks, i need all the pfyed days as possible :)"

2011

February 23, 2011, Melanie called Marie & Rich.

The main parts of the conversation went something along these lines, from my notes that I made...

Wed, 2/23/2011

Melanie called. We talked for about 20 minutes, until her battery went dead on her cell ph. Then she called on her mom’s land line and we talked another 55 min.

She’s engaged (Dec 2010) to Chris McKibben - unemployed. They went to live in a house in PA with 7 people for a while. The “friend” got pregnant, demanding, and her boyfriend was using drugs... Melanie and Chris moved back to MD and each are living with their parents.

Been in rehab, 6 weeks. “The best thing that ever happened to me.” Has had pancreatitis (a common consequence of drug use?).

‘Chris is great. He goes to my AA and MA [marijuana anonymous] meetings with me. She says that he claims to be an atheist and she won’t marry him unless he becomes a Christian. They have dated she

said 'about 1 or 2 years'(not sure?). Chris is on anti-depressant drugs.

Says 'Jesus has been with her.' 'Jesus has protected her.' She wants to return to Elon to finish. It would take 2 semesters. Needs to pay ~\$3,000 at Elon before they will let her reenroll. – I said they need to hunt for 4 jobs; 2 there in MD to get money together to pay Elon and survive and get to here, plus 2 here if Chris is coming with her (she said he was).

She said she wants to reconnect with Marie and me because we have such a good marriage to learn from. Said she wanted to go to church with us, then quickly added 'or somewhere.'

I prayed for her over the phone. She said "That felt good."

Said her email was "MissMelanieManley@gmail.com." I said I've been emailing daily to MelanieManley@gmail.com and she should send me an email to make sure I have the address right.

Fr morning I wrote 3 "letters". I mailed this one, the other 2 are saved to MAYBE send after Marie critiques.

Subject:-Waiting...

Date:-2/24/2011 7:07:55 A.M. Eastern Standard Time

From:- Rdymmel@aol.com

To:-MelanieManley@gmail.com, MsMelanieManley@gmail.com, MissMelanieManley@gmail.com
(MsMel... was returned undelivered)

I'm waiting to hear from you and confirm your email address after last night. No email showed up yet. So I'll try 3.

I've been waiting a couple years for that phone call. I told you, promised you, two things - that I would **pray for you** and that **I wouldn't give up on you**.

You said that a Crimson & White Connection had just come in the mail. Maybe a couple of those articles were meant just for you, right at this moment.

I think you have an idea what we think is fundamental to a life of peace and purpose, and, things we would ask you to do if you wanted us to be involved in your life. Are you sure you want to go there?? -- We offered to assist and mentor one young lady and flew her in from out-of-state for a weekend; possibly to stay with us for about 6-7 months. When she went home after the weekend her mother said we "scared her half to death." She didn't know what to do She changed her mind about being closely involved with us. It was too scary for her.

It won't be easy to come from where you've been to where you know we think you should be. Are you sure you want to do that? We would be here to help you and encourage you, cheer for you.

Yesterday I sent an email to MelanieManley@gmail.com. Sign in to that account and read the part that talks about being a disciple. What you talked about was along the line of wanting to emulate parts of us... that's being a disciple.

I started with searching for the song lyrics about "healing" and found it came from a movie that will be released on Friday. I think you need some healing in your life.

This link is lyrics to the song

<http://www.alllyrics.net/Tenth-Avenue-North/lyrics/Healing-Begins/>

This is a link to the music video

<http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=92C2F1NU>

NEW Tenth Avenue North - Healing Begins [The Grace Card Film] - Music Videos

Go to this for a trailer on the movie "The Grace Card."

<http://www.thegracecardmovie.com/>

Go to this link for theaters in MD. I don't know what's close to you. Maybe Bowie?

<http://www.thegracecardmovie.com/theaters/12>

It starts in theaters Fri, Feb 25th

From the trailer, it looks good and worth seeing.

<http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=92C2F1NU>

Tenth Avenue North -lyrics to "Healing Begins"

So you thought you had to keep this up
All the work that you do
So we think that you're good
And you can't believe it's not enough
All the walls you built up
Are just glass on the outside

So let 'em fall down
There's freedom waiting in the sound
When you let your walls fall to the ground
We're here now

This is where the healing begins, oh
This is where the healing starts
When you come to where you're broken within
The light meets the dark
The light meets the dark

Afraid to let your secrets out
Everything that you hide
Can come crashing through the door now
But too scared to face all your fear
So you hide but you find
That the shame won't disappear

So let it fall down
There's freedom waiting in the sound
When you let your walls fall to the ground
We're here now
We're here now, oh

This is where the healing begins, oh
This is where the healing starts
When you come to where you're broken within
The light meets the dark
The light meets the dark

Sparks will fly as grace collides
With the dark inside of us
So please don't fight
This coming light
Let this blood come cover us
His blood can cover us

This is where the healing begins, oh
This is where the healing starts
When you come to where you're broken within
The light meets the dark
The light meets the dark

in a BlueMountain b'day card 2/28/11:

Subject: Your eCard was just picked up

Date: 2/28/2011 5:27:02 P.M. Eastern Standard Time

From: services@support.bluemountain.com

Wishing you a bright, full path ahead. You said on the phone "I still look 16." But now you're 27

tomorrow. Real beauty isn't in looking like a teenager. REAL beauty is on the inside - spirit (like gentleness, compassion,...); character (like integrity, trustworthy, dependable, fidelity, ...), and personality (like happy, peaceful, ...). Nice on the outside is good, too. But it's what's on the INside that really counts. - The Book of Ruth... have no idea what she LOOKed like, but a book was written about her loyalty, virtue, character that has lasted for centuries and read by millions, billions of people and admired. Esther won a beauty pageant in the Bible; but she is remembered for her character and loyalty. The Shulimite woman in Song of Solomon, what did she have that the most powerful most wealthy man in the world sought HER? She had character and integrity. (I've got a book written to young women about her and that if I can find it in my "library." - That's what we'd like to help you become... beautiful beyond belief on the inside. (And Marie can help you with the outside too to be a lady.) Want to?

Subject: Card has been read
Date: 2/28/2011 5:30:51 P.M. Eastern Standard Time
From: service@noreply.BirthdayAlarm.com

In a message dated 2/28/2011 5:32:03 P.M. Eastern Standard Time, MissMelanieManley@gmail.com writes:

Thank you! I can't wait to talk again. I'll call you soon!

Subject: Re: Thanks for the card
Date: 2/28/2011 6:10:41 P.M. Eastern Standard Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

Melanie

Well, if you "can't wait" then don't wait. , Melanie. (I always have preferred to call you Melanie, because when you say Melanie you have to end with a smile because of the "e.")

Monday's from roughly 8p to 10p I'm on a run to clean out a bakery. Then Tues late morning, roughly 9:30a until noon, I'm distributing it.

Wed evening from dinner until 8:30 is dinner, church, finishing with choir practice. Home before 9p.

Marie works again Thur. She's gone by 6a and isn't home until 8p. She's won't have the physically or emotional reserve to deal with you discussing this after she gets home... unless you were to simply be positively excited about wanting us to work with you to put you in a direction, on a road toward peace and Heaven. ...

On Wed I had written you:

"I've been waiting a couple years for that phone call. I told you, promised you, two things - that I would pray for you and that I wouldn't give up on you. ... I think you have an idea what we think is fundamental to a life of peace and purpose, and, things we would ask you to do if you wanted us to be involved in your life. Are you sure you want to go there??"

Have you thought any more about what you said about "learning from us," or us "mentoring you," or whatever along those lines?

We are willing to invest time and energy with/in you... if you really want us to help you get your life "on track." - If you like what you've seen in our lives/life, and think you want that for yourself, - (1) you expressed an interest in that, (2) we've said we're willing to and willing to commit to time and energy and emotions, (3) now it's your turn to really, truly decide if that is a direction you want to go. You have to decide for Melanie. Frankly I don't want you to "talk it over with Chris" first. This is about Melanie and the direction Melanie wants Melanie's life to go. Once you decide this would be what you want. Only then should you tell Chris what road you intend to put your life on, and you can see if he wants to come along with you or not.

Back to the near top of this. That's my / our schedule. Call me. Call us.

Subject: Grace
Date: 3/8/2011 8:35:59 P.M. Eastern Standard Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

Melanie,

We went and saw this movie Tues afternoon. Quite a movie! "Poor" reviews from the "professional raters. EXCELLENT reviews from the general public that saw and rated it. - Excellent movie!

Still waiting for your call. Let's start healing you, Darling. What has happened? You haven't even picked up the e-cards I sent you on your b'day.

Have you thought any more about what you said about "learning from us," or us "mentoring you," or whatever along those lines?

Or have we scared you off?

Dr & Mrs D

3/9/2011

2:10p Melanie called the house ph and left a nice message about how she had a terrible night tossing and struggling and almost called us at 1:30a and how she loves us.

2:16p-3:48p

Melanie called my cell ph. I called her back. We talked for 1 ½ hours about she getting her student loans in order, about things she needs to do there.

Says she was in OH for a week and just changed cell ph carriers and didn't have her phone to call or check her email.

Talked about how she really needs direction, friends who believe in her, church, God, ..., said she wants to join the choir, join the SS class again - they were about to go on an outing she missed, and how she went on the InterVarsity trip (back in her on campus college days) and loved it.

I told her she will need to write a few things down in an email. Writing makes you think about what you really want to say.

Told her she needs to earn our trust again. We really want to help her make a difference in where she'll be in 300,000 years.

She said she wants to get to a place where she can tell others about where she's been and how they need Jesus.

I said Marie will need to be convinced that she is "for real" and wants a new life. And Marie will be very protective of me investing a lot of my time, energy, and emotions into someone who would hurt me again.

Melanie said she is going to write an email tonight to Marie and call again. - I said Marie is working today and Thur. That Fri afternoon and Sat afternoon would be good times to call to talk with Marie and us. - I said we would be putting the initiative on her to initiate calling us, at least for a while, to demonstrate that SHE does want us to help her life.

Subject: Wed 3/9/2011
Date: 3/9/2011 5:05:07 P.M. Eastern Standard Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

So glad you called!!! I am! I found the message you left on the answering machine after our 1:32 phone conversation on cell phones. Loved it. Saved it for Marie to hear when she gets home.

I welcome the opportunity to sit down and have a few serious talks. About a number of things with you.

If you want a mentor and guidance to "successful living," if you think Marie and I have attained some semblance of relational success and life (not financial, but in living life), well, we'd welcome mentoring you - in life, in relationships.

2 weeks ago you said you wanted to come to church with us... then you hesitated and said something like 'or some church.' - If you want what we've got - or you think we've got - it involves a whole lifestyle. We're not acting; and we're not perfect. And you can't get what we've got by "acting" a part.

At least to start with, it has to be "church with us." Not "some church" but "church with us."

One of the first thing I would discuss face-to-face with you is - do you remember in the corner of the Fireside Lounge when we were talking about death and I said something and you said, "What do you mean by a plan of salvation?" It's a choice. You have to make it. It is THE starting point. It is THE center. It is a basis for all your decisions in life... and for eternity. Its START is spelled out on p.7 of every C&WC. Your answer can be "I'm ready," or "I'm not sure I'm ready yet." But we will bring it up. You don't have to "understand everything" before making this commitment. Ask questions; ask lots of questions. That's fine. "Acting" won't do it. You have to believe it and accept it and submit to it for all the rest to be real and work.

I'm willing... we're willing to invest in you, girl, but you will have to make the real and hard choices.

Maybe you need AA and whatever to help stay "on track." Maybe you need to look at surrounding yourself with what you want to be. Choose your models carefully.

I hope we can have many long discussions when you return. And/or on the phone. - And this doesn't

have to wait until August. If you're serious about this, then you need to be finding a place to live (we might be able to help with that) and find a job here (calls, contacts, make appointments and/or schedule being here to interview and whatever to find a p-t job here). And as soon as possible, and let's get on with helping you build your new life!

I wish God's blessing on you, Melanie.
Dr. D.

On Wed, Mar 9, 2011 at 5:13 PM, <Rdymmel@aol.com> wrote:

I composed that email and just looked at the clock. It's dinner time. They start serving at 5:15 at church. It's chicken pot pie tonight. Mmmmm good.

Marie won't be home from work until after 8p

I won't be home from dinner, church, choir practice (incl Easter music - maybe you can come... bus?... concert is the weekend before Easter) until 8:30+.

I have been invited to speak after dinner at Buffalo Presbyterian Church, Wed, Apr 6, about the C&WC and encouraging and whatever else I want to include.

I told you I would pray for you always and would NOT give up on you.

Dr. D.

Got to run.... dinner.

Subject: Re: Dinner
Date: 3/9/2011 10:00:41 P.M. Eastern Standard Time
From: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

I love chicken pot pie!!!

More than that though, I love the experience of sharing a meal with people that I care about.

Mrs D., I am not one to express my feelings via email or anything written down. I don't exactly know what to say....

Dr. D and I spoke on the phone, as you know, twice...and today for some time.

I want you to know that i am putting all that i can give into gods work and his word. I have been very selfish. i really just want to talk to you and get back in touch. i know ive been irresponsible. possibly not worth your time. However, I care so much about your family. And me.

I would like to be able to talk with you and the Mr. soon. You guys mean the world to me.

I am not getting in touch with you because im coming back to Elon. Sorry it seems that way. I hope I can give back what you have given to me.

I really think I could show you that things are different now. I am very proud of myself, but i have much to learn...and have a lot of room to grow.

Thats it I guess!

With love, and Gods blessings,

Melanie.

Subject: Thur morning thoughts
Date: 3/10/2011 11:11:13 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

Thur morning thoughts
3/10/2011

Marie says I can have a tendency to “overwhelm” people at times with too many ideas all at once. Here’s my thoughts this morning...

- (1) I told Marie about most of our conversation.
- (2) I told her that you would be calling her Fri afternoon or Sat afternoon.
- (3) I will give her your email from last night when she gets home from work tonight. Good follow-through, girl.
- (4) I want to give you something to think through. I woke up this morning with this on my mind.

You are at a fork in the road of your life. You are making a decision, a choice.

It’s like the C&WC article about relationships - “Do They Have Character or Are They a Character” - that does a split page to look at what makes a person of character or not. That article looks at selecting people you might date, build a relationship with. It could also be used to assess yourself. - I’m going to try to find, in one of my boxes in “the library” the book, *Secrets of an Irresistible Woman*.” It’s about what the Shulimite woman had (in Song of Solomon) that the richest most powerful man in the world, who could have ANYTHING he wanted, sought after her. (It was her character that made her beautiful and desirable.)

It’s like when we decided to move to Greensboro... We sat down and literally made a list on a piece of paper...

Stay in Detroit
+ job, business, a few relatives, nice mild short Summer
- snow, cold, property taxes, heating bills

Waco TX

- + a couple friends
- the week we were there it "cooled off" to 95 at night!

Bar Harbor Maine

- + beautiful harbor, forest, fresh lobster
- bitter cold winter and noreaster storms with LOTS of snow

Greensboro

- + rated #3 in Places Rated Almanac, mild winter
- ??????

Orlando FL

- + warm winter, tourist business opportunity
- hot, humid, and hurricanes in summer (trading winter storms for summer storms), tourist business idea was a 24/7 idea to run/manage (time)

And we did that for every place we had been to on vacation or business. Greensboro had no known negatives. We sold the business, sold the house, quit my job; I changed everything except the wife, kids, and dog; and we moved to Greensboro.

You are looking at "changing where you live," and I'm not talking about Maryland and Greensboro. It's like standing at the edge of "your world" and there is a big fence. You can see a few things through the holes in the fence; you can hear some stuff over the fence; but it's a fence. You are deciding whether to climb over to "the other side."

(a) stay or turn back to where you've been living or (b)climb over to the Christian life

(a) Stay where you've been

- + you know what to expect
- + you know some people here
- some of those people have used and abused you (John said he loved you, I think he loved that you gave him sex)
- drugs and alcohol have almost killed you.

(Do you remember the conversation we had in the Fireside Lounge when a friend of yours left school, was in a care-facility in FL and died? You said that they said she was being treated for an eating disorder, but you knew it was drugs and alcohol.)

(b) The Christian life/walk

- you really don't KNOW what's over here (the unknown can be a little scary; it can also be an adventure)
- you only have a couple people you know here; can you trust them with your life?
- they aren't saying much about how the Christian life will probably cost you your old friends because they want the "old you" that did drugs and alcohol
- + they are telling you there is inner peace and a joy here
- they aren't saying that there may be problems, it can't be ALL wonderful. Some people will reject Christians.
- Some people won't believe you that Jesus can really change people like you. Some of those will even be those that call themselves Christians
- + they say it has eternal life, that the real rewards are not just in this life but for the next 300,000

years and beyond

- + they say life here has benefits of people caring about YOU
- there are people here who only TALK the talk but don't really walk the walk (those are called hypocrites).
- you don't understand all the words and ideas + that's okay.

Think this through. Are you still sure you want to do this??? You're not committing to be a follower of Jesus yet, you're committing to honestly search and "try" this new and different life.

Just had an idea... Two of my students at Alamance Christian School attend that big Baptist church in Elon, right across from the Danilea housing complex. I can call / go there there and talk to the pastor and the youth pastor and see if they know of anyone who might have like a one room apartment over the garage or something for you. - I'd tell them that they can't have you, that WE are going to mentor you as a new believer. -

Try looking up www.KLOVE.com and find the station list and find a station near you (I hope they have one near you). Or listen online. KLOVE is all contemporary Christian music. (No "old hymns.")

Maryland

Midland (WLTV) 88.3

Salisbury (WDKZ) 105.5

Delaware

Fenwick Island (WLBW) 92.1

Virginia

Coeburn (WGCK) 99.7

Colonial Heights (WKYV) 90.1

Danville (WKVK) 106.7

New Market (WLTK) 103.3

Newport News 96.9

Portsmouth 93.3

Virginia Beach (WZLV) 90.7

Look up www.BBNradio.org; station list, find one near you. Or listen online. (When BBN plays music, it is all "old hymns.")

I think you'd like Ravi Zacharias "Let My People Think" He speaks on a lot of college campuses and around the world. (I have some of his CDs.)

Saturday: 6:30 pm

Sunday: 8:30 am

I think you'd like "Adventures in Odyssey"

Monday - Friday: 7:30 PM

Saturday: 10:00 AM, 5:00 PM

You might like "Unshackled" from Pacific Garden Mission, Chicago

Monday - Friday: 11:00 pm

Saturday: 2:00 am, 8:00 pm

Sunday: 2:00 am, 10:30 pm

Sat.

Subject: Re: Stanley

Date: 3/12/2011 1:14:42 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time

From: Rdymmel@aol.com

To: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

Don't forget to call Marie later this afternoon

You need to talk with her.

No return call yet from the pastor at FB-Elon yet about any possible leads on housing etc near campus
Dr D

Sat, 3/12/11, early evening(?) Melanie called and talk with Marie (and me on spkr ph)

Subject: "Round ball" on Sunday

Date: 3/13/2011 1:32:07 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time

From: Rdymmel@aol.com

To: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

Maryland beat NC State. :-(I don't remember who beat Maryland.

Today it is UNC Chapel Hill vs Duke for the ACC championship. - We have friends that are BIG Duke fans, so we cheer for Duke - They are up 8-0! You join with us, you have to cheer for No, it doesn't matter what bb team you cheer for. :-)

We're cheering for you and assembling a "cheer leader squad" / **prayer team** that doesn't know who you are but they will all be praying for you and us as we show you Jesus and do battle with the forces of Evil battling for your soul. We've only told them we've been asked to mentor someone who's coming up from having gone down, away from God and now wants to come TO God.

I hope you watched Charles Stanley maybe on TV on his program, "In Touch." If not, watch the DVD I sent. Marie said he was excellent as usual. She had a rough night and stayed home this morning; missed "church," but watched Stanley. - Look in your Sunday newspaper for a TV guide for Sunday morning and use a highlighter to mark "In Touch" and set it aside for next Sunday.

Do you still have the blue Josh McDowell *Daily Devotions* book I bought you way back when? I have run across the page for the day I bought it for you at Family Christian Stores - and you turned to the day - May 9 - and it is about **"A-Maze-ing!" and the maze of life and choices - and you said, "That is definitely my life; a maze."** It is sitting right here next to my keyboard, a copy of that one page. - If not that daily reading book, I'll send you one we can read together and have something to talk about on the phone. - - Do you have the Bible Story Book I gave you? If not I can get us a couple copies and I'd like to read and talk about the stories with you. - - Or am I overwhelming you and need to back off a tad?

Love and praying for you, Melanie,
Dr D

Subject: Re: Sat morn
Date: 3/21/2011 4:43:17 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com
To: Rdymmel@aol.com

Hey Mr. and Mrs. D,

First, I apologize for not getting back to you earlier than this.

Honestly, after our talk together on the phone I became completely overwhelmed. It was like after years of not being in touch with God and needing to reacquaint myself...it takes a whole lot of work. Its almost like not speaking with you for a week! (lol).

I have been watching in touch, and I do love it. It helps put things in perspective.

Also, thank you for the other Cd's and that great picture frame with the boats and everything else. We can talk about it when I get through them all!!

As I have said before, please don't give up on me, I think I just want to move at a slower pace. There is so much time, yet I feel like if I don't spend every minute of it learning and researching and praying than I'm not good enough. I'm just getting used to this. Believe me, I want to, but right now I'm really trying to transition as well. Personally, emotionally, religiously...with work, school, my health, my family life... taking on so many tasks at once almost did me in.

But I am praying, and thanking God for the both of you everyday.

I am so sorry for taking so much of your time and your investment in me and then not speaking to you for a week. I hope this hasn't tarnished the relationship too much already. Like I said before, I just need to move slower, and I won't be as intimidated. Life is hard and I know prayer and faith, etc. are the answer, I'm just learning how to use it in my everyday life. I really want to be a committed young lady that can be held accountable. I think it's just that I expect absolute perfection of myself and it leads to a terrible demise if I do.

Sorry for this rant of an email. I have been thinking of what to say for days.

Like I said before, I want to get through a lot of this material you sent me before I give you a call so we have lots to talk about.

Thanks for always being there,
Melanie

Subject: Your speed...
Date: 3/21/2011 8:18:58 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time (Mon.)
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

Melanie,

We're not giving up on you and won't. I was actually worried that something might have happened to you to put you in a hospital or something.

We're glad you're watching In Touch. We try to catch him many Sunday mornings. Great teacher.

At whatever pace you want to go, we want to help you in this journey.

You said you need to get enrolled at Elon for Summer. To do that you'll need a place to live... I just happen to be a "helper." Give me a problem and I just manage to stumble into solutions and answers... like the empty space in a 3 girl apartment near campus, non-partying, a Bible studies senior.

Melanie, we're your "cheerleaders" and want to be your "support team" and your "counselors" and your "helpers." You tell us something you need or a goal, and we're going to give you suggestions, encouragement, and be praying for you, wanting you to succeed!

You don't need to be "sorry for taking so much of your time and your investment in me." We welcome the opportunity to invest in your future and eternity. We are excited for you! - And God doesn't require you to be perfect. In fact just the opposite. God wants you to admit you aren't perfect so that He can forgive you and turn you into something beautiful, "a new creation" is what the Bible says.

So, we want you to set a pace that isn't intimidating or daunting for you so that you'll keep on keeping on. But we also want to encourage you to keep moving toward God. Don't stop. Take small bites, call us and we can talk about it. Don't feel like you have to have lots to ask about. We'll talk and answer your questions in small increments as you piece this together.

The question I asked about the Bible Story and Josh McDowell books... I was just offering... if you would like to get on the phone or on Skype and read short piece together and talk and learn what the Bible says through that means, we can. If not, okay. It was a suggestion. Your pace, Melanie.

You are mentioned daily in our prayers.
Dr D & Mrs D

Subject: here for you
Date: 3/23/2011 8:05:36 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time (Wed.)
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

Melanie,

I won't/haven't given up on you. I'm here for you. I think you know that. God and I have been patiently waiting... like in Luke 15:11-32 (or in a Egermeier's *Bible Story Book*, p.449 in a 1969 ed. or p.499 in a 1955 ed. or p.479 in a 1947 ed.; I don't know which one I gave you or if you still have it, I looked in the ones here by my desk). - And I am praying for you every day. My main prayer is that God will make Himself so real to you and that you will yield and come to Him. And if we can help you in that journey, that He will prepare us and open the doors for that.

I was told by "In Touch" that the videos of Dr Stanley's sermons are available to download at their

podcast page. However, I have been unable to get Quicktime and iTunes to download and reinstall/update on my computer. Hmmm! I'll have to work on that when I have time.

Marie and I signed up for a "first month free" at an "upscale" gym across town. verry nice facility. We did TWO 1 hr water exercise classes yesterday. Marie's quads were KILLING her last night. I and my knees did just fine. This afternoon I'm doing an assessment interview session. maybe do some more exercise. - We'll decide and make a final selection of enrolling at a gym by the end of the month (that's when the promotion prices at the Rush may change, maybe).

You know you can call me any time.

Dr D

I don't want to overwhelm you or seem like I'm pushing you. I found a couple music videos - 1 was sent to me (fun), and from that I found 2 others. So I'll not send those along until Fri or Sat.

TEAM – A couple people that are praying with a common subject

Subject: Re: Lost Diamond

Date: 3/30/2011 4:46:58 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time

From: mjackson55@triad.rr.com

To: Rdymmel@aol.com

Rich, I have named our friend "Lost Diamond" to keep her constantly on my mind. She can become precious in God's sight and the people around her if she can only find the courage to claim Jesus. Her desire is to be there because she has told you. I will pray regularly for her to take that second step toward victory when she drops the "Lost" part of her name.

Please let me know when she is ready.

Mike

In a message dated 3/30/2011 3:05:43 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, mjackson55@triad.rr.com writes:

Any news on Lost Diamond? I'm waiting

From: Rdymmel@aol.com

To: mjackson55@triad.rr.com

Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2011 4:20 PM

Subject: Re: Lost Diamond

I have not heard from her in over a week, almost 2 weeks. Been almost 2 weeks since she called last. I did get an email from her on Monday 3-21.

I sent her a DVD of Charles Stanley's In Touch and also the web page and link and also encouraged

her to look in the Sunday newspaper for the time and channel to watch on TV. - In her email she said "I have been watching in touch, and I do love it."

Marie says I shouldn't "push her." I need to do like I do with children... let them come to me. If I "push" she's liable to pull back. She had written in the email, "completely overwhelmed. It was like after years of not being in touch with God and needing to reacquaint myself"

So we wait and pray.

Lawrence had said we should have a prayer meeting around the alter and lift her up. Last Sunday I wrote her name on a slip of paper and literally laid her on the alter.

Thanks Michael.

Rich

Subject: Re: Lost Diamond
Date: 3/30/2011 4:46:58 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: mjackson55@triad.rr.com
To: Rdymmel@aol.com

We can be patiently aggressive-prayer and faith

Subject: pfyed
Date: 4/1/2011 8:23:35 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

That's all... just that I pfyed,M.
Dr D.

Subject: Re: pfyed
Date: 4/1/2011 2:44:02 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com
To: Rdymmel@aol.com

Thanks Dr. D,

I watch Charles Stanley whenever I can. Iv'e been reading a lot and listening to the CD's in my car. I would love to hear some of the bible stories, I think it's a great way to start.

As always, thank you for your patience and support. It makes a huge difference in my life.

Melanie

Subject: Re: pfyed
Date: 4/1/2011 10:08:41 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

Sooo good to hear from you, Melanie.

How are your problems / situation with student loans and enrolling and class sequence at Elon coming along? And did those girls ever call you about sharing the apartment? - I thought that was a very cool contact... I "just happen" to be in Elon for my doctor appointment; "just happen" to decide to run by FB-Elon; from there to see the pastor; "just happen" to drive down the road and see the apartment sign; "just happen" that the manager was in; "just happen" that she had ONE apartment with 2 girls that apparently aren't big partyers that might want a 3rd Senior, so I gave her your name and # to pass on (that's how they do that).

You wrote... "I watch Charles Stanley whenever I can." - Would you like me to put the podcast video on a DVD and send it to you each week? -- iTunes only wants to burn the video as a data disk that can only be watched on a computer. I was experimenting and just burned "3/27/11, Jesus_The Seeking Savior" which then is able to be opened in Windows Media Viewer, or whatever video software you might have. If you missed it on TV last weekend, it is really good. Did you see it? Want it on a disc?

"listening to the CD's in my car" - I hope you are liking the music. You know what's around you. See if there is a KLOVE station around that you can listen in your car. www.klove.com Right close to the center of the window it says "Find a Radio Station."

"would love to hear some of the bible stories" - Well, I'd love to read Bible stories and talk about them with you. - I have pairs of a couple editions of the Bible Story Book. I can send you one so we can be reading together from the same edition and page.

We're letting you initiate, call, etc. so we don't "push" you. (Although we are "pushing" - "push" being: Pray Until Something Happens.) - So you tell me when you want to call and talk or Skype and talk. (Wed evening isn't good.) (You can call my cell ph # any time.)

Pfyed.
Dr D

Subject: Re: still pfyed
Date: 4/10/2011 6:54:17 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com
To: Rdymmel@aol.com

Hey Dr. D!

So sorry for my blank email. My computer is getting old, and will honestly erase everything in one stroke without me knowing about it....especially when most of the time I'm not looking at the screen when I send it...trying to rectify this bad habit.

I DID say I want to read bible stories! I had said in my email from before that I DO need another copy, but I would get it myself if you could tell me the edition, title, etc.

Can't wait to hear from you again.

Thank you, as always.

Melanie

Subject: Re: still pfyed
Date: 4/10/2011 8:11:42 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

Hey, girl.

We are eager to talk with you and mentor you to help you get to where you said you want your life to get to. Let's talk about some sort of regular schedule where we can talk. Okay? Maybe 1x a week minimum?

Did you see Charles Stanley today on TV? You can watch him online, too. Today was about "Confidence" and seeing yourself the way God sees you (this morning's email included a few notes/quotes from his sermon on TV this morning/today.

(1) I will put a 1969 Egermeier's Bible Story Book in the mail in the morning (1969 is the year Marie and I got married) - I have bought a couple copies so I'd have one for you. My Stamps.com says it will take 3 days to get to you... so you should get it Thur.

(2) So what is happening with preparations to return to Elon? - And I assume you'll need a roof over your head. Have you been able to connect with either or any of the contacts I've sent you? The one from the pastor sounds great, and only \$300 a month, if it is near campus which he thought it was, or close to the Elon campus bus route.

(3) Call me! - Here's how my schedule tends to work out... Monday morning (tomorrow) Banks and I will be attending the taping of several TV programs with Dr Alex McFarland. He's starting an apologetics show on TCT (Total Christian Television). Alex was President of Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte that organizes and does the Nation Conference on Christian Apologetics every Fall. A FANTASTIC weekend. - He resigned SES to change his focus. He's now a member at South Elm Street and travels nationally to speak. I'll leave about 10 and not be home until about 1p. Then leave at 8p to clean out a Panera Bakery. On Tu morning, it's leave at 9a to hit the gym/pool and then distribute bread until maybe 1:30-2p. Wed morning 9-12a is booked, and 5:15p leave for dinner, Bible study, choir and not home until 8:45 or so. Thur and Fri is 9-11 at the gym/pool then open the rest of the afternoon and evening.

pfyed,M.

Dr D 😊

Subject: Re: pfy
Date: Sat., 4/23/2011 3:03:34 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com
To: rdymmel@aol.com

Sat., 4/23/2011 3
Hey!

I just got your book a few days ago! I LOVE it. I'm reading it right now, actually. I hope your having a great time on vacation, it sounds like your pretty busy!

I have given a lot of thought to what you have said. I have bought a planner of sorts and have been writing down my daily thoughts...trying to sort out through the rubble.

I will give you a call. Have a great Easter!

Melanie

have YOU on my mind and in a prayer. And the Lord told me to write it down to send to you. To write my thoughts, my prayer.

Melanie... I like "Melanie" because you have to smile when you say it... Melanie. "nie" = ☺

Maybe this was partly triggered in my mind because of the "Buckley report" on the news just before I went to sleep. He talked about a guy who is bipolar who has put his thoughts and experience in a blog and in a bunch of YouTube videos. Maybe you're bipolar? You told us enough to know there are eating, alcohol, drug, and marijuana issues... maybe more that you haven't told us. And so I was praying...

Lord, You are the answer to Melanie's problems. I remember way back at Elon, the counselor (what was her name?) said 'Melanie wants to tell you what's been going on, but not right now; but she wants to tell you.'

Melanie's long phone conversations a few weeks ago talked about having been in rehab - I remember sitting in the Fireside Lounge with her and she told me about her friend / fellow student that had recently died at a rehab hospital. How the parents had said that she was there for an eating disorder, but how Melanie knew it was drugs and alcohol. - Melanie told us of her going to rehab and bouts of pancreatitis and now AA and MA meetings - drugs and alcohol. Lord, YOU are the answer she needs.

She told us she wants "what we have." and how she wants to go to church with us on Sunday and Wednesday and sing in the choir and the Sunday School class when she comes back to Elon. Lord, YOU are what we have. It's not "church," it's YOU.

Lord, YOU are the answer to Melanie's life. Whatever it is she's pursuing or whatever she's running from, she needs to run to YOU. YOU are the answer. You have a plan for Melanie. I guess that plan is to let her slip down to where she finally realizes YOU are her only hope.

Lord, You have had me standing by for her. Lord, now we are at another one of those points where I

need You to give me patience to just wait for her to ask for help from us to point her to You. Like You said to me the other day, 'I'm patient with you, you can be patient with Melanie.'

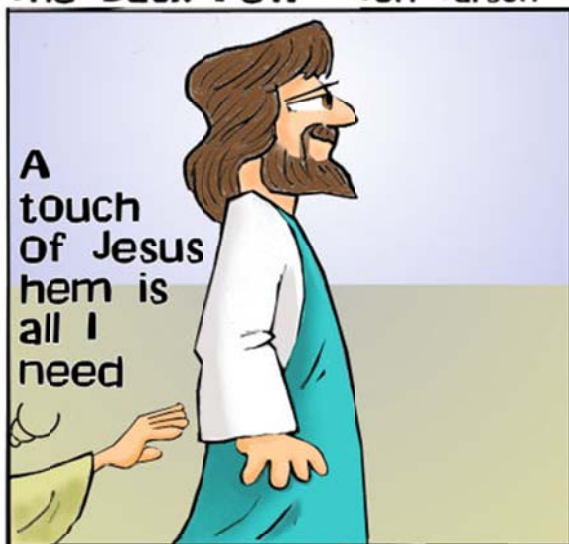
As I went back in the files to search for that counselor's name at Elon, I reread several of the notes that went back and forth. Notes where Melanie said she trusted in You. Was that really true back then? Or was she just saying what she thought I wanted to hear? Only You know that. From her most recent phone conversations, it sounds like she is seeking You to take a priority in her life. It sounds like she really wants to let You take over. Or is it her ... her I don't know what, just talking? Yet ... well, I'm real confused as to her direction. ... In one of those emails of years ago she said she couldn't "keep up with my pace," but asked me not to give up on her. And I repeatedly wrote to her in large print: "I won't give up on you." "I'm not giving up on you." "God loves you and so do I." - And so we "wait upon the Lord," again, Your timing. My job is to wait and be ready. My job is to just tell Melanie that I haven't given up on her and that You haven't given up on her and that You and we care about her.

So my ongoing prayer is that You draw Melanie closer to Yourself. I can't. Only You can. And in Your Word You said it is Your will that none should perish but that all should come to the knowledge of You and have eternal life. So I know it is right to pray for Melanie to come into an intimate relationship with You. So I know You will draw her. But I know You've given us a free will to accept or reject You. Oh, how I pray Melanie will come to You and not turn away again. And if we are to be Your instruments to help her, let us, strengthen us, give us the right things to say and do to help her on her journey to You.

Amen.

I found this that I sent you back in Feb 3, 06:

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



Not money, fame, slimmer waistline, full head of hair, smaller nose, whiter teeth, better grades, more chocolate, pizza, cooler family, etc etc
Mt 9:18-26

She knew and had faith that He had the power to heal her, if she could just get even close enough to just touch Him. – Look up the story in the Bible I gave you. – Matthew 9:18-26

On 2/18/06 I wrote you:

Jeremiah 29:11... look it up in that New Century Bible I gave you. I like the way it reads in that translation. God has a PLAN for Melanie Manley. And it is a terrific, great, good plan that pulls all your experiences in life together. The question is, will you let Him work it out in and for you? – I think there are some painful things in your life. I wish I could help put a Band-Aid and a little healing ointment on it and help it heal. Maybe I can't do anything more than to tell you I care about you, you are important to me. But God can heal any hurt. "God is bigger than ANYthing."

Jer 29:11-13 NCV: I know what I am planning for you," says the LORD. "I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future.
¹²Then you will call my name. You will come to me and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will search for me. And when you search for me with all your heart, you will find me!

And on 2/26/06 I wrote to you:

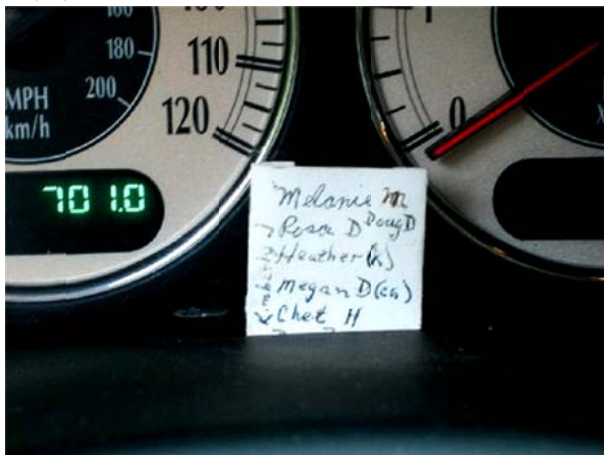
Somewhere I feel there is a deep hurt in you. I sure wish I knew how to heal you. I guess all I can do is just keep tellin' ya' that I care about ya'. Maybe that's enough. God loves ya enough to heal the fatal condition of our sin.



Here's a little band-aid. Stick it somewhere to remind you that love is a great healer. And who luv's ya, kid? God does... and I do, too.

Subject: in the speedometer...
Date: 6/10/2011 9:23:36 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: missmelaniemanley@gmail.com

pfyed.M.
 Dr.D.



[A prayer reminder list stuck in the speedometer]

of my van.]

6/7/11 - Update

To the prayer team:

I found out that our "Lost Diamond" was in the hospital. In Sunday School I told Michael Jackson... you've heard the rumors that "Michael Jackson" was dead, like Elvis... Well, Michael said, "Where is she? Can we go visit her?" I said, "She's in (a state) 340 miles away." Michael said, "So when do we go? I'll go with you." "Monday is my only time this week." "Okay, let's go." - I called and talked with her and her dad to okay coming. I told her I was bringing Michael Jackson with me. I told her, 'You've heard the rumors about Elvis and sightings, and the rumors about Michael Jackson; well, I'm bring Michael with me to visit you.' 'Okay. Sure,' she said. - And so we (Rich & Michael Jackson) left at 7am got there at 12:30 as she was eating lunch; then we 3 went to the hospital cafeteria so Mike and I could have some lunch.

[In the cafeteria, Roy, Melanie's dad arrived and joined us.]

(Michael offered to share the driving, but in case you're among those that don't know Michael, he's blind. But he was good company and a great prayer partner all day.)

Had a good visit. Prayed with/for/over her a couple times.

Really don't feel I can tell you any more than that. - Continue to pray for her physical and spiritual health.

Thanks,

Rich & Marie

Subject: Prayer
Date: 6/11/2011 6:11:15 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

Good morning, Lord. I woke up fairly early with Melanie on my mind, so I assumed it was you. I felt like you saying I should write part of this conversation with you and send it to her. So... In Lawrence's sermon a couple weeks ago, he said it was a powerful thing to listen to someone pray for you. And I said to myself I should write one of my prayers and send it to Melanie. And I wrote it, but I didn't send it. This morning I guess You want me to follow through on that.

Lord, You know Melanie needs healing. YOU are the Great Physician. You made and formed Melanie. You knew her when you formed her in the belly as You said to ... was it Isaiah? ... YOU know exactly what is going on that has drained her physically. You know exactly what damage she may have done to herself over her years. I don't know if or how You would or IF You would, but I would ask You to touch and heal her physically. You could perform a miracle. You could direct the doctors' minds and hands. But my prayer would be for physical healing and that Melanie KNOW that it was YOU that healed her.

But even more than physical healing, Lord, I ask that You touch her spirit. I know that her spirit is wounded. She says she wants what we have. And what we have is YOU. I've done what You've asked of me... keep on telling her that You love her and that I do too. And I know that You can only do so much. You can draw her, woo her, but You leave the final choice up to Melanie. She has to make that decision and choice. Just as you delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, led them and fed them, when they reached that decision point at the edge of the promised land, they said, "No." And you led/left them to their choice... wondering in the desert until they all died. Oh how I wish Melanie would not say "No" again. When she was here 5 years ago, I thought maybe she had stepped over the line and wanted to choose You; but apparently she choose "the world." Oh, how I pray that she sees the path and the end of that path and would make the choice for You now.

Melanie says that I want her to "go too fast," that she "can't keep up my pace." But, Lord, She was saying that 5 and more years ago. In that time, it appears that she moved not slowly in the "right" direction, but away from You. For most of us it is a life-long process, slow and gradual. For some the initial start is rapid. For some even the beginning is slow. And after the "start" it is still a life-long process. But, Lord, she said she wants "it." Does she mean that? Only You know. Only You and Melanie. And if we are the instrument You want to use to help her onto the path, help direct her along the path, we are Your servants. Give us the right things to say and do that will help Melanie find You and grow in her life with You.

Usually when I'm here at Mom's in Florida, when I sit at the computer and write anything, the Sun is brightly screaming in the window at me. This is so early that the Sun hasn't risen yet. It's DARK. The window is BLACK. Maybe the "object lesson" for me is that You WILL shine. Just like the Sun WILL come up in a little while here, Your light WILL shine into Melanie's darkness and brighten her soul, just as I know the Sun will soon rise and flood in through the window in front of me. Oh, how I pray that for Melanie. That You would flood her soul with Your love, Your peace. - But, Lord, I'm impatient. I want that to happen sooner rather than later. But like in the past, in other situations, You told me, "She has to learn something first, then it will happen. I told YOU just to keep on praying for her and to tell you that you and I care about her, and it WILL happen." I'm still impatient. I've been patient, Lord. I've been praying for her for 7, 8 years? Maybe 9? Whatever. Just like the Sun will come up what You time it to, You can make the "Sun" light get to Melanie. In the Bible You made the Sun stop and extend the day for Israel. And Banks found legends on the other side of the Earth from Israel about a night that was 24 hours long. YOU send the light; You send the dark; You control it ALL. But I can still ask that You send the

"light" to Melanie as I have been for all this time.

This new life with You, I can see how Melanie might be afraid to take those first real steps. Anything new can be a bit scary. Lord, I pray that You give her the confidence to start out, get started down the path.

I can't do anything more than be available to be Your instrument, Your tool, a "travel guide" for Melanie, if that's what You want me to be. That and to continue to tell Melanie that You love her and only want the best for her, and that I love her too.

So I close as usual, holding Melanie up to You, that you would touch her, that You would woo her, that she would respond and be drawn close to You.

Amen.

Subject: pfy

Date: 6/12/2011 3:10:15 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time

From: Rdymmel@aol.com

To: MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

Lord, You're not going to let me go back to sleep until I've written down what I'm praying for Melanie, are You?

She's got problems, she got "demons," and maybe actual and not figurative demons that are interfering with her getting to You. These physical issues... Lord, I'm concerned that they didn't solve her problem and sent her on her way with a handful of pills... I'm afraid that will just contribute to furthering another problem for her.

You know how it's my nature to solve problems, and this one, another one of Melanie's problems, issues, is driving me crazy. There is nothing I can DO to help her. Medicaid, a student insurance available through school, something somewhere has got to be available to pay for her to get help with whatever it is that is going on physically resolved. She's 27... can she, with no income, get her own Medicaid, welfare, etc.?

Ultimately, she needs YOU, Lord. Melanie has got such messes in her life... physically, emotionally, relationships, spiritually, SO much that needs healing. That she called and turned to us back at the end of February to somehow help her get to You... she said she wants what we have, and what we have is YOU as Lord, and then something or some thingS have somehow seemingly derailed her being able to move.... More "demons" or demons ... I think Satan has chosen Melanie to wage WAR over her. Maybe right now he has her soul and he intends to fight to keep her. YOU, Lord, are stronger! I pray that You defeat Satan in this battle! That you remove the barriers that are in Melanie's path so that she can freely make her choice for You and move on toward You.

Will she even read this? Does she read the notes and these prayers? Does it encourage her? - I don't know. She doesn't answer when I ask questions. - Is Satan even blocking somehow my efforts to reach out a lifeline to her? ... Am I falling back to "me" when my thoughts go that direction? ... And I return to - You told me to just keep on telling her "You love her and that I love her." That's my part. The rest is up to You. And my part includes her knowing that I pray for her every day.

Thank You for her brief call yesterday. That encourages me to keep on keeping on in this battle with Satan for Melanie. I'm reminded of that chapter in Daniel - the angel is delayed because the Prince (angel/demon) of Persia delayed him by fighting with him and You had to send in Gabriel to take on that fight so the angel with the answer could get to Daniel. There are real demons that wage war with angels in a real yet invisible realm around us. Send in another angel to fight for Melanie! She losing! The enemy is winning! The battle is raging over Melanie's soul!

And so once again, Lord, ... and You are LORD; Lord over everything, Creator, El Shadai, Lord God almighty, the Ancient of Days, sovereign God, the eternal I AM, Adonai, ... once again, I hold Melanie up before You to work the miracle of a new heart, the miracle of new life in her soul. And, Lord, she needs -

I think - a few miracles in several areas of her life. But YOU KNOW exactly what Melanie needs. And at the bottom, underlying all the rest, she needs YOU as the basis and foundation for her life.. this life and the next life.

Now can I go back to sleep, Lord?

Amen

7/5/2011

Melanie,

Would welcome a call where we can talk.

Let's see... Mon., 6/6, Michael & I drove up to see you in the hospital in Maryland after I found out you were in the hospital.

When I found out where you were, I called Michael Jackson (no, not that one, the Original Michael Jackson) on the "prayer team for Melanie" to tell him you were in the hospital. "So when do we go and see her?!" he said. "She's in a hospital in Maryland," I said. "So when do we go and see her?" he repeated. "I'll check and see what's going on and get back to you."

I called and she could have visitors. So I called Michael back.

"So when do we leave?" he said.

"How about 5:30 tomorrow morning?"

"I'll be ready. Pick me up. But you'll have to do all the driving." (Michael is totally blind... and has a great sense of humor.)

We drove about 6 hours to Maryland. Spent an hour or so with Melanie, had lunch, her dad came in and we all chatted. Then Michael and I drove back.

7/25/11

Melanie,

We have 3 of the grandkids here at the house for a couple days. Monday afternoon and finishing after dinner, we watched "Herbie, Fully Loaded." Cute movie... It's about a relationship between her and her VW. She is questioning; then trusting; then gives him up, turns away; then tries to recover the relationship... Just before "the big race," she tells Herbie, "I'm glad you didn't give up on me." - Right there, I thought of you; and how many times you had written to me, "Please don't give up on me." - Get or rent the movie. It's a good evening's entertainment.

Well... I got this email from FB on Sunday. "Hi Richard, Melanie confirmed you as a friend on Facebook." A "friend" on FB means ... means it's a click and if I come to your FB page I can write on it or if you broadcast that you "went shopping today" I'd get that note. What is more important is being a friend in real life. You asked us to be a friend and guide for real life ... and then you "disappear." You didn't even tell us when you go in or out of the hospital. - - How are you doing? Any solutions? - -

Well, I haven't given up on you. I still pfyed.

And we'd still like to be a real friend and guide.

Subject: Hi, Melanie

Date: 8/22/2011 6:13:07 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time

From: Rdymmel@aol.com

To: MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

Mon., 8/22/11
Hi, Melanie.

Well, how are you doing physically? I hope someone has figured out your problem and helped you.

Summer 2 has ended. How did you do with the Summer 1 and 2 classes? Haven't heard from you in SO long. Coming up next Tuesday is the first day of class for Fall 2011. Are you coming to campus???

When you get today's "daily thought," I talk about a felon / ex-drug user who went from a full-ride scholarship college student to convicted felon by his choices. Then in prison he came to own Jesus "in here (heart), not just in here (pointing to his head)." He gave a great concert Sunday night; wish you could have been here. I'll find out if they made a tape of it - his music and his speaking. If they did, I'll transfer it to a CD and send it to you.

We're praying for you. But we're also waiting for you to follow through and make some sort of move. ... Somehow I really feel, Michael said it when we were there that Monday, that there is something else going on that you're not telling. -- There are people here that can help you, if you'll let us.

Attached is the weekly "informer" from South Elm Street Baptist. Note, being Baptist, eating together starts on Wednesdays. And then on Sept 11th, "homecoming," when Dr Alex McFarland will be the speaker. - Alex is a published author, apologist, past president of Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte. He resigned as president to be a traveling evangelist, and does a weekly TV show. Now he is also a member at SESBC.

Still pfyed,M. I "haven't given up on you," but without any response from you, it's hard to be really ____... I'm having difficulty finding an appropriate word. - - I'm sure your AA and MA groups say something like "we can't make you, you have to want to."

I'm still here. Marie is still here. Ruthella is still here. Lawrence and Chad are still here. All willing to help you with your life... but ...

Pfyed,M.
Dr D

Subject: Tag
Date: 9/6/2011 3:21:35 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

Tag. You're it. Your turn to call me.

- (1) Whenever. For whatever.
- (2) Wed dinners start NEXT Wed. - Dinner is 5:30-6:15; church 6:30-7:30; choir 7:45-8:30
- (3) Sunday. Sunday school is at 9:40 followed by "church" at 11 - 12.

Next Sunday is "Homecoming" and Alex McFarland is the speaker instead of Lawrence; followed by dinner under a big tent.

Are you still interested in what we talked about last February? Not to distract you from school work.

We don't want to totally occupy you, that's not what we'd want to do. But to lead you into what we have that you said you wanted for yourself.

Talk to us.

I HAVE to say I am a bit disappointed that you have been here for 6 weeks or so and all that I've emailed and sent you and you didn't call. - There I said it. Done. Over with. Moving on...

Dr. D.

9/30/2011

Well, Melanie, I have been seriously thinking that I need to “give up on you.” - Then God puts several dark green Villager vans in front of me - those remind me of you, like when I caught up with you in the gas station before you drove home for the weekend that time, and I prayed over you. And this morning, as I browse my email inbox, CrossCards.com had sent October screen wallpapers. One was this one, off on the side, “Today’s featured...”: <http://www.crosscards.com/wallpaper/monthly-calendars/october/october-2011-autumn-blessings.html>



Here, I'll blow up the verse in the corner...

Autumn Blessings
GALATIANS 6:9
Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper
time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

I have gotten “weary” praying over you. Galatians 6:9 says there will be a harvest if I don’t give up (on you). — So I’ll keep on praying for you. - But I’m weary of writing and calls with no response.

Pfyed,M.

Dr.D.

And as I was thinking about / praying for you, this song came on the radio on KLOVE, and I thought about how you need healing. And then I found the lyrics for you. And then I found all these various videos. 1, 2, and then 3. Oh, that 3rd one puts the “healing” in perspective. You don’t have to be perfect, you have to admit you’re not perfect, you can’t be your own Savior, you need Jesus to be your Savior.

Tenth Avenue North - Healing Begins

This 1st one is a “music video”... Then a link to the video with scenes from the movie that used the song...

“... It's an unofficial video to Tenth Avenue North's hit single "Healing Begins.””

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LartL77Nuqs>

NEW Tenth Avenue North - Healing Begins [The Grace Card Film] - Music Videos

[Good, thoughtful film; I liked it.]

<http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=92C2F1NU>

Tenth Avenue North - "Healing Begins" Video Journal

[This “conversation,” confession; God already saw you. - Healing from .. the Gospel is ‘I am a bum, I need a Savior’ ... James 5... the healing he’s talking about is the healing from having to be our own Savior...’]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QF1X9VvQbD4>

These next 2 are the lyrics and music...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFUHRXfuNU4>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LartL77Nuqs>

So you thought you had to keep this up
All the work that you do
So we think that you're good
And you can't believe it's not enough
All the walls you built up
Are just glass on the outside

So let 'em fall down
There's freedom waiting in the sound
When you let your walls fall to the ground
We're here now

This is where the healing begins, oh
This is where the healing starts
When you come to where you're broken within
The light meets the dark, The light meets the dark

Afraid to let your secrets out
Everything that you hide
Can come crashing through the door now
But too scared to face all your fear
So you hide but you find
That the shame won't disappear

So let it fall down
There's freedom waiting in the sound
When you let your walls fall to the ground
We're here now, We're here now, oh

This is where the healing begins, oh
This is where the healing starts
When you come to where you're broken within
The light meets the dark The light meets the dark

Sparks will fly as grace collides
With the dark inside of us
So please don't fight

This coming light
Let this blood come cover us
His blood can cover us

This is where the healing begins, oh
This is where the healing starts
When you come to where you're broken within
The light meets the dark The light meets the dark

A “TEAM” to pray for Melanie

Subject: prayer request

Date: 10/13/2011 3:08:14 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time

From: Rdymmel@aol.com

To: rdymmel@aol.com

BCC: Sellstroms@aol.com, JDymmel@gmail.com, Ruthella1@aol.com,
KKTucker1015@gmail.com, SSabin49@aol.com, krehdaddy@yahoo.com, MJackson55@triad.rr.com,
jimnweezie@gmail.com, MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

Thur., 10/12/2011

To: Anna, Jim, Walt, Sheila, Susan, Chad, Lawrence, Ron, Cathy, [the original] Michael Jackson, Ruthella, Ken, Kathy, - that's 13, + Marie and myself = 15

(and to “Lost Diamond”)

Update and specific prayer request

Yesterday I started reading the second “Kid - Heaven” book. I had finished “Heaven is for real,” the one about the 3 yr old with the ruptured appendix who relates things about Heaven that a 3 year old wouldn't know. - A great read! And it's in short chapters and segments - great for stopping to comprehend what you just read - and good for ADD people like me.

Then yesterday I started reading “The Boy Who Came Back From Heaven.” Today's reading - “God timing?” - while I was waiting in a doctor's waiting room... for almost an hour... I got into the part of the book where they had an “army” of people praying for Alex, the 6 yr old with the “internally decapitated” spine - skull connection from a car accident.

“Prayer. Prayer! Prayer! **A prayer ARMY!**” ... It yelled at me. A prayer army had assembled to pray for Alex. Our “Lost Diamond” needs a prayer army!

Why?! Because the person I enlisted you to prayer for, I just found out yesterday around noon, is in a hospital, had been for a couple days, and has been escalated to a specialist in another hospital.

Because of HIPA laws and confidentiality, I can't tell you where or why they are in a hospital. I can't tell you how I discovered they were in the hospital, or anything more right now.

- And I'm hiding their email address from all ya'll as part of the confidentiality. I'm hiding all your emails. But the names at the top are that they will know there is a small army praying for them.

I will tell you that our "Lost Diamond" is in a hospital, and, I've been praying often for her since yesterday. And prompted by the reading of the book, I feel especially urged to ask this "small army" to pray for our "Lost Diamond."

Thanks,
Rich

Lord, You know every cell in their body - You made them - You knew them before they were born. You know the roads they have traveled in life. Okay, I'm not about to tell You how to do things. Your ways are higher than my ways, Your thoughts higher than my thoughts, You are sovereign, the Creator of the universe and everything in it. Maybe you have allowed them to travel the roads they choose because that's what it would take to lead them to a point of realizing that YOU are the only answer. Whatever and whyever, I lift our "Lost Diamond" up before you and ask for Your healing touch - through a miracle, through the miracle of a doctor's knowledge and skill, however. But IF I were to add one more piece, it would be that they realize that YOU are the ultimate answer to life, this life and the next life. -- And I pray for Your intervention in their life, and I pray that You step in in such a way that they KNOW it is You that heals, and that YOU love them and only want good for them. -- And I pray this in the strong name of Jesus. Amen.

Subject: About the "Army"
Date: 10/13/2011 7:05:09 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

Melanie,

You were supposed to call us when you arrived and settled in at Chapel Hill. - You didn't. - It's just that we ARE a couple of people that DO care about you. And there are others, too.

In the other email earlier. Those 13 people don't even know your name, except for Michael Jackson and Lawrence, they know your name. But they committed to pray for you. Michael is the one who first tagged you as a "Lost Diamond" that God will "find" some day.

So now you know. Not only do *I* pray for you, you have an "army" praying for you. Most of them only know you as "Lost Diamond" and as someone that I asked them to put on their prayer list.

Pfyed,M.
Dr. D.

* * * * *

Subject: 3am this time
Date: 10/18/2011 3:26:51 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com

To: MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

I woke up with a couple things on my mind. After reading just a couple pages of the book, "The boy who came back from heaven," and how one day he was panicking because he couldn't SAY the name Jesus, he was under attack by Satan, and they prayed... And I was thinking about someone else who is under attack and what I might do to help them and started praying for that situation and person... Then, duh, I felt prompted to pray for you, Melanie... and that you are under attack by the evil one; that he has you and attacks at his whim. He doesn't want you to choose Jesus. And I felt led to write you to tell you that I am praying for you... now.

Lord, is it Satan that has a grip on Melanie? Is that why when she took that step toward You by calling us last February, she just as suddenly stopped? Lord, Jesus, ... You ARE Lord, sovereign King, Almighty God... I pray in the strong name of Jesus that You rebuke Satan and set an angel in his way to free Melanie from his grip.

I feel like he has so many "hooks" in her. - her past with eating issues that go back, drugs, alcohol, self esteem, whatever and all those kinds of things that are attacking her and keeping her from realizing the life that You offer and freely give and are waiting to give her. You said that You came to give life and that it is an abundant life that You give. But the devil wants to keep her imprisoned, chained. Lord, free Melanie from his grip that she can heal - physically, but more importantly, spiritually. That is what I feel You want me to pray for Melanie right now, at this early hour.

Praying for you, Melanie. - But you need to grab on to Jesus, too.

Pfyeed,M.

Call me... almost any time. I will be unavailable today (Tu) from about 7:30 until maybe 10a. Then sometime after maybe 10a, I will be on the road again headed across Michigan from the Lake Michigan side to the Detroit area, spending the evening and night there before spending 11 hr on the road Wed to get back to NC.

If you'll call me, and tell me where you are, I'd come and pray over you, take you to the grocery store, talk, etc. And if you like, I'd bring Michael Jackson with me again.

Dr.D.

Subject: 4:20 - 4:30am

Date: 10/18/2011 4:32:48 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time

From: Rdymmel@aol.com

To: MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

I kept reading, kept praying...

There is a battle going on over you, over your soul and over your body... A spiritual battle. A fight on the invisible, spiritual, and very real realm. I'm serious. I've said this for years.

In the book of Daniel the angel with the message is detained by an evil angel, a demon, named the Prince of Persia. - "principalities," and "powers" and "rulers."

Ephesians 6:12

[New International Version \(©1984\)](#)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

[New Living Translation \(©2007\)](#)

For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the

unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

[King James Bible \(Cambridge Ed.\)](#)

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

[International Standard Version \(©2008\)](#)

For our struggle is not against human opponents, but against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers in the darkness around us, and evil spiritual forces in the heavenly realm.

[Aramaic Bible in Plain English \(©2010\)](#)

Because your fight has not been with flesh and blood, but with Principalities and The Rulers and The Powers of this dark world and with wicked spirits which are under Heaven.

It's 4:30 now. I need to get SOME sleep. I have to get about 6:30; quick breakfast at 7; check out; leave by 7:30; 15 minute drive to be there before 8a.

Praying for you.

Dr. D.

Subject: 3 things

Date: 11/3/2011 8:56:40 P.M. Eastern Standard Time

From: Rdymmel@aol.com

To: MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

Hey girl,

....

As always... you are in my prayers. - - And now that I know a little more, I can pray for specific things for you in this life, in addition to praying for your spiritual life.

Pfyed, M.

Dr. D.

On my way home, as I passed the Elon P.O., a dark green Mercury Villager van was pulling into the PO parking lot. Seeing one of those always reminds me to pray for you, right then. - - I see those green Villagers often... How many of those can there still be running around?!?! - - It's "a God-thing" that He uses to remind me to pray for you.

And I left a message that you subconsciously want me to come back about something, or take you somewhere (like grocery shopping for some fresh strawberries, or whatever), because you also left your grey hooded sweatshirt in my van.

I guess that's 5 things I wanted to tell you, not 3.

Subject: Monday

Date: 11/4/2011 10:30:42 P.M. Eastern Standard Time

From: Rdymmel@aol.com

To: MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

While waiting for the windshield installer, while waiting for the OnStar install, ... I started rereading a book I'd read before ... Oh how I wish you'd give me 15 minutes to read the first 16 pages to you. ... It seemed to so fit your feelings Friday afternoon. And maybe you'd like to read the rest of the book. Your feelings and attitude and spirit were so deflated, so depleted, so "thirsty," so "dry," I wanted to cry with you and for you. The book is *Come Thirsty* [and drink to fill and satisfy your thirst in life].

Your hooded zipped sweatshirt... If I don't see you this weekend, Monday looks like this: Water exercise (optional) (10:30-11:30); appt at the Sleep Clinic in B'ton (1:00-1:30). Then I am available to (1)

drop off your sweatshirt, (2) take you wherever you need to go if you need to go, i.e. Graham, SS office, Drivers License, groceries for fresh, crisp, lettuce, strawberries, yogert, Chick-fil-A for a salad, whatever.
Pfyed,M.
Dr.D.

Subject: Monday
Date: 11/4/2011 10:31:49 P.M. Eastern Standard Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: MissMelanieManley@gmail.com

While waiting for the windshield installer, while waiting for the OnStar install, ... I started rereading a book I'd read before ... Oh how I wish you'd give me 15 minutes to read the first 16 pages to you. ... It seemed to so fit your feelings Friday afternoon. And maybe you'd like to read the rest of the book. Your feelings and attitude and spirit were so deflated, so depleted, so "thirsty," so "dry," I wanted to cry with you and for you. The book is *Come Thirsty* [and drink to fill and satisfy your thirst in life].

Your hooded zipped sweatshirt... If I don't see you this weekend, Monday looks like this: Water exercise (optional) (10:30-11:30); appt at the Sleep Clinic in B'ton (1:00-1:30). Then I am available to (1) drop off your sweatshirt, (2) take you wherever you need to go if you need to go, i.e. Graham, SS office, Drivers License, groceries for fresh, crisp, lettuce, strawberries, yogert, Chick-fil-A for a salad, whatever.
Pfyed,M.
Dr.D.

Tu, 11/8/11

Melanie,

You told me that you "don't check your email that often," so, since the C&WC was already at the mailing service (and it will head to Maryland, and I forgot to hand it to you when I was with you) I decided that I would run to Elon this morning after my 9am "little car customer appointment" and include among today's errands, putting it and this in your campus box, since you said you check that regularly. - the C&WC, today's email thought and this...

As I was about to send today's email, I decided I needed a little encouraging music. I clicked on KLOVE.com. The song that came on within a couple seconds was Chris Rice singing his "Untitled Hymn." It's what I'd say to you. Here's the lyrics from the KLOVE website as the song played.

And as this played, as I followed reading the words, there are tears running down my cheeks for you, Melanie; your present discouragement, your present health, your present struggles, for you finding peace with Jesus, ...

"What we have," Melanie, is (a) a peace, a relationship, with God that (b) affects everything we do and how we live. We'd like to help you find that peace if you'd let us. It's not "another obligation" that imposes on life's schedule, - you talked about "not having time to commit to Sunday morning, Wednesday, etc.," it's a way of living. A relationship with Jesus is about peace, knowing He WILL work everything out in the end. - I get stressed sometimes, but that's when I start looking at ME figuring it out instead of looking "up."

Chris Rice, "Untitled Hymn" (CD: Run The Earth...Watch the Sky)

Weak and wounded sinner,
Lost and left to die,
O, raise your head for Love is passing by

Come to Jesus,
Come to Jesus,
Come to Jesus and live

Now your burden's lifted,
And carried far away,
And precious blood has washed away the stain...
so

Sing to Jesus ,
Sing to Jesus ,
Sing to Jesus and live

And like a newborn baby,
Don't be afraid to crawl,
And remember when you walk sometimes we
fall... so

Fall on Jesus,
Fall on Jesus,
Fall on Jesus and live

Sometimes the way is lonely,
And steep and filled with pain,

So if your sky is dark and pours the rain... then

Cry to Jesus,
Cry to Jesus,
Cry to Jesus and live

O, and when the love spills over,
And music fills the night,
And when you can't contain you joy inside...
then

Dance for Jesus,
Dance for Jesus,
Dance for Jesus and live

And with your final heartbeat,
Kiss the world goodbye,
Then go in peace, and laugh on Glory's side...
and

Fly to Jesus,
Fly to Jesus,
Fly to Jesus and live

Fly to Jesus,
Fly to Jesus,
Fly to Jesus and live

Chapter 7 - 2012 - 2013

January 2012

Surgery for the pancreas bile duct turns into more serious surgery.

Dad, Roy, says that after surgery they had her under sedation for almost the entire month of January. They removed half her pancreas, part of her stomach, and some of her intestine.

A struggle with school. Concentrating, studying hard.

Summer 2012

Melanie's mom's health takes a turn for the worse. Hospice. Hospitalized.

Melanie takes the train from Burlington to Washington D.C.

On the train she calls Dr.D. She's crying. He talks with her and prays for her over the phone.

She calls Dr.D. from the hospital room. "What would be good Bible passages to read to her?" "Psalm

23. And Jeremiah 29:11 says that God has a good and perfect plan for each of our lives." And he prays with her.

Her mom is on a ventilator and they have to make the decision to remove the ventilator.

Returning to Elon, Chris comes to live with her.

They eventually run into trouble with the landlord where they are living and have to move (____ Sept?____).

Melanie had enrolled in classes for the Fall semester. Her health failed and she was given a medical withdrawal from classes.

December 2012

I don't hear from Melanie until we find her in the hospital again on December 1st. She weighs only 80 pounds now. Among the things we talk about, I ask her where they are living and she gives me their new address.

Melanie says two things to me:

"I don't drink any more. They told me that if I take one more drink, it will kill me."

Chris told us later, in the CCU at the hospital a few weeks later, that she had stopped drinking in November (2012). At the end of February (2013) she had just started in the acceptance process that starts with group counseling to be on a liver transplant list at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Hospital.

The other major thought she told me was:

“I could be the poster child for what not to do in college. - Don’t drink alcohol. Don’t do drugs.”

I said, ‘You should write a book about that.’ And she said, ‘Good idea.’

In the next two weeks, her kidneys would start to fail. She had been accepted at the Chapel Hill Open Door Clinic and I took her for her appointment Dec 14th, I think. She was in a lot of pain. Her legs and feet were swollen. She could hardly walk. At the clinic, I got her into a wheel chair and we got through and in to see the doctor.

When they weighed her, she was 120 pounds. - That means she had gained 40 pounds in that two weeks. That would mean it was primarily fluid from her kidneys and liver not working. - Medication to stimulate her kidneys.

When we got back to her apartment, climbing the stairs to the second floor was a major feat for her – both hands holding the railing and pulling herself up one step at a time. I had an arm around her to help. I was almost going to try to pick her up and carry her, but thought ‘If I do that, we would BOTH probably tumble down the stairs,’ so I just helped to support and try to make sure she didn’t fall. It probably took almost a full minute to go up the , maybe 16 steps.

By Christmas the diuretic medication had got her kidneys working and the fluid off and she was back down to around 90 pounds.

Christmas Eve, Melanie and Chris come to the Christmas Eve service at church.

Melanie says to Marie, “This might be my last Christmas. I’m really sick.”

Marie says, trying to be encouraging, “But you’re getting better.”

Our Christmas Eve service is the singing of a couple Christmas carols and a communion service, the “Lord’s Supper.”

Our pastor, Lawrence, always says the same, or similar things before communion. Among them is the admonition from Paul (1 Corinthians 11:23-32) that if you are not a believer, a Christian, someone who has not trusted in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, you should not participate. – Verses 27-29 read: Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. – He always says that parents should take the opportunity to tell children who haven’t professed Jesus for themselves yet, they should be told not to take the bread and the cup. And then when you get home, to take the opportunity to explain salvation to them.

When the bread and cups were passed, Melanie took them, indicating to me that she understood and had accepted Jesus sacrifice as being for her and that she was a “believer.”

This was new for her. When she took the bread, and the cup, she asked Marie, “What do I do with it?” Marie told her, “Wait just a minute and we’ll all eat it together.”

I was reminded of this on Maundy Thursday, March 28, 2013, before Good Friday when we had a communion service. I remembered Christmas Eve and Melanie participating in communion that evening and that Lawrence had said the same things he always says.

Christmas Day, Melanie and Chris join us for dinner. We “do it up fancy” in the dining room, the fancy Lenox Christmas china, the red goblets, serving dishes and platters, the whole deal.

Two of our other friends joined us for dinner, Greg and Anna. Something was said about dying, I don't remember what, and Anna quickly said, "Any of us could die at any time. I could get hit by a bus tomorrow."

Somehow the discussion at the table came around to the Biblical use of the word "adoption" and how the Bible refers to believers in Jesus as having been adopted by God and how very important the process of adopting a child was in the first century, in that culture and time. – An adopted child was to accept the position and responsibility of the parents' child. The child was then guaranteed their minimal fractional portion of the inheritance. A natural child could be disinherited or the fraction altered. An adopted child was guaranteed at least his appropriate fraction, maybe more. Hence the Bible talks about believers in Jesus as "adopted" by God and receiving an "inheritance."

Two conversations in December ...

(Conversation 1) Sometime during December. In my van, I can't remember where I had taken her, I said, "Melanie, you had said, 'I want what you have.' What we have is peace and stability because everything we have and are is built on one foundation. Our home, our marriage, everything is built on a foundation of a faith in Jesus. If you want what we have, you have to start with Jesus. It's all built on that."

(Conversation 2 as relayed in an email to the "Melanie Prayer Team")

12/29/2012 Dr.D.'s email update to the "prayer team" for Melanie:

I have good news... and bad news... and good news.

I went over to see "Lost Diamond" today to check out her car. She had called me on Thurs (?) saying she had gone to Chapel Hill for an appointment and they sent her to the ER and drew fluid off her tummy again; and they kept her overnight. In the morning "My car was awfully hard to start."

I figured she had a bad battery that was put below par by the morning cold. (And I was a bit upset with her for driving herself to Chapel Hill.) Well, her battery was just part of the problem. Her car ran TERRIBLE! The battery was so weak that in just doing diagnostics and reading the codes from the "check engine" light, the car wouldn't start, wouldn't go "click click click," it would only go "click, dead."

I replaced her battery. - On to more diagnostics at the Toyota dealer. - Part good news; it appears to only be the coil on one spark plug causing much of the rough running. That would cost \$124 for the part; not good news. - Then the BAD news, it has a blown head gasket and shouldn't be driven, period, except in maybe a drastic emergency; certainly not 30 miles to the hospital at Chapel Hill and then back for another 30. She will be dependent on others to get her there. Maybe her family can come up with \$\$ to get the car fixed.

Back to their apartment... I sat down with her, told her what I had found about her car and [I can't wait, I have to be sure I've spelled it out with you, and] walked down "the Roman Road" with her.

"The Roman Road" to Salvation

Romans 3:10 (All Have Sinned)

As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one;

Romans 3:23 (All Have Sinned)

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 5:12 (Sin's Penalty)

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

Romans 6:23 (Sin's Penalty)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in (through) Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:8 (Christ Paid the Penalty)

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 10:9,10 (Salvation through Faith)

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Romans 10:13 (Salvation through Faith) (Joel 2:32)

for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

John 3:16 God so loved the world (that includes you) that he gave his one and only Son (Jesus), that whoever believes in him shall not perish (Hell) but have eternal life (with God, Heaven).

- - - She said, "I've done that. I believe it." - - - HURRAH!!! I told her, "Now we, you and I and others I'll tell that have been praying for you, that **we KNOW where you will be 1,000 years from now, and we can all go to lunch together then in Heaven.**"

Her fiancé called and she was apologizing to him for not having gotten around to washing up the dishes (full sink and counter). So I just rolled up my sleeves, emptied the sinks, found the dish soap, and started washing dishes, glasses, silverware, and pots and pans. This also gave up time to talk about 'spiritual growth' and 'serving as Jesus leads and gives opportunities' while she sat at the table. (She can't stand for more than about 10 minutes.)

So my GOOD NEWS is that I have been assured that we have a little sister. We're both adopted. I asked her, "Didn't we have a conversation about what it means to be 'adopted' in Bible times?" "Yes." We parted by my saying "Bye, sis," and she said "Bye, bro."

I just HAD to pass this on to all ya'll!!!

Rich

Chapter 8 - 2013

Her health was failing. She'd have good days, then she'd be in the ER.
Her body was not able to maintain and keep her chemistry stable.
She be in pain; a lot of abdominal pain.

February 28th, Marie, Marie's mom - Melanie called her Gramma that day - and Marie sister - Melanie called her Aunt Kathy that day - took Melanie on a shopping spree. They bought her tops, pants, camisoles, even underwear. Shoes. Earrings and a necklace. Even acute hat.

Kathy took "Gramma" home. Marie took Melanie to the appointment they had made to get her hair done.

"This has been the best day I've ever had since my mom took me shopping before I went off to college."

March 01, 2013
To: Dr. D and Marie (rdymmel@aol.com)
From: BlueMountain.com



Melanie (missmelaniemanley@gmail.com) has just picked up the eCard you sent on February 28, 2013.



Happy, happy birthday, Melanie!
Dr. D. and Marie

... remember, God loves you and so do we.

March 1st Melanie's 29th birthday.

She wore one of the outfits to a job interview. AND SHE GOT THE JOB!! – A part-time job teaching an after school art class. She is to start Monday, March 11th.

3/5/13

Melanie (missmelaniemanley@gmail.com) has just picked up the eCard you sent on March 01, 2013.



* * * * *

Sunday, March 3rd. – I had sent a text message to Melanie that on Sunday evening (1) at 6:00p our neighbor was the speaker telling about their work in inner city Greensboro, (2) at 7:00p our Sunday School class was doing “soup and dessert” after church, and from 8:00-10:00 on the History channel was part 1 of a 5 part series, “The Bible,” and they could come and watch that with us.

She sent a text about 7:30p saying she had forgot about things (remember this) but were we still having food? I replied, 'Sure. Come on.' Then in a little bit she sent a text saying where they were on the road. I replied, 'Just meet us at home, we're cleaning up here.'

We brought soups and a plate of desserts and met them at the house.

Hungry. "Starving. Mmmm." – And we fed them while the TV was recording "The Bible" so we could back it up and restart it, pause, talk, etc., after they finished eating.

We watched "The Bible - Part 1" pausing to explain a couple points and answer a couple questions. Melanie was "going in and out" in her attention.

When they left, she said she was really hurting and was walking slowly, in obvious pain.

Tuesday, March 5th. I change my usual errand route to make Melanie and Chris my first stop. - On Monday night I clean out a Panera Bakery. On Tuesday I distribute all that to a number of places and families. This time I decided to change and go to them first.

I called ahead. I said to her, "My van needs gas. If she brings one of their cars and meets me at the bp station where I gassed up their cars before, I'll fill it up at the same time." "I'm on my way back to the apartment. I'll ask Chris which car to bring and call you back in 5 minutes, I'm almost home."

20 minutes pass and no call. So I call her again. Melanie answers and sounds "in a fog." "I'm sorry. I forgot to call you back." "You sound terrible. You stay there. I'll be right there." And it only takes about 5 minutes to get from the gas station where I was waiting to their apartment. When I arrive, she seems bright, alert, happy, etc.

- Remember I said she was "forgetting" on Sunday? And the "going in and out" Sunday evening? And then the erratic swings today. - I think her blood chemistry was getting out of whack again. -

We share lunch that I brought. She shows me all the clothes she got the week before. She wanted Marie to see her in this outfit and showing off the shoes with the "bling, sparkles" Marie and Kathy and Ruthella had bought her a few days before. I took this picture Tuesday, 3/5/2013, about 2:00 in the afternoon.



In less than 12 hours she would stop breathing, her heart fluttering ... 911 called ... Chris doing CPR. ... EMS arrives and rushes her to the ER. She will not regain consciousness again.

Email to Melanie's "Prayer Team":

Wednesday, March 6th.

The email to the "Melanie Prayer Team."

Subject: Prayer - Melanie is in CCU

3/6/13 11:22a

Chris, her fiancé, just called me. (11:10a)

Yesterday when I visited, she was a little tired, a little dizzy (normal drug side effect of a couple things she takes), but generally was on the plus side, upbeat, happy.

Chris said that about 1:30a she was breathing erratically and he couldn't wake her. He said they resuscitated her. Her potassium is over double what it should be. She is in CCU at Alamance Regional Medical Center.

Rich

Subject: Melanie prayer update

3/6/2013 11:06:08 P.M.

10:30pm update on Melanie Manley, our "Lost Diamond," actually "Found Diamond."

She does not have even a poor outlook for survival.

Under sedation she is having almost constant brain seizure activity. EEG shows brain damage from lack of oxygen during the multiple heart stoppages and etc. They shocked and brought her back 6 times in the ER and once right after she was moved from the ER to ICU. - She has a 29 year old heart, but her other internal organs are in trouble from her history of abuse. And now the brain damage. The doctor gave little hope for surviving another heart stoppage.

A couple months ago now, I had a serious, straight talk, talk about salvation and eternity. Melanie told me that she had trusted Jesus; just hadn't been living right; and wanted to begin a new life with a new focus on Jesus and living right.

Chris's mom and sister drove in from Maryland. We had opportunity to talk with them.

Melanie's brother flew in from NY, arriving about 9p. He's here.

Melanie's dad, I talked with him on the phone; he's arriving in Cary about 8a tomorrow.

We, or at least I, will be back at the hospital in the morning.

Rich

Tuesday... "just happened" ... gas station... so they could get there
Sunday for "The Bible - Part 2" ... my # in Chris's cell phone to call me 21 hours later...

Subject: Melanie update - Thur evening

Date: 3/7/2013 7:31:26 P.M.

3/7/2013, 5:00p

I spend a lot of the day at the ICU.

When I got there they said she was off of sedation, the seizures had virtually stopped, they were able to stop dialysis, and they had blood contents back within normal ranges. I asked if that meant she might be able to hear me. The nurse said, "I'd like to think so." (Hearing is the last sense to go.) – So I talked to

her and read her scriptures like John 14:1-3, "I go to prepare a place for you ..." and Jeremiah 29:11 "I have a plan for you..." and others.

However, as "good" as being off the sedation and brain seizure activity ceasing and other medical plusses may sound, being off sedation should have brought about her responding... she is non-responsive. Tomorrow morning they are planning an EEG to see what if any brain activity is happening. It still looks very grim, no expectations, just that the road to the same end looks "smoother" than it did yesterday.

Met and talked with a couple more family members today. Her dad is in from near Jacksonville FL, brother from NYC, brother's dad from FL.

That she's going to Heaven, that's good. That she's in this physical condition and process she is, still very bad.

Her mother died this past Summer. The doctors are having the same conversations with her dad today that he had with doctors about her mother 8 months ago.

Rich

Thanks for the update....you must be exhausted!
Sheila

Subject: Fr., 3/8/13, 4:00p, Update
Date: 3/8/2013 6:36:06 P.M.

Fr., 3/8/13, 4:00p, Update

Melanie is hanging on by the smallest thread. She's been off all sedation medication for over 24 hours now and shows no real signs of "waking up." She's still on a respirator and not breathing on her own and not fighting or over-riding it (which she should be doing once the sedation has been removed); She does twitch a little bit and did bite her tongue and it is bleeding a little from when she apparently bit on the respirator tube in her mouth.

I did talk to Chris, her fiancé, briefly. He's not a big talker, a quiet guy. He is opening up a little and warming up to me. -- "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." -- He needs people who care. His father died after a heart attack when he was 12. That's when his mother said he "lost his faith."

A Chaplain was in Melanie's room with Chris, and Chris's mom, and I came in. She asked who I was in the situation. I told her I was the "en loco parentis," the "resident, stand in dad." -- As we left the room I put my hand on Chris's back and said, "If you need a "loco parentis," you know I'm here and available." He put his hand on my shoulder and said quietly, "I know."

It will be a long weekend until Monday when they will do another EEG to see if there is any brain activity. (There is no one to do EEGs on the weekends.)

Pray for all of us.

Thanks,
Rich & Marie

Subject: Melanie update

Date: 3/9/2013 11:27:18 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time

From: Rdymmel@aol.com

3-9-13

10:00p

Melanie has been made a "do not resuscitate" if her heart stops. The dr said it could be tonight, tomorrow, ...

They have started to prep for organ donor process.

Rich

Subject: Update; Sun, 3/10/13, 11:55p

Date: 3/11/2013 12:49:12 A.M.

Update; Sun, 3/10/13, 11:55p

Marie and I went over to the hospital right after lunch today. The plan was that they would prepare for organ donation starting about 5p.

The decision was to remove the ventilator and plan to do organ donation. The hope of any recovery on Melanie's part is hopeless; massive brain damage from lack of oxygen at the initial event and then the 8 heart arrests and resuscitations early Wednesday morning. That required, and it was expected, that she'd quit breathing on her own in less than one hour after they removed the ventilator at 8:50p.

After 2 hours, she still hadn't even slowed her breathing or heart rate. After 3 hours the breathing rate had slowed only slightly.

We decided we would go home and I'll return in the morning. I believe the family is holding vigil through the night. Her fiancé is sleeping in a recliner, next to the bed, holding her hand.

I said to Marie in the car as we came home, "We can choose to become involved with people, and sometimes get hurt and have pain along the way in relationships; or we can be uninvolved and avoid the pains. The first option is better." She said, "Yes."

This latest event, not being able to fulfill Melanie's request to be an organ donor and have at least that good come after all this, is another disappointment in the whole scheme of events of this very stressful week.

Continue to hold the family up in prayer. I am 100% sure of that Melanie has long since gone to be with Jesus. Her body, breathing, heart, etc. is running on "auto pilot" from the brain stem and that she has a 29 year old healthy heart even though several of her internal organs are in chaos in one way or another. But we can tell that her body is slowly shutting down. Death may take her body in a few hours, a day, a couple days.

Opportunities to talk about Jesus and Eternity and Heaven have been showing up left and right (!!!) with a few of the family members there.

Among other things, I have been able to tell the family how there has been a “team” of people praying specifically for Melanie for over a year. They have expressed appreciation.

Thank you for your prayers and encouragement.
Rich & Marie

Subject: Update; Mon, 3/11/13, 3a
Date: 3/11/2013 4:42:57 A.M
From: Rdymmel@aol.com

Update; Mon, 3/11/13, 4:30a

I got a call from the nurse’s station about 4a to let us know that Melanie officially passed away around 3a.

I called Roy, her dad, they were just arriving in the parking lot at the motel (4:00a). He said that ‘her numbers slowly declined slightly and then suddenly all went flat. Neal was the name of the nurse (the night nursing supervisor) that came out and told them (in the CCU waiting room).’

That part is now over.

I said, “Melanie left us a while ago, sometime a couple days ago.”

Roy said, “I know.”

— Her body finally quit breathing this morning.

A couple of times yesterday evening, I said it to Chris and to Cindy, Chris’s mom, “I’m holding these two incompatible, contradictory thoughts in my head. I am 100% convinced that Melanie is not here, that she is in the presence of Jesus. And yet when everyone else had left the room, I didn’t want her to be alone there. So I had to sit there and held her hand.” – Marie said, “That is for you; so you know that you’ve done everything you could have done.”

Thank you for your prayers and support for over the last over a year.

On one hand, I think this has got to have been one of the hardest weeks of my life. And on the other hand, I think maybe it has been one of the best, in that I was able to connect with Roy, Melanie’s dad, who I’ve met and talked with before, but on a whole new level, talking about Melanie and talking about God; and Cindy, Chris’s mom, who I met for 5 minutes once before but now learned a lot about Chris’s history, and talking also about spiritual things. And connected with Chris on a much deeper level, which hopefully will continue and help him come to a saving faith in Jesus, too.

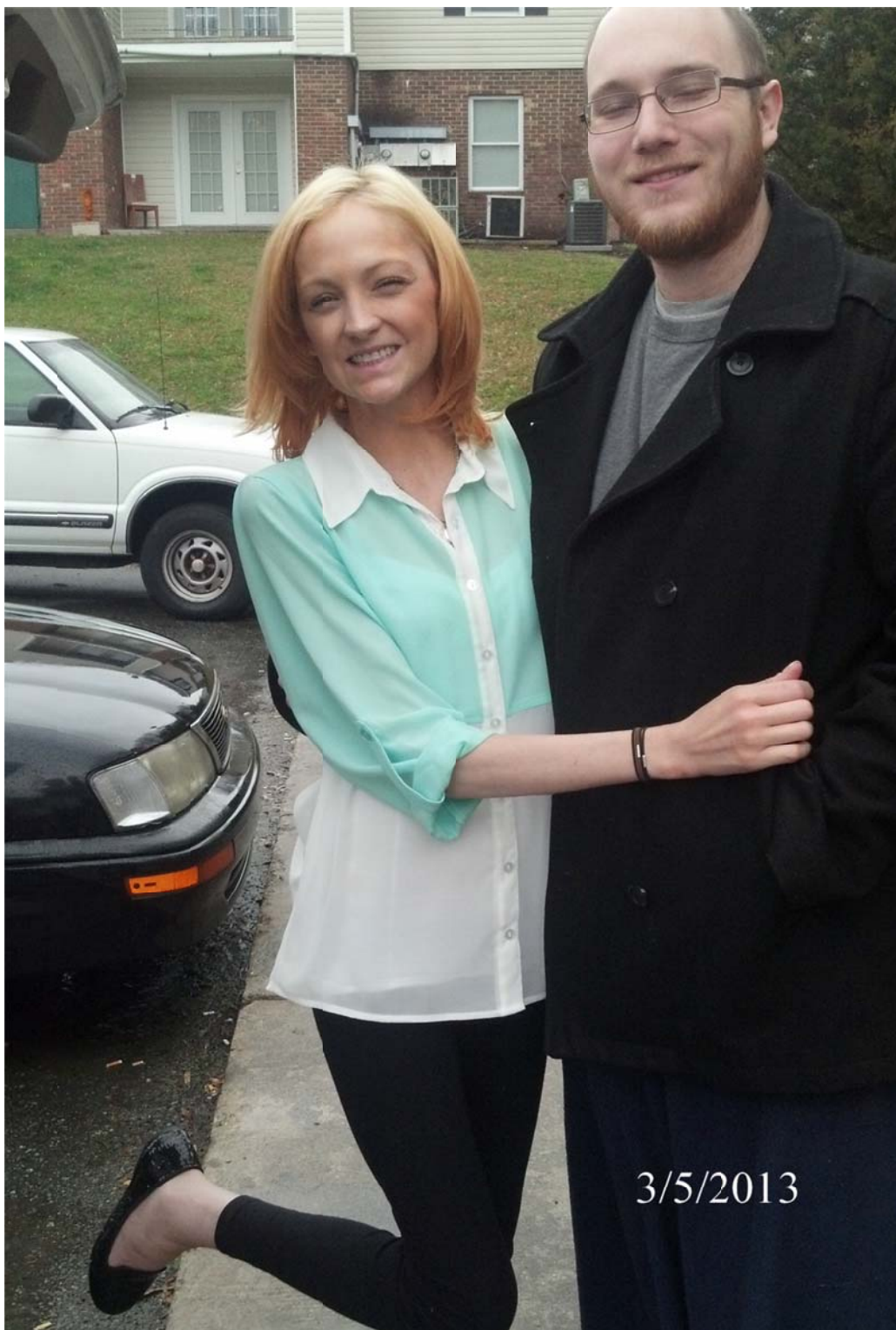
Rich



Oct 8, 2012



Feb 28, 2013



Melanie died on March 11th and Greg died on March 9th from complications after a heart attack. Eleven weeks after that Christmas Day dinner, two of the seven people around that table Christmas Day had died. – “Life” is uncertain. –

Matthew 6:19-21 NKJV – “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Luke 12:16-21 NKJV- Then He [Jesus] spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

I believe they have both transitioned from this life to the next. I believe they are both in Heaven with God.

This has been “the story of Melanie Manley.”

I believe Melanie would have wanted us to tell you two messages from her life...

She said, “**I could be the ‘poster child for what not to do in college. - Don’t do drugs. Don’t do alcohol.’** Both of those killed her at age 29.

The second message I believe she would have told you is ‘**I finally came to understand that a necessity for life and the future is to accept Jesus and try to follow Him as best as I can. You need to do that, too, if you are to join me in Heaven.** Want a place to start? I liked reading the stories in the *Egermeier’s Bible Story Book*. Dr.D. had given me a couple copies of that book over the past years.’

Is what you’re doing today going to make a difference 300,000 years from now? For you? For others? Where will you be 300,000 years from now? – We will all live forever, the question is “Where?”

In memory of

Melanie Lauren Manley

March 1, 1984 — March 11, 2013

Chris and Cindy,

First I want to express my appreciation for you guys not abandoning Melanie in her day... no months of troubles, illness, and demons and giants.

And how sad that her struggles ended as they did. She was building such hope... getting on the Chapel Hill list, gaining weight, feeling better, getting that job, ...

But apparently God had a different plan. I believe she finally trusted God, based on what she had said to me in January and actions she started to take despite the interference of her health issues.

In a Bible study we did on the book of Daniel, one of the things I remember is that God sometimes removes or resolves the problem, sometimes He goes with us through the trouble, and sometimes He might remove us from the situation. From this side now, I'm convinced that God knew that Melanie's physical problems couldn't be solved by the doctors in Chapel Hill or anywhere else. So He healed her by taking her out of this messy world and the battles she had with demons and giants - yes, I'm convinced, I even wrote her once that I was convinced that there was a very real battle going on in unseen, spiritual realms over her body and soul. The demons won the battle for her body, but God won the battle for her soul. As the "Ultimate Physician" he healed her by freeing her from that wracked body and has given her a new one, free of pain, free of all those complications.

Can we see it? No. She left us and is in Heaven, in a new heavenly body, free from pain and pills and all that for eternity.

A Eulogy for Melanie (“A gathering of friends” at Elon University, 4/22/13)

By Dr. Richard Dymmel

Many called her Mel. I said I preferred to call her Melanie, because when you say “Melanie,” since it ends in an “e,” you have to smile.

Here on this campus is where I met Melanie in August of 2002, when, as Melanie has said, she “just happened” to register for my section of Statistics.

Here is where we had many discussions about life, death, and eternity, mostly over in the Fireside Lounge in the Mosley Student Center.

Here is where she was also introduced to the demons of alcohol and drugs. They took her down a road of destruction. – I think I can say this because one of Melanie’s recent statements and wishes was to tell people, [quote] “I could be the poster child for what not to do in college. Don’t do drugs. Don’t do alcohol.” [close quote] We talked about telling her story by writing a book as recent as Tuesday, the last day she was conscious.

I wrote to her often and we talked occasionally over the following years. I had promised her that I would pray for her every day. She would say, “Please don’t give up on me.” And I promised her I wouldn’t and would tell her that I loved her and Jesus loved her.

Melanie called me on February 23rd, 2011 and said, once again, more seriously than the times she said it in the past, “I want what you have.” “I want to go to church with you, I want to get into a Sunday School class. Sing in the choir. ...”

Over the next months, she returned here again to try to finish her degree, but her health was fragile. And we had several discussions including about “what we have,” a life built on a foundation of a belief in God and a relationship with God through a relationship with Jesus. She asked me for another Bible Story Book and another Bible. A couple conversations in the last few months convince me that Melanie had a fledgling belief in God and Jesus, and that Jesus died to pay the price for her soul for eternity.

In one letter to her in a particularly troubled time in her struggles, I wrote that I was convinced that there was a very real battle raging in the spiritual realm over her. – The very real demons ended up winning the battle for her body and this life. But God won the battle for her soul and her eternal life. – I think, maybe, God knew that all the medical stuff she was headed for wouldn’t work and a life of continued pain and struggle lie ahead. So He said, “Ten thousand years ago I knew you and I knew you would make those bad choices. But I also knew that you’d eventually, through all those ‘just happened’ things, reach that point where you would believe in and want Me. That was enough. And I decided you’d suffered enough in this life. It was the right time to save you from all the pain and suffering that lie ahead for that body and bring you home to be with Me. I am the ultimate physician. I will give you a new, healed, restored body. Now is the time to come to the eternal home I have prepared for you.” In John 14:2 Jesus said He’s prepared a place for his followers in His Father’s house.

Melanie was far from having all her theology organized or “right,” as I tried to teach and show her, but I believe she had the basic foundational pieces - God is. And Jesus came and died for her and is alive and real today.

And I believe Melanie is alive and well today, in a restored, healed, real body in Heaven today; no longer battling the demons of drugs and alcohol that killed this earthly body and caused her all that pain; no longer being attacked by literal demons. She is now safe in the arms of Jesus.

She didn't have all the “right answers” to theological questions. She didn't believe all that I believe. She didn't believe all that the Bible says.

When we were cleaning out their apartment, I found an opened envelope with a page I had mailed to her. She had underlined 3 sentences. 11 days after she would have read this mail and underlined these sentences, she would be on a ventilator in a CCU bed and 5 days later stop breathing and her heart stop beating. I had written this intro and then included a story about someone singing “His Eye Is On The Sparrow” in a Starbucks...

Th., 2/21/13 - Coincidence

Is it a coincidence that today, I reach back to “clean up” my email inbox? To clean out and compile “daily funny stories,” and there was this - not a “funny” story at all, but words of encouragement, [that “just happened” to be] sitting in my inbox since last October, 4 months, until today... {then she had underlined the next sentence in red} “His eye is on the sparrow. And I know He watches me.”... A note, a story, to send you today when maybe you need a note of encouragement. {then she had underlined this next sentence in red} The “I Am,” the eternal, all knowing, Alpha and Omega, knows you and is watching over you. {then she underlined in green} Someone once told me, “Things don't ‘just happen’.” {Melanie was the “someone” who would often say this to me.}

I wrote to Roy recently that I am convinced that I will see Melanie in Heaven in the future. And she will be well, healed, whole, restored; and is now sitting at the feet of Jesus. I wrote this to Roy:

I'd bet she's asked Him things like, "The 'virgin birth,' like Dr.D. tried to tell me; come on, I know how babies happen. Really?!" "Yes, Melanie; really. If God created everything, including you, don't you think he can create a baby on his own?" "And the stories in that Bible story book, the Bible stories, like you stopping the funeral and raising the widow's son from the dead; you really did that?" "Yes, Melanie. Just like in the Bible story book, just like in the Bible, just like Dr.D. told you. Yes, Melanie, I am stronger than death. You 'died' but I beat death and now you're here, alive, talking with me, aren't you?" "But I only really believed a little bit of it." "It was enough. It isn't about what you did, it's about you accepting that I paid your debt for you." "That's what Dr.D. told me. I hope he can reach the rest of them, like Chris, so they can be here, too." "He's trying; but it's up to them to accept and believe it; like you did."

Back on March 11th, when we got that phone call at 4 a.m. and they told us that she stopped breathing at about 3, Marie said something that summarized some of my emotions... Marie said, *“You lost your dream for the three of us to be a family. She was becoming a daughter to us. And now she’s gone.”*

She is “gone,” from here. But I know I will see Melanie again, in Heaven. And we will have an eternity to sit down and read Bible stories together.

In the book of Revelation, chapter 21, verses 4-5, it reads: ⁴And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” ⁵Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.”

Jeremy Camp sings a song titled “There Will Be A Day.” The lyrics include:

I try to hold on to this world
with everything I have
But I feel the weight of what it brings,
and the hurt that tries to grab
The many trials that seem to never end,
His word declares this truth,
that we will enter in this rest with wonders anew

But I hold on to this hope
and the promise that He brings
That there will be a place
with no more suffering

(Chorus) There will be a day with no more tears,
no more pain, and no more fears
There will be a day when the burdens of this place,
will be no more, we'll see Jesus face to face
But until that day, we'll hold on to you always

I know the journey seems so long
You feel you're walking on your own
But there has never been a step
Where you've walked out all alone

(Chorus) There will be a day with no more tears,
no more pain, and no more fears
There will be a day when the burdens of this place,
will be no more, we'll see Jesus face to face
But until that day, we'll hold on to you always

I will see Melanie, my little sister, again, when I get to Heaven. I say she's my sister because the Bible says Melanie and I are both adopted children of God. And in the Bible, to be adopted means to be a child that is guaranteed your inheritance, and that's Heaven.

Addendum

Several “daily emailed thoughts” from Dr.D. ... Some specifically surrounding Melanie and other messages that would be relevant.

3/12/2013



Deus Absconditus

The Olympic Mountains in Washington State form the “backbone” of the Olympic peninsula. Jagged peaks blanketed with snow for much of the year, they are a delight to behold. Living within walking distance of an overlook that affords a panoramic view of these majestic peaks often sounds a siren call beckoning me to come and to gaze at their beauty. I am not the only one who hears this call. On sunny days, the overlook is filled with individuals coming to gaze at, or to photograph those mountains as the sun cascades down their spiny backs.

There are other times, however, when the Olympics are shrouded in a thick blanket of cloud. Grey and foreboding, this blanketing cloud-blockade obscures any hope of viewing their grandeur. Hidden from view, one can only see an impenetrable wall of cloud.

Our human experience of God can appear very much like the Olympic Mountains. There are many days when God’s grandeur and glory are on full display. And we are assured, like the ancient Hebrew poet that as we “lift up our eyes to the mountains” our “help comes from the Lord” (Psalm 131:1-2). At other times, God seems obscured by clouds—clouds of doubt, suffering, disappointment, or pervasive evil. Sometimes it seems that there are far more cloudy days, than clear ones. The experience of God can seem like that of the biblical Job going “forward but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him” (Job 23:8-9).

Deus absconditus is the Latin phrase that describes this phenomenon — *the hidden*

God. The hiddenness of God is a particularly painful experience for those who affirm faith in God. It is equally difficult for people who do not affirm any faith: *Where is this hidden God believers want us to follow? Why doesn’t God show up?* It is an apologetic conundrum experienced by many throughout history. Blaise Pascal, one of the greatest Christian apologists, [and mathematician] described his own experience with *deus absconditus* as a pitiable mystery: “This is what I see and what troubles me. I look on all sides, and I see only darkness everywhere. Nature presents to me nothing which is not a matter of doubt and concern. If I saw nothing there which revealed Divinity, I would come to a negative conclusion, if I saw everywhere the signs of a Creator, I would remain peacefully in faith. But, seeing too much to deny and too little to be sure, I am in a state to be pitied.”⁽¹⁾ Pascal speaks poignantly of the pitiable state when the clouds of our human experience hide God away and leave us with an utterly obstructed view.

Surely this was the same experience of Jesus as he wept in the Garden of Gethsemane. Under so much duress, his sweat mingled with drops of blood, the likely result of broken capillaries under his skin. And from the cross, his recitation of Psalm 22 became his cry of abandonment: “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). Here, the cry of *deus absconditus* from his only, beloved son. These are the last words uttered by Jesus in Matthew and Mark’s Gospels. John doesn’t include them at all. Of the three synoptic gospels, only Luke ends his crucifixion narrative with Jesus quoting from another of Israel’s songs: “Into Thy hands, I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46; Psalm 31:5). Jesus affirms in a whisper of trust that seen or unseen, his life is in God’s hands.

Perhaps, like Jesus, there are times when the best we can do is to yield ourselves to the God who seems hidden behind the clouds—and perhaps to acknowledge that the journey of faith is not always the warm assurance of perpetually clear skies that we thought it might be. For those outside of faith, such admissions may well be a needed authenticity.

In this sense, as author Flannery O'Connor wrote, faith is not the guarantee for security or comfort. "I think there is no suffering greater than what is caused by the doubts of those who want to believe. I know what torment this is, but I can only see it, in myself anyway, as the process by which faith is deepened... What people don't realize is how much religion costs. They think faith is a big electric blanket, when of course it is a cross...

Tu., 1/22/13 - "Be seen"

Jesus doesn't point out the sin with a "pointing finger," like a Pharisee. ("Jesus, Friend of Sinners," Casting Crowns. "... Open our eyes to the world at the end of our pointing fingers ...") Her life is "a mess" and she already knows it. He set up her admission opportunity (be seen); then He tells her who He is; and she believes (John 4). And Jesus uses her to save the town.

Jesus can use anyone. It's not what you've done or not done. The Pharisees were the "kings" of "do this and don't do that" and Jesus despised those guys. They wouldn't acknowledge / believe who He was (except for Nicodemus, eventually, it just took him a while).

Have you "come clean" with God? Will you let Him use you to "save the town" (or do whatever)?

Have a blessed day and a fantastic forever.

Rich

1/22/2013 - John 4:1-42 - "A Slice of Infinity" from RZIM

Knowledge Without Shame

A few years ago, a man had an idea. He decided to start a blog—intended to be a temporary community art project—in which individuals would mail postcards on which was written one secret they hadn't told anyone. No longer a "temporary art project" this blog is now an online community with over 80,000 members.

You arrive at enough certainty to be able to make your way, but it is making it in darkness. Don't expect faith to clear things up for you. It is trust, not certainty."(2)

In the experience of *deus absconditus*, God seems hidden from view just like my majestic Olympic Mountains. Yet even here, faith, not securing or comforting, but seeking and searching, still points towards the God who is there behind the clouds.

Margaret Manning is a member of the speaking and writing team at Ravi Zacharias International Ministries in Seattle, Washington.

(1)Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*, as cited in Kelly James Clark, *When Faith is Not Enough* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 38.

(2)Flannery O'Connor, *The Habit of Being* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1979), 354.

Apparently, even those with secrets feel the need to share them with someone. Whatever secrets people have hidden, this blog phenomenon highlights the fundamental human desire to be known and *seen* at the deepest levels.

Yet being truly known simultaneously arouses fear. And it is no wonder that so many keep secrets from even their nearest and dearest. Being known opens us up to exposure, and if exposed we risk rejection—for all of who we truly are is neither beautiful nor lovely. As the contemporary songwriter Aimee Mann once lamented, "People are tricky. You can't afford to show anything risky, anything they don't know. The moment you try, well kiss it goodbye."(1) So rather than risk relationship, we hide from others what resides in the dark recesses of our souls. We hide our private secrets and put on our public facades praying that what we really are will never be seen or come to light.

Given this fear of being known, the invocation to "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done," could be heard more like an accusation at an inquisition than an invitation to be seen completely without shame. Yet, this invitation—given by an unnamed, Samaritan woman in the gospel of John—is an invitation to see, and to be seen by one who tells her all that she had done. His knowledge doesn't reject or destroy relationship. His knowledge restores her dignity.

We are only given a few details about her. She was a Samaritan, a long-despised ethnic group. She came to draw water during the hottest part of the day and not early in the morning or late in the evening as would have been typical for the women of her day. We are told that she had five husbands and was currently living with a man to whom she was not married. While it is not stated explicitly, this is likely the source of her

shame. Women in the ancient world derived their social standing and economic viability from their husbands. Without a husband, and particularly without a male child, a woman was without recourse and completely dependent on a society that often abandoned her. And so, perhaps this woman comes to draw water when no other women were around as a way of hiding her shame. Hers is a secret too painful to sit with in the open.

Yet in her brief encounter with a man who asks her to give him a drink, her secrets are revealed. But not for the sake of shaming her or exposing what she feared the most. This prophet at no point invites repentance or, for that matter, speaks of sin at all since she very easily could have been widowed or have been abandoned or divorced. Five times would be heartbreaking, but not impossible. Further, she could now be living with someone that she was dependent on, or be in what was called a Levirate marriage (where a childless woman is married to her deceased husband's brother in order to produce an heir, yet is not always technically considered the brother's wife). Her shame is tragic, rather than scandalous; her fear of being seen the result of deep pain.

Immediately after the man describes her past, she says, "I see that you are a prophet" and asks him where one should worship. "Seeing" in John, biblical scholars note, is all-important. "To see" is often connected with belief. When the woman says, "I see you are a prophet," she makes a confession of faith.(2)

She sees because this man named Jesus has *seen* her. He has seen her plight. He has recognized her, spoken with her, offered her something of incomparable worth. He has *seen* her—and showered on her worth, value and significance. All of this is treatment to which she is unaccustomed. And so when he speaks of her past both knowingly and compassionately, she realizes she is in the presence of a prophet. She leaves her waterpot, runs into her city, and issues an invitation to all the townspeople to "come, see a man who told me all the things I have done." [John 4:28]

John's gospel places this encounter with the unnamed Samaritan woman immediately after Jesus speaks with Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader [John 3:1-21]. Nicodemus, however, has great difficulty comprehending who or what Jesus was. Yet as scholar David Lose notes, Jesus's encounter with this woman yields an entirely different result. She "who was the polar opposite of Nicodemus in every way, she recognizes not just who Jesus is but what he offers — *dignity*. Jesus invites her to not be defined by her circumstances and offers her an identity that lifts her above her tragedy. And she accepts, playing a unique role in Jesus' ministry as she is the first character in John's gospel to seek out others to tell them about Jesus."(3)

Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done becomes an invitation to be welcomed into knowing, and welcoming others to know. This Jesus is the one who demonstrates that knowledge of our most intimate life details need not make us afraid or feel

ashamed. His knowledge brings dignity and freedom to be known in all of our human complexity. The nearness of Jesus doesn't kill us from exposure, but offers us a new identity forged from intimate knowledge. It is an invitation to know, just as we are fully known.

Margaret Manning is a member of the speaking and writing team at Ravi Zacharias International Ministries in Seattle, Washington.

(1)Aimee Mann, "It's Not," *Lost In Space*, Superego Records 2002.

(2)David Lose, "Misogyny, Moralism and the Woman at the Well," *The Huffington Post*, March 21, 2011.

(3) *Ibid*.

We., 1/23/13 - "FREE" stuff?

FREE!!

Great word!

Most things aren't free. After rejecting the estimate of just over \$500 by the dealer to replace the fan in the front heater / AC in my van, I started searching for the part numbers on-line. Found them for less than half the price they wanted. Not free, but a lot less expensive. Bought them. The dealer said it's a 4 hr job to remove a major portion of the dash to get to the fan. It did take me about 6 hours, lying on my back, under the dash board, my back pressed by the door sill (2 days later my back and shoulder still ache a little), but I saved \$400. "Removing the dash" is because one screw is buried in the carpet and insulation in the back and the shape of the floor ALMOST blocks dropping the cover, but with a little force it will come down. - I reached in with a hacksaw blade and cut the plastic tab off where you can't reach the screw head.

I needed to save the \$400 because the next day the engine SUDDENLY started running REAL rough. - Not good. That one I figured was beyond my abilities. By the time that was fully resolved, it was \$373.

I find that interestingly coincidental. I saved \$400 and the next day I get a \$373 expense. - A "God thing"? I'll buy that.

But "FREE!" I can go for that. Sometimes I'll even take a freebie even if it's something I don't need. Maybe I'll run into someone who CAN use it and I can just pass it on to them.

Very few things are really "free." Usually

there is a cost involved. Even if it's "free to me" monetarily, it will take a few seconds or minutes of my time to get it. – "Free" TV channels and paid for by all those commercials, they want my time to get in my face with their message. – And don't try to get into the argument that what I watch on TV or video games I play or movie I watch doesn't affect me. The companies that pay thousands of dollars to get in front of you for 30 seconds KNOW that what you see will influence you and affect your choices.

I just got a "free" ream of paper at Staples office supply store yesterday. Except I had to pay \$6.99 + tax up front, and then today I'll go online and put in the code from the store receipt, and they will credit my store card with \$6.99 for when I go back to buy other stuff I need like occasional printer ink cartridges or a case of paper, etc. They got me into the store, I did buy a couple things I needed, and I went to their store instead of Office Depot. It affected my choice.

And of course salvation is free. The price for my salvation and eternal life in Heaven with God has been paid for by Jesus. "Paid in full." I do have to accept His gift. It is a gift. – Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast."

And if you have truly accepted God's gift, it should affect how you live. Jesus didn't call us to a mediocrity. He calls us to be Christians! And as such, we are to spend these few years living for Him. - - I like the billboards for the U.S. Marines. They talk about "commitment." Jesus talked about commitment when He said "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (There are 3 comments in this arena of being committed in Luke 9:57-62.) Ever thought about how almost anyone can join the Army, the Air Force is more selective, the Marines talk about "the few, the proud"? And then there are the Seals; talk about selective and elite. - Too many "Christians" (notice I put that in quotations) join the "Christian National Guard" and only want to be "weekend warriors."

Now this last "freebie," which is what really got me started on this whole thing about "free"

today, is free music for your iTunes.

It will take a little while, weeks, and you don't get to choose, except whether yes or no each week.

And it will introduce you to their website (store), that's your "cost" and what they want from you, where you might find other things to "get" - their daily verse, listen to their music online, and then maybe listen to their station.

Here's the deal... At www.KLOVE.com, click on the [Music Room] tab. At the bottom of the list it says [Free Song]. That takes you to another screen with a code number for the week. Highlight the code and then click on [Redeem code Here: Get it free on iTunes.] That will take you to the iTunes store and will download the free song of the week. Every week another free song to download. And in a few weeks you will be building a library of music.

And you can get the lyrics to songs at the KLOVE.com page, like I've been including the past few weeks. And, for me, sometimes it's interesting to read, and think about, the words in the songs. – Not that songs are where we should get our theology. We get and base our theology on the Bible. But songs often are a good way to express our theology. – Let's be real. The Psalms were meant to be sung. They were the "hymnal" or "song book" of past centuries, millenniums actually. And the Bible talks about praising Him with tambourines (drums) and stringed instruments (lyre, guitar, harp, piano,...). And an actual pipe organ, air blown in the pipes, I suppose, would be a "pipe instrument" (Ps 150:4) along with flutes and such.

Well, so much on "free."

I revert back to – it's a good thing for me that I don't have to earn my salvation, that it's a gift, because I know I'm not "good enough" to deserve Heaven. And I try to exhibit my thanks for the gift of eternal life by how I live this life, every day, and not just on Sunday.

Selah. (Many interpret "selah" as a musical term that means to pause and meditate on what was sung for a moment.)

Mo., 2/11/13 - "Fear"

When I read this piece from John Piper this morning, several thoughts, aspects of this ran through my head. – I "fear" God. – Others see my trust in God. – And just maybe my confidence in God can help them "fear" God.

And then the book, *Not a Fan*, crossed my mind. It raises the question as to whether we are "just a fan" of God, or do we really trust Him. – Saying we trust Jesus for saving our soul and our eternity, that's maybe "easy" (?). But to really trust Him... that would involve trusting Him with our today and tomorrow. And that "trusting Him" thing, that can be a tough one.

And a "flash back moment" of trying to demonstrate trust with a college student in the student lounge, oh maybe 10 years ago. — "Do you trust me, that I wouldn't let you get hurt?" "Yes." "Then I'm standing here behind you. I will catch you and not let you fall or get hurt. Okay? Believe me?" "Yes." "Trust me?" "Yes." "Now close your eyes, cross your arms, and lean back and fall, and I will catch you. You'll be safe." And she'd start to lean, just a little... then step back with a foot to catch herself. — It's about trusting God and what He says in His Word. She *said* she trusted me, but when it came down to action ...

And if I trust God, then maybe others, who see me, can learn to trust God, too. And who might you be a "daddy" to? Who are you an example to? Who might be watching and learning from you?

Selah.

Have a blessed day and a fantastic forever.

Rich

February 11, 2013

How to Be a Refuge for Your Children

John Piper

If Daddy is afraid, where can a little child turn? Daddies are supposed to be safe. They are supposed to know what to do and how to solve problems and fix things and, most of all, protect the children from harm. But what happens if a child sees fear in Daddy's face? What if Daddy is as scared as the child, and doesn't know what to do? Then the child is utterly distraught and feels panic. He feels that the one strong and good and reliable place of safety is no longer safe.

But if Daddy is confident, then the children have a refuge. If Daddy is not panicking, but calm and steady, all the walls can come tumbling down, and all the waves can break, and all the snakes can hiss and the lions roar and the wind blow, and there will still be a safe place in Daddy's arms. Daddy is a refuge, as long as Daddy is confident.

That's why Proverbs 14:26 says that "his children will have a refuge," if Daddy has a "strong confidence." Daddy's confidence is the refuge of his children. Dads, the battle to be confident is not just about us, it is about the security of our children. It is about their sense of security and happiness. It's about whether they grow up fretful or firm in faith. Until children can know God in a deep personal way, we are the image and the embodiment of God in their lives. If we are confident and reliable and safe for them, they will be much more likely to cleave to God as their refuge when the storms break over them later. So how shall we have "strong confidence"? After all, we, too, are little children, clay pots, weak and broken and battling anxieties and doubts. Is the solution to put on the best show we can and hide our true selves? That will lead to ulcers at best, and God-dishonoring teenager-repelling duplicity at worst. That is not the answer.

Proverbs 14:26 gives another answer: "In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence." This is very strange. It says that the solution to fear is fear. The solution to timidity is fear. The solution to uncertainty is fear. The solution to doubt is fear.

How can this be?

Part of the answer is that the "fear of the Lord" means fearing to dishonor the Lord. Which means fearing to distrust the Lord. **Which means fearing to fear anything that the Lord has promised to help you overcome.** In other words the fear of the Lord is the great fear destroyer.

If the Lord says, "**Fear not, I am with you, be not dismayed, I will help you,**" (Isaiah 41:10), then it is a fearful thing to worry about the problem he says he will help you with. Fearing that problem when he says, "Fear not, I will help you," is a vote of no confidence against God's word, and that is a great dishonor to God. And the fear of the Lord trembles at such dishonoring

God.

If the Lord says, **"I will never fail you nor forsake you,"** so you can confidently say, **"The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me?"** (Hebrews 13:5-6) - if the Lord says that to you, then not to be confident in the Lord's promised presence and help is a kind of pride. It puts our reckoning of the trouble above God's. That is why we read the amazing words of the Lord in Isaiah 51:12 **"I, even I, am He who comforts you.** Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies And of the son of man who is made like grass?" Who are you to fear man, when God has promised to help you? So it is pride to fear man. And pride is the exact opposite of the fear of God.

So, yes, the Proverb is true and a great help to us. Fear God, dads. Fear God. Fear dishonoring him. Fear distrusting him. Fear putting your assessment of the problem above his. He says he can help. He is smarter. He is stronger. He is more generous. Trust him. Fear not to trust him.

Why? He works for those who wait for him (Isaiah 64:4). He will solve the problem. He will rescue the family. He will take care of the little ones. He will meet your needs. Fear not believing that. Then your children will have a refuge. They will have a Daddy who "has strong confidence" - not in himself, but in the promises of God, which he trembles not to trust.

Learning to fear the Lord for the sake of my children,
Pastor John

By John Piper. © Desiring God. [Used with permission.]

Tu., 2/12/13 - "Trust"

After I put yesterday's thought together, I was editing and archiving some of the "daily thought file." - Man, it was getting huge, pushing 400 pages in a Word file that started after the June computer "crash" that lost January through May 2012's file. Plus a couple hundred pages of "interesting stuff" that I have saved and not used.

Anyway... just a couple clicks down and I ran across these two cartoons that add to yesterday's thought on "trust."

The Cartoon Knuggets says there is ONLY ONE NAME under Heaven that is really important.

Don't trust in me for your salvation. Although, if I gain your trust, then like a child who trusts what someone says because they trust that person... "trust me" because I am trying to point you to a life saving, life changing trust in Jesus.



The second cartoon, from The Back Pew, is from the story where there was a lot of trust. All around.

The Jewish spies, had to trust Rahab, a prostitute (known) / (apparently) innkeeper, that she wouldn't just hide them and then tell on them, "The guys you are looking for are under the stalks of flax on the roof."

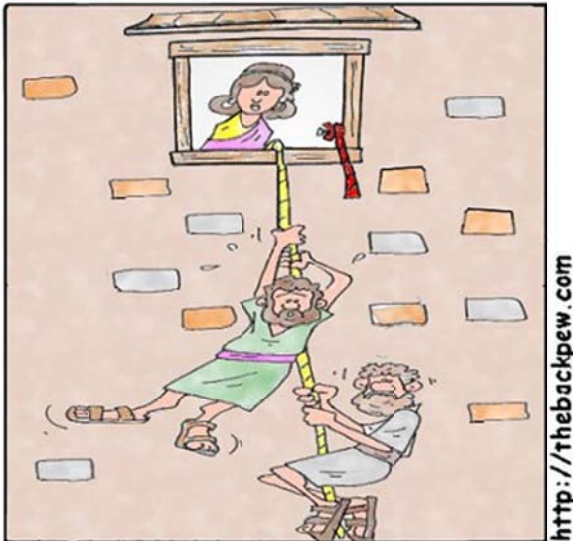
But you have to assume when you read the whole story (Joshua 2:1- ... well stuff happens in between, but the conclusion is by the end of chapter 7) that she placed a faith and trust in the power of the LORD (v.11) and believing, she made a deal (v.12-14) to be "saved" because of her belief and trust in the LORD, and these guys.

And it worked. She trusted the spies, which were "witnesses" for Jehovah. (See Joshua 7:17,22-23,25.)

In 1:18, notice it is a "scarlet cord" in the window? Does that remind you of when the death angel went through Egypt? The Israelites, who were obedient, put the scarlet blood of the sacrificed lamb from dinner on the top and sides of the doorframe (Ex 12:23). And the death angel passed over them. They were saved by the scarlet blood. - The symbolism is that of the scarlet blood of Jesus saves and protects us. - Not by the physical smearing of blood, not from a scarlet

cord in a window, but the Old Testament foreshadows Jesus, gives us images that represent Jesus saving and protecting us - now and our soul for eternity.

THE BACK PEW - JEFF LARSON



Joshua 2: The 2 spies escape Jericho with the help of Rahab the prostitute. *not the kind of story they wanted to go home and tell their wives.*

So the issue is still - - Who or what do you trust?

Is who you trust worthy of that trust? Are they capable?

I have to periodically do a little maintenance to keep my van with 200,000+ miles on it running. And now, since I did my most recent repairs, it can be trusted to carry me on my appointed rounds and where I want to go. HOWEVER, I DO realize that at any moment, it COULD just quit. When the transmission went out at 130,000, it was sudden and at 4:45p I was calling a mechanic I "trusted," who referred me to a transmission shop he "trusted," who sent a tow truck. - And when "something broke" last week, it had been running wonderfully; stopped at a stop sign; and when I stepped on the gas to go ... chug, chug, chug... NOT GOOD.

But God is the Alpha and the Omega (Rev 1:8, 21:6, 22:13); always has been (that's the beginning, "Alpha"), always will be (that's the end, "Omega"); omnipotent - He created the

universe (John 1:1-3); it says that all things are sustained by Him (Col 1:17, that's "currently active"). And Jesus is God. Always was, always will be, capable, truthful, does what He says... can be trusted... never fails.

For most of us, there are things or people you know you can't depend on or trust. And there are people and things that you can trust in, maybe even a lot. But although I am pretty trustworthy, and Pastor Lawrence can be pretty much trusted, and ... well you can probably name a few more people or things... gravity can be trusted to work. But people and things can let you down and fail (like my van, unexpectedly). But Jesus never fails.

Selah.

Have a blessed day and a fantastic forever.

Rich

[M.M. underlined these 3 sentences in red, red, and green on the page I had mailed her. 11 days after she would have read her mail, she would be on a ventilator in a CCU and die 5 days later. I found the opened envelope with the page when we were cleaning out their apartment.]

Th., 2/21/13 - Coincidence

Is it a coincidence that today, I reach back to "clean up" my email inbox? To clean out and compile "daily funny stories," and there was this - not a "funny" story at all, but words of encouragement, sitting in my inbox since last October, 4 months, until today... {red underline} "His eye is on the sparrow. And I know He watches me."... A note, a story, to send you today when maybe you need a note of encouragement. {red underline} The "I Am," the eternal, all knowing, Alpha and Omega, knows you and is watching over you. {green underline} Someone once told me [this was Melaniel, "Things don't 'just happen'."

Have a blessed day and a fantastic forever.

Rich

10/26/12

today'sFUNNY=====

THE SPARROW AT STARBUCKS

The song that silenced the cappuccino machine by John Thomas Oaks

It was chilly in Manhattan but warm inside the Starbucks shop on 51st Street and Broadway, just a skip up from Times Square. Early November weather in New York City holds only the slightest hint of the bitter chill of late December and January, but it's enough to send the masses crowding indoors to vie for available

space and warmth.

For a musician, it's the most lucrative Starbucks location in the world, I'm told, and consequently, the tips can be substantial if you play your tunes right. Apparently, we were striking all the right chords that night, because our basket was almost overflowing.

It was a fun, low-pressure gig - I was playing keyboard and singing backup for my friend who also added rhythm with an arsenal of percussion instruments. We mostly did pop songs from the '40s to the '90s with a few original tunes thrown in. During our emotional rendition of the classic, "If You Don't Know Me by Now," I noticed a lady sitting in one of the lounge chairs across from me. She was swaying to the beat and singing along.

After the tune was over, she approached me. "I apologize for singing along on that song. Did it bother you?" she asked.

"No," I replied. "We love it when the audience joins in. Would you like to sing up front on the next selection?"

To my delight, she accepted my invitation.

"You choose," I said. "What are you in the mood to sing?"

"Well ... do you know any hymns?"

Hymns? This woman didn't know who she was dealing with. I cut my teeth on hymns. Before I was even born, I was going to church. I gave our guest singer a knowing look. "Name one."

"Oh, I don't know. There are so many good ones. You pick one."

"Okay," I replied. "How about 'His Eye is on the Sparrow'?"

My new friend was silent, her eyes averted. Then she fixed her eyes on mine again and said, "Yeah. Let's do that one."

She slowly nodded her head, put down her purse, straightened her jacket and faced the center of the shop. With my two-bar setup, she began to sing.

"Why should I be discouraged?
Why should the shadows come?"

The audience of coffee drinkers was transfixed. Even the gurgling noises of the cappuccino machine ceased as the employees stopped what they were doing to listen. The song rose to its conclusion.

"I sing because I'm happy;
I sing because I'm free.
For His eye is on the sparrow
And I know He watches me."

HOLY MOMENT

When the last note was sung, the applause crescendoed to a deafening roar that would have rivaled a sold-out crowd at Carnegie Hall. Embarrassed, the woman tried to shout over the din, "Oh, y'all go back to your coffee! I didn't come in here to do a concert! I just came in here to get somethin' to drink, just like you!"

But the ovation continued. I embraced my new friend. "You, my dear, have made my whole year! That was beautiful!"

"Well, it's funny that you picked that particular hymn," she said.

"Why is that?"

"Well..." she hesitated again, "that was my daughter's favorite song."

"Really!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," she said, and then grabbed my hands. By this time, the applause had subsided and it was business as usual. "She was 16. She died of a brain tumor last week."

I said the first thing that found its way through my stunned silence.

"Are you going to be okay?"

She smiled through tear-filled eyes and squeezed my hands. "I'm gonna be okay. I've just got to keep trusting the Lord and singing his songs, and everything's gonna be just fine."

She picked up her bag, gave me her card, and then she was gone.

Was it just a coincidence that we happened to be singing in that particular coffee shop on that particular November night? Coincidence that this wonderful lady just happened to walk into that particular shop? Coincidence that of all the hymns to choose from, I just happened to pick the very hymn that was the favorite of her daughter, who had died just the week before? I refuse to believe it.

God has been arranging encounters in human history since the beginning of time, and it's no stretch for me to imagine that he could reach into a coffee shop in midtown Manhattan and turn an ordinary gig into a revival. It was a great reminder that if we keep trusting him and singing his songs, everything's gonna be okay.

Sa., 2/23/13 - What if...?

Just something I ran across. Something to say,
 “What if we did...? Might it have an impact on
 someone’s life, maybe for eternity, maybe even if
 just for today.”

Have a blessed day and a fantastic forever.
 Rich

<http://jenniferheeren.com/2012/08/09/what-if/>

What If?

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 2012

What If?

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better [to be with Him], and it will not be taken away from her.” ~ Luke 10:38-42

I am often worried and upset over many things. I worry what could happen if I do something. I worry about what could happen in the future. The thought of “what if” can lead to many things to worry and be upset over.

But what if I turn that around? What if I turn those what ifs into possibilities?

What if God comes through in the nick of time?

What if I do such in such and it really helps someone?

What if everything works out?

What if my hard work leads to something bigger than myself?

And even, what if a miracle happens?

What if?

Mo., 2/26/13 - the motions

Sunday we, the choir, sang “Motions.” It’s a slight modification, an arrangement, of “The Motions” as sung by Matthew West (from his album “Something to Say”) on contemporary music stations like KLOVE. His lyrics go like this:

This might hurt, It's not safe,
 But I know that I've gotta make a change
 I don't care If I break
 At least I'll be feeling something
 'Cause just ok, Is not enough
 Help me fight through the nothingness of life

Chorus

I don't wanna go through the motions
 I don't wanna go one more day
 Without Your all consuming passion inside of me

I don't wanna spend my whole life asking
 What if I had given everything?
 Instead of going through the motions

No regrets, Not this time,
 I'm gonna let my heart defeat my mind
 Let Your love, Make me whole,
 I think I'm finally feeling something

Chorus

Take me all the way. Take me all the way.
 Take me all the way

“Church” for some people is “going through the motions.” It’s on their checklist, of “what we do on Sundays;” or it’s on their checklist of “things to do to get to Heaven.” — WRONG! — Nowhere in the Bible does it say “attend church and you will be saved.” Singing in the choir, playing in the band, giving money, earning a Sunday School attendance pin, feeding the hungry, none of that. The Bible says: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). BUT, having been saved, verse 10 goes on (I like the NCV wording) “God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us to do good works, which God planned in advance for us to live our lives doing.”

The Bible says “...what must I do to be saved?” ... “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved,...” (Acts 16:30-31). And “...that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ ...” (1 John 3:23). (Also see John 9:35-38 after Jesus healed the blind man.) And because of that, then we’d want to “do good works” and to worship.

What “church” is supposed to be is a time of worship, a time of meeting with God, a time to say “thank you” for saving me,” a time to praise Him for who He is. “Church” is not just some “motions” to go through, for whatever reason.

Have a blessed day and a fantastic forever.
 Rich

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Daily Encounter ~ Thursday, February 21, 2013
 Know God: <http://actsworld.org/christian>

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By Richard Innes. Published and (c)

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Today's Daily Encounter Christianity vs Churchianity

As Jesus said to the religious leaders of his day, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions." (John 4:24) [is Mark 7:9, NIV]

Francis McNutt, author of the classic book, *Healing*, and director of Christian Healing Ministries points out how God's answer to the church in one generation can become a problem in the next or in following generations.

McNutt, in one of his monthly news reports, "The Healing Line," gave the following example: "In the Old Testament God instructed Moses to set up a bronze serpent on a stick, so that whoever might look at it was healed of a snake-bite during their wanderings in the desert. But then, centuries later, the good, reforming King Hezekiah 'broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made' because the Israelites had started to worship it!"

If we knew how Peter "gave the invitation for people to come to Christ" on the Day of Pentecost when 3,000 people were converted, we would cling to this method religiously and tenaciously. We would even fight over it and allow it to split churches. Fortunately, the New Testament is almost totally silent on methodology. What God is concerned about is our heart--not our methods! As E.M. Bounds said, "Men are looking for better methods. God is looking for better men [and women]."

One of the biggest battles in the church today is over the music and manner of worship. The reality is that God isn't concerned with our method of worship be it contemporary, traditional, or whatever, but with the spirit of our worship--the attitude of our hearts. As Jesus said to the woman at the well when she mentioned the "proper" place to worship, "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (Mark 7:9 (NIV)) Like the brass serpent, when "old traditions or modern methods of worship" become the focus of our worship, we may be going through the motions [my emphasis], but totally missing the point--and missing out on God!

Suggested prayer: "Dear God, please help me to be real and not to get bogged down in traditions or methods that are not relevant, but always be open to the work of your Spirit in my heart and life--and in my church. And please help

me to always worship you in spirit and in truth--from the heart. Gratefully, in Jesus' name, amen."

<:)))><

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Fr., 3/8/13 - The unexpected (1/2)

Sorry, but this week has just gone into the emotional blender. And for the next few more days you may not hear from me as I am involved in "hands on ministry" with some people. Let me explain...

Monday and Tuesday I wrote you about "The Bible" mini-series on TV and mentioned the young couple in their 20s we had over to watch it on Sunday evening.

Tuesday I was visiting with them. They were planning on coming over for "Part 2" next Sunday evening. -- Perky, happy, excited. -- Wednesday morning he called to tell me she was admitted to (and is still in) the Critical Care Unit at the hospital. She is on life support. During the night she stopped breathing. Her heart stopped in the ambulance and they revived her. Her heart stopped six more times in the E.R. and again right after they got her to the CCU. She is hanging on to life by a thread right now.

So I will ask you to consider just how fragile life is. ... A wisp of wind; a flower that is in bloom today and dried up tomorrow. -- Memories flashed through my brain... "I could get hit by a bus and killed tomorrow" as one of the guests at our Christmas dinner table said a couple months ago in the conversation. - On the highway, on a sign in front of a church, a couple years ago now... "Goldsboro 5 miles. Eternity 1 heartbeat." -- Each of us is one breath, one heartbeat, away from Eternity. -- Last week a car ran off the road near here and flipped and the 14 year old in the back seat was ejected through the window and the car rolled over her. Dead at

14. Our friend on life support turned 29 last Friday. You read the newspapers and see the news on TV... Death is no respecter of age. 14 or 64 or 94. And often gives no warning. Suddenly.

I would covet your prayers for my friend in CCU. And for her family members that have come in. And for us as we are among them and ministering to them and showing them the love of Jesus. Healing would be an absolute miracle; not impossible with God, but it would be a miracle. Peace and comfort and strength would be gifts from God. Opportunities to talk about Jesus and how she was turning her life around and was starting to walk toward God would be gifts from God.

It was at her kitchen table about two months ago that I said, "I have to ask you; I can't guess, assume, or take the chance that you may or may not have heard this presented and responded." And I walked through the verses of "The Roman Road" to salvation. -- She said that she had accepted that and believed it and has trusted in God. And she wanted to get into coming to church; maybe even sing in the choir. (She does have health issues that have affected her getting out some, but has come several times, especially since that conversation.) Now, she has a lot to learn and grow. But the thief only had to acknowledge what Jesus had been teaching - he had apparently heard - about His kingdom, the kingdom of God. And probably had heard, maybe even seen, a miracle or two he'd done. Nothing sophisticated. He just acknowledged and believed. And Jesus's reply to his miniscule expression of belief? "Today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

Have a blessed day and a fantastic forever.
Rich

"The Roman Road" to Salvation

Romans 3:10 (All Have Sinned)
As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one;

Romans 3:23 (All Have Sinned)
for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 5:12 (Sin's Penalty)

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

Romans 6:23 (Sin's Penalty)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in (through) Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:8 (Christ Paid the Penalty)

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 10:9,10 (Salvation through Faith)

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Romans 10:13 (Salvation through Faith)
(Joel 2:32)

for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

John 3:16 *God so loved the world (that includes you) that he gave his one and only Son (Jesus), that whoever believes in him shall not perish (Hell) but have eternal life (with God, Heaven).*

Mo., 3/11/13 - The unexpected (2/2)

I am writing my very personal emotions and thoughts from the last couple days today. This has been a very emotionally traumatic last 5 days.

Around 4 this morning, Marie said something that expressed, summarized, some of my emotions over the last 5 days. She said, "*You lost your dream for the three of us to be a family. She was becoming a daughter to us. And now she's gone.*" And I suppose she's right; that does express my emotional state.

We had stayed at the hospital until shortly after 11. Then we got the call from the hospital at 4a that the body that Melanie had inhabited for 29

years had passed away at 3a.

We met just over 10 years ago. She made choices in college that took her down a road of self destruction, of her self, her body, and her mind. Through the Crimson & White Connection and intermittent emails and an occasional call, we maintained this sort of “rubber band connection” of her bouncing away, then back, then away again.

Two years ago, February 23, 2011, she called me and said, ‘I just got out of rehab... I’m engaged...,’ and then she said “I want what you have.” And, ‘I want a marriage like you have... and to go to church with you guys...’

Since then it took a while before she relocated here. We had many conversations, particularly since last Spring. We often talked about how “what we have” that she wanted, is based on our lives being built on a foundation of Jesus.

I felt that she was just really starting to “get it.”

The last 10 years involved, that I know of, choices that got her into alcohol and drugs. – She told me she was going to AA and MA (Marijuana Anonymous) meetings. Eventually she told me she tested positive for some consequences of harder drug use. – Some college students make that choice and it doesn’t appear to have any serious consequences. But for Melanie, the consequences were tragic. – She said, quote, “I could be the poster child for what not to do in college.” It destroyed her liver to where she had just qualified and had started into a program to get a liver transplant; you can not live without your liver. – It destroyed her pancreas and she had to take enzyme pills to digest food – but they only partly worked and what was left of her intestine couldn’t digest and absorb the food properly and she was always hungry and was diagnosed by her doctors as malnourished. – She was often in pain that the heavy-duty pain meds she took didn’t quite give relief. – It affected her mental abilities – it affected her physical stabilities. Her body couldn’t properly monitor its chemical balances and in the last few months she was admitted to hospitals several times so they could stabilize her chemistry, etc. —

And last Tuesday and then into Wednesday early in the morning, her potassium level rose to

over double what it should be and her heart went into ventricular fibrillation about 1:30a.m.. That’s where the heart chambers, instead of pumping in proper rhythm to circulate the blood, just “flutter” rapidly and it doesn’t circulate blood and oxygen.

Lack of oxygen to the brain... her heart having to be restarted 8 times over the next couple hours because of the ventricular fibrillation caused by the potassium imbalance upsetting the rhythm... 8 times without oxygen to the brain... her brain essentially died. Wednesday was spent under heavy sedation while her brain was in almost constant seizures.

Medically with gallons of fluids pumped through her system and her blood cleansed by filters and dialysis, her kidneys began to function again, and the seizures quieted.

The “primitive” brain stem maintained the heartbeat and breathing.

Saturday the doctors and family decided that there was no hope for her ever recovering. Sunday, the plan, intent, and expectation was that she would stop breathing within an hour after removing the respirator and they could then complete her final wish, that of being an organ donor.

That didn’t happen as planned. Her breathing continued for 5 hours, from 8:50p until around 3:00a. Then, they told me when they called at 4 this morning, her breathing began to slow a little and then she suddenly took her last breath.

29 years old last Friday.

I believe she died and her soul left us to be with Jesus forever maybe last Thursday when the seizures quieted; or maybe Friday when she became totally unresponsive to anything; maybe some other time this week, maybe even at 1:30 Wednesday morning. But she had left this world. This morning it was just the shell she had lived in and left behind that died.

At dinner on Christmas Day, around the table, we talked about several things. Among them, somehow, the topic of how the Bible talks about how by believing in Jesus we are “adopted into the family of God” and what “adoption” meant in the first century. – I suppose, I had hoped we could “adopt” Melanie, in at least some emotional way, into our family and nurture and guide her spiritual growth. – Sometime in January, as I wrote last Friday, Melanie assured

me that she had trusted in God. – Honestly, with her slightly altered capacity I'm not sure what she really understood from our years of conversations, but I believe that God understands her faith in Him. Just like the thief on the cross next to Jesus didn't have to understand a whole lot and would be with Jesus in Heaven, I believe Melanie expressed enough faith in God that I will see her again when I get to Heaven.

As I wrote last Friday, when Melanie assured me she is trusting God (yes, present tense, she IS), that makes her my "little sister" since we are both adopted into God's family. We parted that

day saying, "Bye, Sis," and "Bye, Bro."

The last couple days, as I talked to the shell lying there – maybe it was just for my emotional outlet, or maybe she may have still been there and might have actually heard me, but at some point she had left to be with God – I would sometimes part saying, "Not, 'Goodbye, little sister,' but 'Until we meet again, Melanie, my little sister.' because I will see you again in Heaven."

I hope you have a blessed day and a fantastic forever with Melanie and me in Heaven.

Rich

Subject: Fwd: Hi, Chris
Date: 3/17/2013 4:43:50 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: Mckibben@us.ibm.com

As I wrote the other email I just sent, I thought, maybe Cindy might like to see the email I sent Chris yesterday. Maybe if just for the last paragraph and picture at the end. Somehow I'd like to stay in touch with Chris. We were just starting to get to know each other a little. Maybe you could encourage that. - I think Melanie would have said, 'Nothing 'just happens' and maybe Chris and Dr.D. were supposed to meet through all this complicated path and know that he honestly cares about Chris.'

Rich

Subject: Re: This weekend 3
Date: 4/2/2013 11:47:48 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rdymmel@aol.com
To: mckibben@us.ibm.com
CC: CMckibben@gmail.com

The really good Chinese place we go to is just down the road from the apartment, right near the courthouse in the center of Graham. It's not a big place, and not noisy. - Olive Garden is mmmm 10 miles E toward Greensboro at the big Alamance Crossing center at exit 140. Decent acoustics so it's not too noisy and people can have a conversation. - Either works for us. So we'll lean toward Olive Garden. - - You've never been to an Olive Garden? I thought they were almost everywhere. Maybe they aren't in your area. It has

very good Italian pasta, etc. I think they are owned by Pillsbury; maybe that's wrong; but I know it's a BIG national food company. - - Anyway, either way... We would love to spend a little casual time together with you both.

Call us if you need any help with lodging - I assume you'll get a hotel. - It takes us about 20 minutes to get from here to Olive Garden, 25 to Graham. Gas was cheapest at the Sheets station at exit 143, and a free Sheets card" gets even 3c off the pump price - I paid 3.48 there today. Just in case you need our numbers...

the house is 336.674.7564,

my cell # is 336.908.3652,

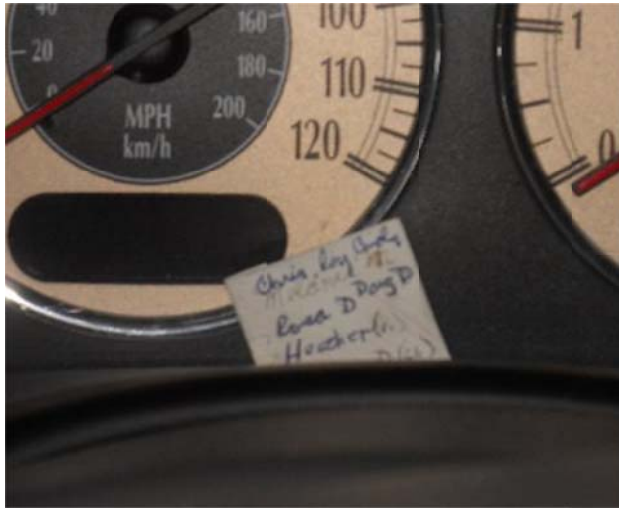
Marie's cell # is _____

You've driven it a couple times so you already know - 300 miles and 6 hours is what mapquest.com says, as I recall.

Looking forward to having even just that little time together Friday with you both.

Rich & Marie

A conversation I had today with someone I stopped at to see if they could use some of the Panera stuff I had from last night's pick up gave me a new word to describe the last ten years as I talked about Melanie with them... They said that **"she was my assignment from God."** That's why "that girl in my Stat class" has been in my mind, heart, and prayers for the last ten years. And now maybe He's given me a "new assignment." Somebody that Melanie would say that she "just happened" to have brought into my life. ... Maybe. You are in my prayers.



From: Rdymmel@aol.com
 Date: Mon, 8 Apr 2013 19:42:41 -0400
 Subject: Car and more ...
 To: Manley912e@live.com

Roy,

....

Do you remember me saying how Melanie had said that writing a book about how the choices she made took her to the point where she was, as a warning to others, was something that she wanted to do? We, she brought it up again, had that conversation on the Tuesday afternoon before that fateful disastrous Wednesday early morning. -- Well, I found, a long time ago, that writing can be therapeutic for me. And so I started writing / assembling, pulling from hundreds of "conversations" with Melanie that I recorded in (a) saved emails and (b) notes made after conversations. It's about 70 pages so far.

I have a chapters / spaces for you and Chris to add and fill in things about her HS days (I found a picture of her as a cheerleader on facebook today) and some of her issues back then. (Melanie and Lynn had told me about her eating issues.) And then some of how she got "off track" and into drugs and alcohol, starting on campus at Elon. She told me in Feb 2011 when she called, how she had just gotten out of rehab. Chris told me that she had quit drinking in Nov 2012, just before we reconnected AGAIN on Dec 1, 2012 in the hospital. - When you're ready, I'd like you to contribute.

And, when you're ready, maybe you'd like to read and see the conversations Melanie and I had and how she, near the end, expressed what I felt was a real belief (small as it may have been) and faith in Jesus for her Eternity.

I got the envelope with the DVD in today's mail. Tomorrow I will probably make the copies. In a few minutes I need to head out to my Monday evening project, cleaning out a Panera Bakery and Tuesday will be distributing it around. I haven't heard anything from Dean or Chaplain at Elon yet.

Stay in touch.
 Rich

In a message dated 4/9/2013 2:23:04 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, manley912e@live.com writes:

... Regarding the book, I believe we may be able to to something valuable. She did a student film in high school that won a Phila area competition, was shown in a local movie house, and was in the same league as college film makers and a few young professionals. Her film was striking, and if you haven't seen it, I'll be sure to locate a copy. I need to anyway, as most of my valuables are packed up. The professional health specialist/ anorexia / bulimia specialist at the Doylestown Hospital (she is in the film) asked for permission to use the film in her own continuing work at the hospital and in the community Melanie certainly had a lot to offer... as I say /type this through tears. I'll talk with you soon.

All the best... Roy

Subject: Re: Car and more ...
 Date: 4/9/2013 4:15:38 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
 From: Rdymmel@aol.com
 To: manley912e@live.com

....

'Melanie made a movie' ... When you run across a copy, I'd like to see it. That is part of her story - self image, acceptance - it's maybe another clue as to why and how she made some of the choices she did in college that took her down the road where she went.

When she called us in Feb 2011 saying, among other things, that she had just gotten out of rehab, I might think that was an indicator that she knew she had gone down the "wrong road" and wanted to change her life and direction. But those kinds of "demons" are hard to overcome.

And at one point a few months later, I included in a letter to her, that I felt there was a REAL, literal battle being fought in invisible spiritual levels with real demons over her. They won her body, but I'm convinced that God won her soul. Talks we had; things she said to me; maybe not followed through on completely because of the demonic battle being fought over her affecting her thinking; but I am convinced that I will see Melanie in Heaven in the future. And she will be well, healed, whole, restored and is now sitting at the feet of Jesus.

I'd bet she's asked him things like, "The 'virgin birth,' like Dr.D. tried to tell me; come on, I know how babies happen; really?!" "Yes, Melanie; really. If God created everything, including you, don't you think he can create a baby on his own?" "And the stories in that Bible story book, the Bible stories, like you stopping the funeral and raising the widow's son from the dead; you really did that?" "Yes, Melanie. Just like in the Bible, just like in the story book, just like Dr.D. told you. Yes, Melanie, I am stronger than death. You 'died' but I beat death and now you're here, alive, talking with me, aren't you?" "I only really believed a little bit of it." "It was enough. It isn't about what you did, it's about you accepting that I paid the debt for you." "That's what Dr.D. told me. I hope he can reach the rest of them, like Chris." "He's trying; but it's up to them to accept and believe it; like you did."

On my way home KLOVE played a song on the radio... this works for me. - I wouldn't begin to say "I know how you feel," but I would tell you that we hurt with you. Back on 3/11, I wrote: Marie said something that expressed, summarized, some of my emotions... . She said, "*You lost your dream for the three of us to be a family. She was becoming a daughter to us. And now she's gone.*" ... that does express my emotional state.



Your Love Never

Fails

Newsboys from the album *God's Not Dead*

Nothing can separate
Even if I run away
Your love never fails

I know I still make mistakes
You have new mercy for me everyday
'Cause Your love never fails

(Chorus)

You stay the same through the ages
Your love never changes
There may be pain in the night
But joy comes in the morning

The wind is strong and the water's deep
I'm not alone here in these open seas
Cause Your love never fails

The chasm is far too wide
I never thought I'd reach the other side
Your love never fails

Chorus

And when the oceans rage
I don't have to be afraid
Because I know that You love me
Your love never fails

You make all things work together for my good
You make all things work together for my good

Chorus

And when the oceans rage
I don't have to be afraid
Because I know that You love me
Your love never fails

Rich

To: Melanie's "prayer army"
cc: Roy, Cindy, Chris, 4 from Elon,

4/24/13

"Gathering of Friends" at Elon

The "gathering of friends" was very nice on Monday, 4/22. The new building we were in, the Numan Lumen Pavilion that includes the "chapel" has only been in use for 6 weeks. Chaplain Fuller lit a candle on the table, I had 2 pictures of Melanie enlarged and on a stand, and a circle of chairs in a area that was a circle with large 2-story tall windows surrounding us, the Sun streaming in.

There were eleven there: Roy, her dad; Marie, Ruthella, Anna, Lawrence and myself, from "Melanie's Prayer Army"; Kay from our Sunday School class; from Elon were Dean J Lynn Patteson, Troy Martin her advisor, and Karen Walter from the financial aid office, and Chaplain Jan Fuller.

A special thank you to Kay and Lawrence who I know changed their schedule to come. - And we know some simply couldn't come for numerous reasons. And that's understood.

Nice things were said by all. Memories shared.

"Christian" comments were specifically mentioned by almost all. Marie added a comment about how Melanie needed learn to cook if she was getting married, but she said, 'Chris did all the cooking and he is a great cook.'

To organize my thoughts and what I'd say, I wrote out "A Eulogy for Melanie" describing some of the events of our interaction and my conviction that she was saved and now in Heaven (included below and attached).

The Chaplain had said earlier that she would 'close with a prayer and that all may not have the same beliefs,' but she closed with a very nice prayer and ended with "In Jesus' name, amen."

Some conversation continued afterward for about 15 more minutes between the Elon staff and us "outsiders." (I couldn't think of another word there at the moment.)

Thank you for having been Melanie's Prayer Army these past ... I just looked; it was 3/11/11 that I first sent out the recruiting email for the "army" and she died 3/11/13. ... Your prayers were effective. Melanie expressed to me several times that she was thankful for your prayers.

Some of you have "reenlisted" for our next "assignment," Rosa. - A couple weeks ago someone who I have contact with that works with at-risk young men told me that the reason I couldn't shake Melanie from my mind for these 10+ years was that "she was my assignment from God." Rosa has been in our "circle" since January of 2006 and we are feeling that she is "our next assignment from God."

I thought you might like to read the "story of Melanie" I wrote and read at the "gathering of friends" ...

Thank you for your prayers for Melanie and for us over this past two years.

Rich & Marie

A Eulogy for Melanie 4/22/13

Many called her Mel. I said I preferred to call her Melanie, because when you say "Melanie," since it ends in an "e," you have to smile as you say the "e."

Here on this campus is where I met Melanie in August of 2002, when, as Melanie has said, she “just happened” to register for my section of Statistics.

Here is where we had many discussions about life, death, and eternity, mostly over in the Fireside Lounge in the Mosley Student Center.

Here is where she was also introduced to the demons of alcohol and drugs. They took her down a road of destruction. – I think I can say this because one of Melanie’s recent statements and wishes was to tell people, [quote] “I could be the poster child for what not to do in college. Don’t do drugs. Don’t do alcohol.” [close quote] We talked about telling her story by writing a book as recent as Tuesday, the last day she was conscious.

I wrote to her often and we talked occasionally over the following years. I had promised her that I would pray for her every day. She would say, “Please don’t give up on me.” And I promised her I wouldn’t and would tell her that I loved her and Jesus loved her.

Melanie called me on February 23rd, 2011 and said, once again, more seriously than the times she said it in the past, “I want what you have.” I want to go to church with you, I want to get into a Sunday School class.

Over the next months, she returned here again to try to finish her degree, but her health was fragile. And we had several discussions including about “what we have,” a life built on a foundation of a belief in God and a relationship with God through a relationship with Jesus. She asked me for another Bible Story Book and another Bible. A couple conversations in the last few months convince me that Melanie had a fledgling belief in God and Jesus, and that Jesus died to pay the price

for her soul for eternity.

In one letter to her in a particularly troubled time in her struggles, I wrote that I was convinced that there was a very real battle raging in the spiritual realm over her. – The very real demons ended up winning the battle for her body and this life. But God won the battle for her soul and her eternal life. – I think, maybe, God knew that all the medical stuff she was headed for wouldn’t work and a life of continued pain and struggle lie ahead. So He said, “Ten thousand years ago I knew you and I knew you would make those bad choices. But I also knew that you’d eventually, through all those ‘just happened’ things, reach that point where you would believe in and want Me. That was enough. And I decided you’d suffered enough in this life. It was the right time to save you from all the pain and suffering that lie ahead for that body and bring you home to be with Me. I am the ultimate physician. I will give you a new, healed, restored body. Now is the time to come to the eternal home I have prepared for you.” In John 14:2 Jesus said He’s prepared a place for his followers in His Father’s house.

Melanie was far from having all her theology organized or “right,” as I tried to teach and show her, but I believe she had the basic foundational pieces - God is. And Jesus came and died for her and is alive and real today.

And I believe Melanie is alive and well today, in a restored, healed, real body in Heaven today; no longer battling the demons of drugs and alcohol that killed this earthly body and cause her all that pain; no longer being attacked by literal demons. She is now safe in the arms of Jesus.

She didn’t have all the “right answers” to theological questions. She didn’t believe all that I believe. She didn’t believe all that the Bible says.

When we were cleaning out their apartment, I found an opened envelope with a page I had mailed to her. She had underlined 3 sentences. 11 days after she would have read this mail and underlined these sentences, she would be on a ventilator in a CCU bed and 5 days later stop breathing and her heart stop beating. I had written this intro and then included a story about someone singing “His Eye Is On The Sparrow” in a Starbucks...

Th., 2/21/13 - Coincidence

Is it a coincidence that today, I reach back to “clean up” my email inbox? To clean out and compile “daily funny stories,” and there was this - not a “funny” story at all, but words of encouragement, [that “just happened” to be] sitting in my inbox since last October, 4 months, until today... {then she had underlined the next sentence in red} “His eye is on the sparrow. And I know He watches me.”... A note, a story, to send you today when maybe you need a note of encouragement. {then she had underlined this next sentence in red} The “I Am,” the eternal, all knowing, Alpha and Omega, knows you and is watching over you. {then she underlined in green} Someone once told me, “Things don’t ‘just happen’.” {Melanie was the “someone” who would often say this to me.}

I wrote to Roy recently that I am convinced that I will see Melanie in Heaven in the future. And she will be well, healed, whole, restored; and is now sitting at the feet of Jesus. I wrote this to Roy:

I'd bet she's asked Him things like, "The 'virgin birth,' like Dr.D. tried to tell me; come on, I know how babies happen. Really?!" "Yes, Melanie; really. If God created everything, including you, don't you think he can create a baby on his own?" "And the stories in that Bible story book, the Bible

stories, like you stopping the funeral and raising the widow's son from the dead; you really did that?" "Yes, Melanie. Just like in the Bible story book, just like in the Bible, just like Dr.D. told you. Yes, Melanie, I am stronger than death. You 'died' but I beat death and now you're here, alive, talking with me, aren't you?" "But I only really believed a little bit of it." "It was enough. It isn't about what you did, it's about you accepting that I paid your debt for you." "That's what Dr.D. told me. I hope he can reach the rest of them, like Chris, so they can be here, too." "He's trying; but it's up to them to accept and believe it; like you did."

Back on March 11th, when we got that phone call at 4 a.m. and they told us that she stopped breathing at about 3, Marie said something that summarized some of my emotions... . Marie said, “*You lost your dream for the three of us to be a family. She was becoming a daughter to us. And now she’s gone.*”

She is “gone,” from here. But I know I will see Melanie again, in Heaven. And we will have an eternity to sit down and read Bible stories together.

In the book of Revelation, chapter 21, verses 4-5, it reads: ⁴And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” ⁵Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.”

Jeremy Camp sings a song titled “There Will Be A Day.” The lyrics include:

I try to hold on to this world
with everything I have
But I feel the weight of what it brings,
and the hurt that tries to grab
The many trials that seem to never end,
His word declares this truth,
that we will enter in this rest with wonders anew

But I hold on to this hope

and the promise that He brings
That there will be a place
with no more suffering

(Chorus) There will be a day with no more tears,
no more pain, and no more fears
There will be a day when the burdens of this place,
will be no more, we'll see Jesus face to face
But until that day, we'll hold on to you always

I know the journey seems so long
You feel you're walking on your own
But there has never been a step
Where you've walked out all alone

(Chorus) There will be a day with no more tears,
no more pain, and no more fears
There will be a day when the burdens of this place,
will be no more, we'll see Jesus face to face
But until that day, we'll hold on to you always

I will see Melanie, my little sister, again,
when I get to Heaven. I say she's my sister
because the Bible says Melanie and I are both
adopted children of God. And in the Bible, to
be adopted means to be a child that is
guaranteed your inheritance, and that's
Heaven.

Subject: Re: "Gathering of Friends" at Elon

Date: 4/25/2013

From: mjackson55@triad.rr.com

Rich, I want to thank you for bringing Melanie into my life. I prayed for her nearly every day over the past couple of years. I am at peace with knowing she is in Heaven with Jesus and that we will see her again one day.

Part of me mourns for what could have been for her life but in reality I realize that Melanie may have lived a life that would never come to know Jesus if she had never tasted drugs. She dug herself a very deep hole but she came out of it when she accepted Jesus and believed. Blindness can be very difficult at times but I realize that perfect sight may have led me to a different lifestyle and place that may not have included Jesus. So, drugs and alcohol may have cost her years on this Earth but it may be one of the ingredients that allowed you to lead her down the right pathway.

You fought a great battle, Dr. D, and Melanie was the benefactor. Both you and Marie gave it all you had to give and Jesus came up victorious when Melanie opened up her heart. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of the celebration.

Sorry I couldn't be there on Monday. ...
Melanie knew that I loved her and that is the important thing.

Michael

Monday, January 27, 2014 – Elon, N.C.

THE PENDULUM

Elon University's Student News Organization

- See more at: <http://www.elonpendulum.com/2013/03/former-elon-student-dies-at-alamance-regional-medical-center/#sthash.EwpZvxRD.dpuf>

<http://www.elonpendulum.com/2013/03/former-elon-student-dies-at-alamance-regional-medical-center/>

Former Elon student dies at Alamance Regional Medical Center

by Katherine Blunt on March 12, 2013

Melanie Manley, a former Elon University student, passed away yesterday at Alamance Regional Medical Center.

Manley was most recently enrolled at Elon in the fall, and she suffered from frequent medical problems during her time as a student, according to an email sent by Smith Jackson, vice president and dean of Student Life.

According to the email, she wanted to return to her studies this summer. Members of her family and her fiancé were with her at the time of her death.

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. March 23 in Griffin, Ga. A gathering of friends will be held on campus after spring break.

Read Jackson's email below:

I regret to inform you of the death of a former Elon student, Melanie Manley, who passed away yesterday, Monday, at the Alamance Regional Medical Center. Members of her family and her fiancé were with her at the time of her death. During the past several years while at Elon Melanie had frequent medical problems. Those who knew her described her as a kind and courageous student. She was most recently enrolled at Elon last fall and very much wanted to return this summer to continue her studies. Melanie's family sends their deep felt thanks to all who supported Melanie and feel fortunate for her time at Elon.

University Chaplain Jan Fuller and Assistant Vice President for Student Life Jana Lynn Patterson have been in contact with the Manley family the past two days. A memorial service for Melanie will be held at the Conner Westbury Funeral Home, 1891 West McIntosh Road, Griffin, Georgia 30223, at 3:00 PM Saturday the 23rd of March.

A "Gathering of Friends" will be held on campus after the spring break.

Ecstasy



It is known she took Ecstasy (or one of the many derivatives, “bath salts,” etc.) just before she died.

An assumption would be that she was familiar with where to get it and may have been taking it regularly for some time. – Some of the characteristics described in the article below are consistent with her, although not definitive. Such as: depression (and she took an anti-depressant drug); fatigue (she was often fatigued, “too tired”); had been a marijuana user; impaired attention (was always writing down notes on anything she needed to remember); gastrointestinal disturbances (I was with her when part of the doctor’s diagnosis was “malnourished,” she didn’t digest and absorb what she ate); aches and pains; exhaustion. — An overdose - convulsions, seizures (seizure brain activity was what the doctor said the first day or so she was unconscious in CCU); tachycardia (pulse rate stayed well over 100 the last 5 days in

CCU); loss of consciousness; renal (kidney) failure, coma (the last 5 days unconscious on a ventilator in CCU), death. – Her heart went into ventricular fibrillation (rapid “fluttering” where the chambers aren’t pumping in rhythm and therefore not circulating the blood and the brain isn’t supplied with oxygen). Her heart stopped several times and was restarted in the ambulance, the E.R., and in CCU.

In the research for this, I read, and now I can’t find the exact statement again - liver failure and kidney failure as a result of repeated use as well as abdominal pain. She had serious liver failure and had just started into the counseling for being a liver transplant candidate. She had repeated episodes of renal failure and kidney stimulation by drugs to rid her body of excess fluid. She often complained of abdominal pain, to the extent that in the last few months she made several trips to the E.R. and would be admitted to the hospital for the pain.

I might speculate that her final Ecstasy pills may have been to counter pain, to counter anxiety over whether she would get a liver, whether that would be enough, or maybe years of use as escape and escaping the pain took over. – At Christmas 2012 she said, “This might be my last Christmas.” – Ecstasy dosage on the street is extremely inconsistent and over dosage would be easy.

Alcohol could also have contributed to her liver failure. She had said that she attended A.A. meetings. But it was said that she quit drinking in November of 2012. December 2012, in the hospital, she said to me, “They told me if I take one more drink it could kill me.”

Ecstasy may have been a contributing element from earlier years, and ultimately was the cause of her death – “MDMA Toxicity” is what the toxicology report said and what is on her death certificate.

Ecstasy

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MDMA>

MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxy-N-methylamphetamine) is an empathogenic drug of the phenethylamine and amphetamine classes of drugs. MDMA has become widely known as “**ecstasy**” (shortened to “**E**”, “**X**”, or “**XTC**”),

MDMA can induce euphoria, a sense of intimacy with others, and diminished anxiety.

MDMA is occasionally known for being taken in conjunction with psychedelic drugs, ..., or even common drugs such as cannabis.

Aftereffects

Effects reported by some users once the acute effects of MDMA have worn off include:

- Psychological
 - Anxiety and paranoia

- Depression^{[25][26][27][28]}
- Irritability^[26]
- Fatigue^{[27][28]}
- Impaired attention, focus, and concentration, as well as drive and motivation (due to depleted serotonin levels)^[25]
- Residual feelings of empathy, emotional sensitivity, and a sense of closeness to others (afterglow)
- Physiological
 - Dizziness, lightheadedness, or vertigo^[28]
 - Loss of appetite^[25]
 - Gastrointestinal disturbances, such as diarrhea or constipation
 - Insomnia^[25]
 - Aches and pains, usually from excessive physical activity (e.g., dancing)^{[25][27]}
 - Exhaustion^{[26][28]}
 - Jaw soreness, from bruxism^{[28][29][30]}

A slang term given to the depressive period following MDMA consumption is Tuesday Blues (or “Suicide Tuesday”), referring to the low mood that can be experienced midweek by depleted serotonin levels following MDMA use on the previous Friday or Saturday when raves or dance concerts were frequently scheduled.

Overdose

Upon overdose, the potentially serious serotonin syndrome, stimulant psychosis, and/or hypertensive crisis, among other dangerous adverse reactions, may come to prominence, the symptoms of which can include:

- Psychological
 - Disorientation and/or confusion
 - Agitation,^{[32][33]} restlessness^[33] and paranoia^[32]
 - Hallucinations^{[26][32][33]} and/or delusions^[34]
 - Thought disorder or disorganized thinking
 - Cognitive and memory impairment potentially to the point of retrograde or anterograde amnesia^[35]
- Physiological
 - Muscle rigidity^[33]
 - Convulsions^[32]
 - Hyperreflexia or overresponsive or overreactive reflexes^[36]
 - Hyperactivity^[32]

- Hypertension^{[32][33]} or hypotension^[33]
- Tachycardia^[33]
- Tachypnoea or rapid breathing and/or dyspnea or shortness of breath
- Palpitations^[33]
- Angina pectoris or severe chest pain, as well as pulmonary hypertension (PH)^[37]
- Vasculitis or destruction of blood vessels^[38]
- Cardiotoxicity or damage to the heart^[39]
- Cardiac dysfunction, arrest, myocardial infarction, and/or heart failure^{[40][41][42]}
- Hemorrhage and/or stroke^{[43][44]}
- Severe hyperthermia, potentially resulting in organ failure^{[45][46]}
- Loss of consciousness^[47]
- Renal failure^[33]
- Coma^[32] or death^[47]

Chronic use

Some studies indicate repeated recreational users of MDMA have increased rates of depression and anxiety, even after quitting the drug.^{[48][49]} A meta-analytic review of the published literature on memory show that ecstasy users may suffer short-term and long-term verbal memory impairment—with 70–80% of ecstasy users displaying impaired memory

...

Depression and deficits in memory have been shown to occur more frequently in long-term MDMA users.^{[67][68]} However, some recent studies have suggested MDMA use may not be associated with chronic depression.^{[69][70]}

...

http://alcoholism.about.com/cs/ecstasy/f/mdma_fa_q04.htm

.... MDMA is not a benign drug. MDMA can produce a variety of adverse health effects, including nausea, chills, sweating, involuntary teeth clenching, muscle cramping, and blurred vision. MDMA overdose can also occur - the symptoms can include high blood pressure, faintness, panic attacks, and in severe cases, a loss of consciousness, and seizures.

In the hours after taking the drug, MDMA produces significant reductions in mental abilities. These changes, particularly those affecting memory, can last for up to a week, and possibly longer in regular users.