



Courage Through the Resurrection

*Living with a crippled body but a good mind,
victories and meaning
through struggles and setbacks*

By Gary Schell (1947 - 2023)
with composition help and commentary from Jim Crosby

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Introduction

By Jim Crosby

I became acquainted with Gary around 1973 through our mutual attendance at church. We were separated for 33 years thereafter, then reunited after his time in Florida.

We have three things in common. First, we are basically the same age, I am 3 months older (in 2023, both of us are 77 years old).

Second, I had a brother with cerebral palsy, the same malady which afflicts Gary. This is a birth defect of the brain (cerebral) resulting in muscle weakness (palsy). It also causes stiffness and contractures (tightening and spasms) of the arms and legs. Talking is often impaired due to weak jaw muscles. The mind (thinking) often works fine, which is true for Gary. The cause is generally unknown. My brother had severe CP preventing any volitional body movement making him bed-bound and no ability to talk or communicate at all. My parents, mostly my mother, cared for him 24/7. He died at age 9, when I was 12. This was shortly after he left our home and entered a total care facility, demonstrating my mother's care was keeping him alive, especially recognizing he never had been hospitalized.

Our third commonality is that we both have very good mental capabilities. Mine allowed me to become a physician, but I remain amazed at Gary's memory of past and planned events that I likely would have forgotten. I sometimes wonder if he knows particulars of my family that I forgot!

But differences are profound. I have full function of both arms and legs. My speech is fine. I have been a fairly good singer all my life. I have run marathons, played baseball, climbed mountains, canoed long lakes. I play piano, guitar and trumpet. I garden, write normally, and use a computer keyboard with usual dexterity. On the social side, I have been blessed with a stable, healthy and typical home life both as a child and adult.

Gary, on the other hand, has never been able to do and enjoy any of these activities. I am amazed, as you will learn, that he learned how to drive. He learned to walk only at age 7, but never could fluently, and – for practical purposes – has lost this ability for the past several years.

He currently is wheelchair and bed bound. His speech is slow and very hard to understand, making normal conversation a tedious job. His left arm and hand are

basically useless. His right hand is severely contracted, leaving one stiff finger as the only instrument to use on a keyboard. For him to make one keyboard touch takes over one minute. He is unable to use the mouse. Add to this an impaired ability to swallow. He constantly uses a towel to wipe the saliva off his chin and is unable to eat many foods.

He is able to feed himself, but with much difficulty, and needs lots of set-up. Recently he has needed a urinary catheter full time, has added hearing aids for certain settings and needs eyeglasses for some reading. On the social side, Gary has spent about a third of his life in institutions.

Despite all this, Gary is noted for saying thanks. The lack of observed bitterness is remarkable. His zest for life has been an encouragement to others.

The autobiographical story that follows has been formulated from interviews and dictations from Gary to me and a few others. Some are word for word. Other parts are my paraphrases with Gary's verification.

Some readers will have lived lives much like mine in regard to physical function. I encourage you to ponder how you would have done if you were in Gary's shoes. What lessons can you learn? What source of strength and purpose would you recruit?

Some readers will have physical impairments similar to Gary's although perhaps not as severe. What can you learn from Gary?

And some readers will be caretakers for people similar to Gary. How can Gary's story help you continue a good job or do better?

To help you answer these questions and better profit from Gary's story I have added some extras at the end for your reflection (but the main event is his story).

My Story

PREFACE

The first composition of my story was several years ago. It was short and mostly limited to my spiritual side which remains central to my story. In the last couple of years, Jim has encouraged me to expand my story to my entire life. He thinks writing and telling my story will be good for me. That is true. He also thinks my life can be an encouragement to others and teach lessons to others. You will be the judge of that.

The title I chose for this longer story reflects the centrality of Jesus in my life. Specifically important is my belief that Jesus suffered an excruciating crucifixion for me but was resurrected and still lives, giving me purpose, strength and courage to face the many challenges that have come my way, which as you will discover have not been small. I have had victories and setbacks. Through the resurrection I proclaim victory.

Before I start my story, I want to thank and acknowledge the many people who have helped me. I regret not keeping in touch with these precious friends. As I look back, I realize more and more how valuable they were in my life. There are so many. Some will be mentioned by name in the story, others equally important will go unnamed.

My mother (I wish I had given her more thanks), my aunt, the many during my Binghamton University time, my many friends in Florida, my church family now and from the past, the dedicated and caring caretakers at Ideal, my relatives who are alive now who have come to my side, and the Wetherbees.

Thank you!

FIRST 6 YEARS

I was born in 1947 with cerebral palsy (CP). At first my parents didn't know I had CP until I was about one year old because I had trouble sitting up by myself. My parents took me to two or three different doctors before they knew I had CP.



Back then doctors didn't know about cerebral palsy like they do today. I was totally dependent on my mother, and other people for my care. Someone had to carry me everywhere, mostly my mom. I was not able to write or draw normally and never have been able to write a sentence that most people could read. My talking has always been very hard to understand, but I think I developed otherwise mostly on schedule.

I had a red tractor that I rode up and down the sidewalk. Pedaling that tractor probably helped me to get strength in my legs to later be able to walk. I never went to the usual grade schools. Instead, I attended a CP clinic in a nearby town where I recall I got mostly physical therapy

During my early years I lived with my mother, father and grandmother, first in an apartment later in a house in Port Dickinson, adjacent to Binghamton, New York. My sister, and only other sibling, was born when I was 4 years old. My family's social circle was relatively narrow and I do not remember much other significant contact from family or friends except occasionally from a few relatives.

AGE 7-8 HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED #1

At age seven, I went to a rehabilitation center, called the Reconstruction Home in Ithaca, New York, about 60 miles from home. This was originally a place for the care of children with polio.

When I was there, its focus had expanded to children with disabilities in general. Now it is a “nursing home” for elderly and adult rehabilitation. I was there for 14 months. I went there to learn to do things on my own, like dressing, bathing, and feeding myself. One of the first things I learned to do there was to walk by myself. What a tremendous accomplishment!

When I returned home, I hoped I would have a normal life, like all the other kids in the neighborhood, because I was able to walk by myself and take care of most of my needs. But my hope turned into disappointment, because while I was away my parents got divorced. I didn't come back to the big house that I had lived in, but to a small two-bedroom apartment. My mother had to work so she couldn't be with me full time. My grandmother tried to take care of me, but could not provide the care that I needed.

Another defining event happened during these years. A friend of my grandmother worked for Chevrolet automotive sales in Binghamton. One day he gave me some photos of some new automobiles. This sparked in me a strong interest in studying cars of all makes and years and in collecting car photos.

Today (in 2023) my room is cluttered with car photos, books and magazines about old and new cars. And my mind is filled with all sorts of car specs trivia. My email name (vetteguy) reflects my liking of Corvettes. I am thankful for my friend Steve taking me to car shows in recent years.

AGE 9-19 HOMES (INSTITUTIONS) FOR HANDICAPPED #2 & #3

I entered the Newark State School near Rochester, NY about 150 miles from home. I was there for almost ten years. This was not a good experience as the home was mostly for mentally disabled, many severely so.

It was thought that I had a mental disability. I had no privacy. I slept in a room with others and there was a large day-room where I stayed with others during the day. I had some schooling, but there were no grades. While there I had two operations on my feet which were deformed.

I came home occasionally but only for a few weeks in the summer and for Christmas. During my mid-teens I began to realize that I was not mentally disabled and began to yearn to be released.

Some of the staff there became convinced I did not belong there, and they helped make arrangements for my release.

I was transferred to a rehabilitation “hospital” near New York City and stayed for three months. I had a number of tests to see if I had any job skills. But my hand and arm handicaps prevented me from advancing.

My mother picked me up from the “hospital” with the intention to return me to Newark, but I protested. I did not return but remained with my mother and sister in Binghamton.

AGE 19 - 25 BACK HOME, A JOB & GED

Back home, at age 19, was a difficult time. My mother, sister and I lived in a small apartment with little support. And I was very disappointed, feeling I didn't get a fair chance to see if I had any kind of job skills or could be trained to improve.

I was able to walk on my own and could take care of myself pretty well, but I was unable to use my hands much although I was able to use a typewriter. I received an electric typewriter for my 20th birthday and I started writing devotionals for a newsletter of the church I attended.

I wasn't going to give up trying to find out if I could do some kind of work. I wrote a letter to the department of rehabilitation for New York State, which got me in touch with the Sheltered Workshop for the disabled in Binghamton. The people at the workshop gave me a chance to work, although they had their doubts about whether or not I could do any kind of job there. I had a three-month trial, to see if I could do any job there.

I was able to pack samples of dental powder into small boxes, and to pull pins out of relays with a table knife, and other simple jobs. Because I was able to do some jobs, I became a regular employee. I worked at the workshop for about four years. Working gave me a sense of independence because I was earning a little money to support myself.

[Commentary from Jim Crosby, July 2023: I learned from his cousin at Gary's funeral that he had yet another set-back during this time, while working at the Sheltered Workshop. He fell and injured his neck, incurring fractures necessitating several weeks of a neck/head brace secured with metal stabilizers inserted into his scalp.]

I wanted a way to get around by myself. One day I took the bus to Sears and bought a tricycle and had it delivered. At first my mother didn't approve of me



buying the tricycle. But when she saw that I was somewhat independent with it, like going to the store for a loaf of bread, she was glad I bought it.

Around this time, I was able to qualify and receive Social Security

Disability income monthly which has continued although this is not a lot of money. I also during this time joined the YMCA and learned how to swim.

As my life went on, I wanted to get more education, because I had no formal education. In 1971, I went to an adult learning center for study to take the GED exam. It took me about a year to prepare to take it but I passed.

AGE 25 – 30 BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY, 1972 -77

I contacted and met with the New York State Department of Rehabilitation, to see if they would pay for me to go college. My counselor at the Rehab department didn't think I could do college work. This was after a psychologist gave me several tests with the conclusion that I was not college able.

But my counselor talked her superiors into giving me a chance. I went to Binghamton University. I lived in a dorm on campus. For the last 6 months I lived in an apartment in Johnson City with three other young men, one who helped drive me to campus in his car.

I was able to walk around campus to classes. I ate at the dining hall. The friends I met in college gave me a social life which I never had before. I remember my first date, going to a movie and an Italian restaurant.

Many of these friends were Christians from the campus chapter of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and I began attending the nearby, Pierce Hill Christian Fellowship.

The courses were hard, but I managed to pass them with the help from some tutors. Any writing or typing that was needed had to be done by others, after I dictated. There were only typewriters then, no computers for document-making.

New York state paid the college bill. I graduated with a BA degree in social work and creative writing. It took me five years, but I did it. Another accomplishment, something some people thought I couldn't do.

As I mentioned in the beginning, I now regret that I did not stay in touch as much as I should have with all the friends who helped me during these years. Thank you.

AGE 30 SETBACK

In 1977, about 1 month after I graduated from college, I was in a terrible car accident. In the car were my sister, who was driving, my mother in the back seat and myself in the front seat. It was a head-on collision and my mother died on-site and my sister a couple days later.

This time was one of the most stressful and needy of my life, both emotionally and physically. It was like a hurricane swept over me and wiped away all my support. I was essentially on my own.

My lower left leg and right wrist were broken. For a while the doctors thought my leg would have to be amputated, but by Jesus' healing hand, I still have my left leg. I was in ICU for six weeks in Cortland, New York. The doctors and other people didn't think I would live. But through prayer, I survived.

I was transferred to the Binghamton General Hospital Rehab unit. On discharge, Sharon and Jack Stevens, who I had not previously known, took me into their home in Port Crane, New York, on the north side of Binghamton.

It took about a year of physical therapy for me to get back on my feet. I asked Jesus for strength, and by His grace He gave me the strength to walk again.

During the end of this period, I lived with Tim and Virginia Wetherbee (and their two young children) in their house in Endicott, New York. They have remained my key support to this writing.

AGE 32 – 63 FLORIDA, 1979 -2010

I always had the desire to live in Florida, because of the warm sunshine, and weather. In 1979 I moved to Miami, Florida to make a life of my own. Moving to Florida was another big challenge.

When I arrived, I lived in a group home (an old motel) “for CP people or similar” for about 4 months. The social worker there helped me find an apartment. I faced many hard challenges that I had never encountered before, like going to the supermarket to buy groceries and to the Laundromat, to do my .

There were times I felt like giving up and moving back to New York. But I was determined to make living in Florida work.



A microwave oven was a big help for me to live on my own, because I was able to cook food myself. I was able to shop on my own riding my tricycle to the store a few minutes away. At first the tricycle moved only with the usual leg power, until I convinced my friends to make it motorized. (In 2023 my friend Dave, who helped this happen, reminded me how he thought I was crazy to think this would work.) I could walk during this time and left the tricycle parked outside the store.

Shortly after arriving in Miami, I met Johnny Winters, who became a good friend. He had CP also and he had more trouble walking than I did, but could talk better. He helped me a lot adjusting to living in Miami, and living by myself. Johnny ran an organization called GOAL, which stands for Get Out and Live, which Johnny founded. GOAL had activities for disabled people to get out and live, like having coffee houses, and taking trips to the local zoo. I took part in many of GOAL’s activities.

After a year or so in Florida, things seemed to be coming together pretty well for me to live on my own. I was disappointed and discouraged that I could not be employed – but using money given to me from the car accident – I bought a condominium. Owning my own home gave me a sense that I had established my own life.

I joined a health club to improve the strength in my upper arms and hoped to be a witness to others that disability does not necessarily keep one isolated. I remember stopping at times at a 7-11 for a cup of Pepsi, which I had to get in a paper cup from the soda fountain. I was afraid of bending the cup and spilling the drink, so I had to get an employee to get the drink for me. But I got a plastic cup with a lid that I took along with me to use instead, showing I could be independent.

Johnny also got me involved in another ministry called AIM, which stands Achieve, Inspire, and Motivate. It was started by a couple whose daughter was handicapped. I was a part of AIM until I moved back up north.

AIM gave me the determination to learn how to drive and stick with it until I got my license. Johnny could drive a car and I thought if he could drive, I could do it. Learning how to drive was not easy. It took me 6 months but with Jesus in the front passenger seat, and encouragement from Johnny Winters, I received my driver license in April 1984, passing the road test on the first time. I bought a car and drove for 24 years.



I learned about AIM weekends in the spring of 1982. I attended my first AIM weekend when the weekends were held only once a year, and I missed two or three years. Later, the AIM weekends were twice a year. I made about thirty weekends altogether. So, I guess I was a true AIM faithful.

I'm grateful to Bernie and Harriet Molinski, Eileen Kenny, JoAnne Allison, Mary Renaud and the countless other people for having the desire and determination, through Jesus, to start and keep the AIM weekends going.

In 2004, I fell exiting the elevator in my condominium apartment building and thereafter began to lose my ability to walk and have never been the same since.

I had to give up driving in July 2008 because I fell down. Not being able to drive anymore wasn't easy to accept, but Jesus gave me the peace to accept it.

In 2007 there was a roof leak in my condo. Because my condo was on the top floor, the water from the rain came in mostly in my kitchen. My whole condo had water damage and I had to go to a motel for over a month.

Everything in my condo had to be moved out so repairs could be done. Almost all the sidewalls in my condo had to be replaced. All the tile and carpet also had to be replaced. The whole left side of my kitchen had to be torn out. My good friends Paul Paschke and Bob Heinlein from AIM helped me get through that storm, along with Jesus.

The years in Florida were the best times of my life. Thinking about these times now can be depressing and I tell myself “everything has to come to an end.” But I knew living by myself was coming to an end, living by myself was getting harder and harder.

I knew I had to move back up north. Making the decision to move was not easy. In Binghamton, I had valuable friends who could help me, such as the Wetherbees. And it was where I was born. I had maintained my ties there as I made regular short visits back to the Binghamton area during these years, staying with the Wetherbees.

Shortly before moving back, I made the following announcement to my AIM group:

“With the confidence that Jesus never misleads me, I’ve an announcement to make. This might be my last AIM weekend because after thirty years of a good and thankful life in Miami, Florida, I’ve decided to start making arrangements to move back to Binghamton, New York, where I’m from.

I don’t know when I will be moving. It depends when a handicapped apartment becomes available, once I have my application in for one. The reason for my decision is because I am not able to do the things for myself, like I used to do. I need more and more help all the time.

I’ve an aide, Marie, and although she comes four days a week to help me, I need someone nearby ready to help me, whenever I need it.

In Binghamton, I would be in a handicapped apartment that has a button I can press and someone will come to assist me. Maybe not the minute I press the button, but someone will come to help me within a reasonable amount of time. Everything about moving is too overwhelming for me to even think about. I have come to the conclusion, if Jesus wants me to move back to Binghamton, He will get me there.

About a month ago my good friend, Mary Renaud, sent me a picture of Jesus. The picture was a sign from Jesus that I’m doing the right thing by moving back to Binghamton. I have many friends from the AIM weekends, too many to mention. In fact, I can’t even remember all of them, but I’m thankful for all of them for being a part of my Christian walk.

When I move back to Binghamton and think of those friendships I made through AIM, it will strengthen me to know those friends are behind me no

matter where I am. When I see my friend Jesus face to face, I will say with confidence the words of apostle Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race. I have tried to keep the faith".

AGE 63 BACK TO BINGHAMTON, 2010

In April 2010, I moved back to Binghamton. Four of my friends from Miami, and a friend from Endicott, moved me.

The Miami friends rented a big truck to move my belongings into, loaded them into the truck, and drove to Binghamton. Then they unpacked my things and set everything up in my new apartment.

I moved into a small one-bedroom apartment, not like the roomy two bedroom one that I lived in in Miami. I wasn't very happy in that apartment. I felt cooped up there, it was hard to get in and out of my apartment, the door was too heavy, it was hard to open because I had to stand up from my wheelchair to open it and to get back into my apartment, I had to stand up to unlock the door. The same thing to get in and out of the building. The front door was too heavy for me to open to get out and I had to stand up to unlock the front door to get back into the building. I felt it was too dangerous for me to be standing up, because I couldn't stand up very well, I was afraid of falling.

Shortly after I moved back to the Binghamton area, I became a member of the Vestal Evangelical Free Church (now Pierce Hill Christian Fellowship). Since then, Pastor Art and the other members have been wonderful about giving me fellowship and helping me out whenever I need it. I take part in many of the church activities. I'm glad God directed me to this church and let me become involved.

AGE 64+ ANOTHER SETBACK AND TO INSTITUTION #4

In November of 2011, I had a colonoscopy that went wrong. From the hospital I went to Ideal Living Center, a skilled nursing facility, but most call it a nursing home, where I currently live.

When I first went to Ideal, I was weak from being sick in the hospital. There, I received a lot of physical therapy to help me regain my strength, and get me back on my feet. I went to three different places for physical therapy, outside of Ideal: Southern Physical Therapy, Court Jester, and Positive Life Force.

Court Jester was my favorite because there was pool therapy. I have always loved the water. During this time my mobility improved. Nevertheless, independent walking never returned and I have needed a wheelchair since.



I wanted to be in a 5K run if I could find someone to push me. One Sunday around 2015 my friend and I were in a 5K run, called The Color Run. At four different points in the run, the runners get sprayed with colored corn starch. My friend and I had loads of fun. I received a gold medal for crossing the finish line as everyone who crossed the finish line received one. I think everyone deserves a gold medal, after getting sprayed with colored corn starch.

I wanted to be in 5K runs to show people watching on the sidelines that disabled persons can do some of the things that a normal person can do. A disabled person sometimes needs help to do those things.

While I was going to those places for physical therapy, I was losing the ability in my left hand. It was hard for me to open my left hand. Also, my church family

and some of my friends prayed that God would give me back full use of my left hand. I left the outcome up to God. Through physical therapy, and working with my hand on my own, I was able to open my left hand fully. However, the improvement did not last. Currently, my left hand is mostly useless.

As of this writing date (2023), I have been in the nursing home for 11 years. During that time, I have had to go into the hospital for illness setbacks about four to five times, the last being this year for a very serious, difficult episode. But I have recovered although weaker.

The first 8 years I had to share a room with someone else. That was very difficult. The rooms were small and only a fabric curtain separated us. But in 2018 I got a single room in which I still have.

Living in a nursing home has been difficult, especially in comparison to my earlier independent time. I live on a floor where almost every other resident has severe dementia and staff often are in short-supply.

One example of something that has been very difficult and anxiety-producing for me surrounds my recent daily evening dinners. I have to have most meals supervised as I can choke easily, so I have to eat near the nursing station.

Unfortunately, there has been another man within a few feet of me while I am eating who often because of his mental condition has super loud verbal outbursts. Not a pleasant relaxing dinner atmosphere! My choking is made worse. This situation hopefully has been corrected.

Also, I need a continuous bladder catheter. I get frequent skin tears on my arms and legs, some serious. I am able to feed myself with much difficulty and messiness (and as just mentioned am prone to choking).

Covid resulted in many restrictions, not the least of which were extreme visitation limitations for over a year and my confinement to the facility. I contracted Covid myself but had a mild case. I am thankful for the several occasions of window-phone visits. For the memory books, I remember Jim standing in the cold and snow, 50 yards from my window, and we talked via our cellphones.

Later, after my room had changed and my window was at ground level, for my 75th birthday, several from the church came with their cellphones and greeted me in the snow. When not able to attend in person, I have been able to attend church and my near weekly small group via zoom or You-tube.

Now that Covid restrictions have been substantially lifted, I am able to return to leaving the facility for times outside, for church and occasional shopping. I spend most of my day in my wheelchair in my room. I follow news and sports on TV, email on the computer, and enjoy many spiritual web-sites with courses, lessons and readings. Although my manual computer capabilities are severely limited, I am able to “make-do” with my crippled right hand.

My room is cluttered and packed with piles of books and papers. I am not one to participate in the activities offered in the facility primarily because most of the other participants are severely mentally limited and my physical impediments are a substantial barrier. I have participated in the nursing home’s resident counsel, which allows for resident input into the care given. The staff who attend to me are kind and supportive for which I am thankful. Many have become friends. But it remains a nursing home. Not most people’s “Home Sweet Home”.

MY FRIEND JESUS

Spirituality has been a major source of strength and contentment for me. I describe myself as a follower of Jesus and I adhere to the teachings of basic Christianity. The goal of my life and of this story is to glorify Jesus and share the good news of Christianity.

Church was not a regular or frequent happening in my childhood although I was baptized as a baby in a Presbyterian church. It was when I was in the Ithaca Reconstruction Home at age 7 or 8 that I began my walk with God. Two ladies came to the home on Sunday mornings to teach Sunday School, where I learned the Bible verse John 3:16.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have eternal life”, which told me that God loved me so much that He sent His Son Jesus to die for my sins.

I also learned from other Bible verses that Jesus loves me and wanted to be a part of my life, and to be my friend. No other friend would be willing to die for my sins, as Jesus did. That is a true friend, one who would die for my sins, so I could be assured of having eternal life through His death and resurrection. The Bible, in John 11:25, records Jesus saying: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.” Through God’s abundant love, I was free of the guilt from my sins. It was a tremendous sacrifice, my Savior giving His life, to assure me of having eternal life.

These Bible truths were a fairly quiet but meaningful ember during the rest of my childhood and teens when I lived in the Newark State School. There were some church services there which I attended. But I knew that God and His Son Jesus would always be in my life to help and guide me, if I put my trust in their hands.

When I was at Binghamton University, I became involved in IntersVarsity Christian Fellowship (IV), a campus group of students who were serious about growing in the Christian faith. Also, at this time around 1973, with other IV students, I began to attend the Evangelical Free Church of Vestal (now Pierce Hill Christian Fellowship), a basic Christian church. I returned to this church after my time in Florida. Through this church and IV I continued to grow in my faith.

During my time in Florida, I attended a Presbyterian and Lutheran church. I also became friends with several of the Catholic faith. Johnny and many of my AIM friends were Catholic. We committed to obeying Christ's call to serve others. My Catholic friends were very helpful in helping me get back to New York.

While in Florida I typed out a testimony of my life to that point entitled "The Storms I Have Conquered". In it I wrote: "Jesus' resurrection is the reason I've achieved many goals in my life.... There's a song entitled "You Never Walk Alone". The song is not a religious one, but I think it has a religious message. The song has been an encouragement to me. Some of the words are "When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high and don't be afraid of the dark. At the end of the storm is a golden sky and the sweet silver song of a lark. Walk on with a hope in your heart and you'll never walk alone." That hope in my heart is God".

When I returned to the Binghamton area in 2010 at the age of 63, I rekindled my relationship with the Pierce Hill Fellowship.

As with college learning, it was and is not easy to grow and learn Christ's way. I had to depend on others for transportation and because of difficulty with my hands it was hard to work with books. And my difficulty speaking limited the faith conversations with others which are so important in growth. There were no computers or Google for many years. Currently I take advantage of my computer and the internet to link with a large number of Christian ministries for teaching and encouragement. My room is cluttered with books, booklets and other papers from these organizations.

Recently I was asked to summarize what benefits I have found in committing myself to Jesus. My answers were: eternal life, peace, strength and the fellowship of other believers.

Some other Bible verses that have helped me and meant a lot are:

- Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." This has been especially helpful when facing a challenge, to know that Jesus is behind the scenes giving me strength.
- Deuteronomy 31:6 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."
- Philippians 4:9 "The God of peace will be with you."

When thunderstorms are above me, Jesus is by my side, guiding me, just like He did with the disciples in the boat, assuring them that He was with them. He is

with me, giving me the same assurance. I find peace wherever I put my hand in Jesus' hand, and His caring and love covers me. When the waters around me become rough, I leave the steering of my boat to Him. Jesus' resurrection shows me that if He can overcome death, I can overcome any obstacle that comes my way. The obstacles are opportunities for my friendship with Jesus to grow.

I have a large collection of books about old cars which I treasure. Some of them may be worth something, because they are out of print. If those books have any monetary value, they couldn't be more valuable than the friendship I have with Jesus.

All Jesus asks of our friendship is that I love Him and do my best to show others that He is my friend, which I'm guilty of not always doing, but Jesus understands and loves me regardless of my shortcomings. Jesus is never wrong in the ways He leads me, and I put my trust in Him knowing He will never lead me in the wrong direction, as long as I keep my eyes on Him. Jesus will never misdirect me, because my well-being is His main concern.

Since I met my friend Jesus, He has helped me through many challenges. Being handicapped presents countless different challenges. Jesus has guided me through all of them, giving me the encouragement to meet all of them and to be victorious. From learning to walk at age 7, all the way to making a life of my own, in Miami. My family and some other people thought I could never live on my own, but as long as I'm in Jesus' hands nothing is impossible.

When I see my friend Jesus face to face, I will say with confidence the words of apostle Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race. I have kept the faith". 2 Timothy 4:7

ADDENDUM, JULY 2023

By Jim Crosby

In June 2023 Gary had a major medical setback from which he did not recover. His faith and hope of full recovery in heaven were evident to his earthly end, giving him comfort and strength. He died on July 16, 2023. The Bible verse above is surely his testimony.

Gary had wanted to include a few of the writings he had composed but we never got around to getting them in this paper. He was eager to share his faith with others and the following meditation is an example.

A MEDITATION

The Light That Some People Can Not See

Christmas Reflections by Gary Schell 2022

Fitting that Christmas comes at the end of the year. Some people have gone through difficult times during the year. Things pile up and become overwhelming, making our lives dark. The Gospel of John tells us that Jesus was born to be the light of the world. When we have difficulties and darkness in our lives we can look to Jesus. Some people might not see the light of Christ and miss the true meaning of His birth.

God sent Jesus from heaven to be a sacrifice for our sins. When Jesus came, He provided a way for us to have a relationship and connection with God, through the Holy Spirit. When darkness overtakes our vision, God can provide us with the hope and the light to make the darkness go away. If we let God's light always shine in our lives the darkness can't replace God's light.

As said at the beginning, Christmas comes at an appropriate time of the year. We can enter the new year knowing the light of the world is always shining on our path.

As the shepherds and wise men, when they found the baby Jesus, bowed down and worshiped, we too should worship Jesus for what He has done for you and me. O come let us adore Him.

When a baby is born there is a lot of excitement. People can't wait to see the new baby. Likewise, we too should be excited about knowing Jesus, our Savior.

Like the song Go Tell it on the Mountain, we should be willing to go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ was born.

ROLLER COASTER *By Gary Schell*

One of Tommy's favorite places is the amusement park. His parents take him every chance they get. Tommy loves to ride the roller coaster, just hearing the squeals and screams from the people on it, makes him excited. Going through all the loops and down all the drops gives him a thrill.

When Tommy gets up to where the roller coaster is, he waits for the next available car. The attendant puts the harness safely over his head and fits it securely around his shoulders and upper body. The harness is snapped securely, into the bottom of his seat. As the car sped over the bumps and curves ahead, the harness held him in place, even when the car turned upside down.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells me to put on His yoke, His harness. The harness Jesus offers His people is one of faith in the forgiveness He earned for us when He died for our sins. The cross holds us tight over bumps of fear or helps us navigate unexpected curves of confusion.

Jesus' harness keeps us on track when we encounter those bumps and curves in our lives. We can even have faith in Jesus' harness to keep us secure, when we go through the upside down loops, knowing that we are safe in His loving care.

Jesus suffered the bumps and bruises for us. The cross He died on was the heaviest yoke of all. Because Jesus died for us, our yoke is light and we can rest in the new life He gives to us.

When life becomes a roller coaster ride, let us remember that we are securely in Jesus' harness, which will keep us safe from harm.

(This additional meditation was sent to me by a Florida friend of Gary's after Gary died.)

POSTLUDE: LESSONS AND REFLECTIONS

By Jim Crosby

Gary's story does not require any additional commentary. But I felt compelled to provoke at least some readers to think beyond the story and into the "so what".

In knowing Gary and his story, I have been challenged to do just that and the following short reflections and essays are shared with the "so-what" in mind. They are not light reading, so be prepared (or stop here except for the last paragraph).

Why?

Why the disability? Why the pain and suffering? Seems unfair.

If there is no God, the answer seems simple. That is just the way it is. There is no reason other than brute chance and an unlucky lottery ticket. Not a very strong reason to want to live with suffering.

But if there is a God, why did He allow Gary's condition? To be honest, I don't fully know (nor do any others, I submit). There are only partial, possible reasons.

The answer God gave the suffering biblical Job was basically "I am God and you are not. Don't try to understand". A key message of the Bible is that God is good. Gary's belief in this goodness and the goodness of Jesus' death and resurrection has lifted him to victory. I will leave it there.

Worth and Importance

I recently (2022) attended a high school football game in the deep south USA where football is king and the game is a prime time, elaborate, and crowded event. Bands, flags, pom-poms, cheering, socializing. And the celebrities, the important people: the talented, muscular players with name recognition over the loudspeaker; the beautiful, decorated, good-figured cheerleaders; and, as it was home-coming, several queen candidates equally or more beautiful selected by popular peer voting who were paraded on the field; And the skilled instrumentalists marching and playing simultaneously surrounded by more beautiful flag-waving gals (I did not see any guys but if there they would have been handsome)

Hard work paying off. The offensive football players had memorized over 50 detailed plays and endured hard physical training. Cheerleaders learned many routines and cheers. And more. Kudos.

But I think of Gary. No chance to come close to any of these accomplishments or presentations. What gives humans worth, value or importance? What makes you think you are significant? Perhaps contributions to society, good looks, talents, skills, job or social position? What about the unattractive, the disabled, the clumsy, the dependent?

Gary makes me ask these questions and more. What does “all men are created equal” mean? What if you were severely disabled due to no fault of your own? Would you be any less important than the able? How would you like to be treated?

Some inequities are fair. Unfair are penalties for hard work or for just being able. But what is fair for those who are unable? What actions are warranted when one says that the disabled are just as important as the able?

No easy answers. Tough questions.

Where is the balance? Do we err on the side of the able or unable? What do the able owe the unable?

Just asking. Gary’s story makes me ponder. Hopefully you too. Make your own lesson.

Abilities as Disability

Most of us who are able do not wish we were disabled. But ironically the disabled may have some advantages. Abilities may be a disability. Abilities may delude us. Gary may have something good that the able don’t have, or at least don’t have as much.

Abilities can delude us into a false, even inflated, sense of our worth and importance. And when that falsehood is exposed or fails, we can be left in a void.

Disability can force us to realize we are loved and of value just because of being, not because of what we have accomplished or can do. Disabilities tend to keep us humble, which most I think would agree is a good thing.

On the spiritual side and for those who believe in a personal God, abilities can keep us from recognizing our need to depend on God, to take God more seriously. The writer of the Old Testament book of Psalms wrote:

“It was good that I was afflicted so that I might learn your (God’s) decrees”.

The disabled are likely to see heaven as much more real than the able.

I see in Gary a dependency and appreciation for God that is likely deeper due to his disability. There are of course many able-bodied who have a similar relation with God, but I doubt their abilities do much to foster this relation.

Having a disabled person in one's social circle, in a church group for example, can add a rich dimension that is not possible if all were super-able and self-sufficient. Many disabled like Gary have learned lessons and demonstrate qualities that are profitable for the able to emulate.

This is not to glorify disability. Nor to say it is easy to view one's own disability as positive. Living with disability, especially if severe like Gary's, is no easy task and is filled with frustration and hardship.

But I suggest there is a little silver-lining if one looks for it.

Patience

I watch Gary use the computer using only his one clumsy, stiff, contracted finger. So slow! I am so tempted to interrupt and jump in to do it myself.

I help him transfer into a car. After being carried into the car to a sitting position, he can move his legs from outside to inside but oh how slow.

I know how long it can take for an aide or nurse to respond to his call for assistance. My simple conversations with him take much longer than normal with a lot of concentration and repeats to understand him.

Although he admits that he gets impatient and frustrated at times, one saintly skill he has learned is patience. At least that is what I observe.

Waiting. So hard many times.

Sometimes delays and slowness are not beneficial. But most of the time we will be just fine, even better, waiting or going slowly.

A lesson from Gary, whose name could be Herbert as I remember this song from The Music Machine album by Frank Hernandez & Sherry Saunders Powell

*There was a snail called Herbert who was so very slow
He caused a lot of traffic jams wherever he would go
The ants were always getting mad and the beetles, they would fume
But Herb would always poke along and sing this little tune*

*Have patience, have patience Don't be in such a hurry
When you get impatient, you only start to worry
Remember, remember that God is patient, too
And think of all the times when others have to wait for you*

*As you can well imagine, there's a moral to this tale
Some of you may find yourselves behind a creeping snail
So if you get impatient and you're easily disturbed
Think about this little song and take a tip from Herb (Gary!)*

Disability Discrimination and Neglect Part 1 General

By disability I mean long term or permanent which substantially impair usual function including hearing, visual and muscular impairments, even severe obesity, mental illness and language differences. A broad definition would include financial, social and educational limitations. It goes without saying that Gary's disabilities have been and are profound and multiple as I mentioned in the introduction. And Gary's financial resources are very basic with no pension, big nest egg or "rich uncle". For the past many years, he has had no or minimal family support.

Society's dealing with the disabled has been improving. A benchmark is The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 which applies to fairness in employment, transportation and public accommodations. Gary benefited from a variety of social systems aimed to help the disabled some in place even before 1990. But as the Civil Rights Act did not eliminate racism the ADA has not eliminated disability discrimination.

- A google search revealed many examples of present disability discrimination in health care, employment and criminal justice.
- A 2017 study showed among adults aged 65 and older, 50% of those with developmental disabilities reported one or more unmet health care needs, compared to 17% of those without such disabilities.
- Harvard physician Dr Lisa Iezzoni studied physician attitudes and practice involving disabled patients (2022 report). Several physicians given anonymity were interviewed by Zoom by Dr. Iezzoni (disabled herself in a wheelchair not apparent to the participants). Many admitted that they and their practices treated the disabled such as those in wheelchairs much differently than others to the extent of taking steps to detour the disabled from their practice. They cited inadequate facilities and lack of time. Nearly all of the many reader responses supported the reality of this bias with personal examples.

Bottom line: the disabled too often are neglected even by the health care system, which leads to the next part.

Disability Discrimination and Neglect Part 2

Nursing Home Care (2022)

I am a family physician/geriatrician and have been part of the care time for many disabled persons. I have spent many years working in a nursing home and have been Medical Director of the home where Gary now lives. Much of my perspective has been “top down” but I hope is favorable to the disabled. Yet, Gary has brought into better view what it is like to be at the “bottom”.

Not all nursing home residents are severely demented. Many residents are cognitively fine and will reside in the nursing home for many years.

Since he has been in the nursing home, a recurrent concern he has voiced to me and others is his conviction that nursing home care has much room for improvement. Important: This is not to single out his present setting which he rates (and I concur) as one of the better ones. He is generally satisfied with his care and especially appreciates his immediate care takers. (I remember distinctly Gary’s substantial remorse when he had to be moved to another floor leaving his dedicated care-friends). He realizes that most of the “problem” goes beyond the nursing home to governmental policies and funding.

This is not the place to go into all of the reasons and manifestations but I posit a couple deficiencies

- **Insufficient staff (especially aides):** It has clearly been shown that in health care facilities less staff means less care means more deaths and morbidity. Caring for the disabled in the strictly regulated nursing home environment takes lots of time and attention. Nursing homes funded mostly by Medicaid (Gary and many others in his home are on Medicaid) cannot afford as much staff as the staff, residents and even administration consider best. Other payers such as Medicare do not pay for long term care. Unless one has lots of money or long-term care insurance, funding falls to low-paying Medicaid. It is hard to recruit and keep staff. Kudos to the nurses and aides who faithfully do their best and more.
- **Discriminatory attitudes:** To what extent this applies to nursing homes I do not know. And to the contrary, I have been impressed with the kindness so many nursing home staff show to their residents. Yet nursing home staff and administrators come from the general population where naïve, uneducated and prejudicial views exist that many disabled are dumb, lazy, trying to take advantage of the system, and that some even deserve it due to poor past decisions. So, it would be surprising if these attitudes did not carry over to the nursing home resulting in neglect and second-rate care even if unconscious. Perhaps it is society on the whole including the governing bodies who are at most fault.
- **Counter-productive payment system for physicians and nurse practitioners:** Although changing (hopefully for the better), the underlying current payment system is “the more encounters the more the pay”. Short encounters are the thing. Long encounters lose money. Providers usually prefer to spend more time with patients but

feel pressure to spend less. Complicating matters is a short supply of nursing home providers, another matter akin to the staffing issue.

- Stifling facilities and environments: Gary is privileged to have a private room. But there is room only for a bed, a small TV stand, a few bookcases, a small portable meal tray, a wheel chair and one other small chair. Most nursing home residents must share one small room with another separated only by a cloth curtain. Green space is skimpy or none.

Neither Gary nor I have easy, slam-dunk sure solutions other than to admit that money is key. To us it is sad that so much money is being spent on things that seem so less worthy. What is more important, giving dignity and care to our most needy and vulnerable or trying to find out if there is life on Mars (I probably could come up with a better example)?

Most readers will find themselves impotent to do anything to effect system change. But one suggestion: become personally involved as a volunteer. Befriend and visit a resident, take one for an outside walk or wheelchair ride, provide entertainment or a spiritual ministry, do something for the front-line staff, if only a thank-you card to encourage and show appreciation. Contact a nursing home for details.

Spirituality

What is the meaning of life? Is there a purpose? Is life (and disability) only an undirected, chance collection of atoms and energy? And at death all of what we are turns to impersonal dust?

If so, life in a nursing home with severe disabilities is a good reason for severe depression. Spirituality and Gary say there is more to the story.

Spirituality: Believing in something beyond one's self, that there is more to life than the physical. May include supernatural beings and involve formal faith traditions or only a private approach.

Gary has shared his spiritual story. Since he has been in the nursing home, I have seen his growing dedication to the spiritual life. Reading books is very difficult due to his hand impairments but the computer and internet has been his conduit to a large variety of sources of Christian learning and support. His room is cluttered with Christian books, several Bibles and printouts of internet papers. Frequently he sends me a web-link to a spiritual devotional. I know he prays regularly. He has been a regular in an almost weekly small Zoom "growth group" with prayer, sharing and Bible study. I and others serve as his taxi service to our church services. At his initiative, he and I study Bible passages on a regular basis including some on-line courses. He has mentioned more than once that a prime goal of making this story is that God would be glorified.

As physical exercise and activity promote physical and mental health, numerous studies show spiritual practices do the same. Spiritual practices include prayer, connecting with others about spiritual issues, mindfulness, meditation, certain forms of yoga, time in nature, studying spiritual writings, and service to others.

I must add that it is important to recognize that aberrant, harmful forms of spirituality/religion exist. These are to be shunned.

Gary's story is laced with spiritual threads although he will confess that his faith has not been as full as it could have been. Spirituality does not require perfection and even can be augmented by failures and pain.

Adding to his disabilities, living in a nursing home, where he has been for over 10 years and likely much longer, is a set-up for depression and anxiety. Sort of being in jail. But even many able living "on the outside" experience similar suffering. I am convinced that Gary's thankful (mostly) and contented demeanor is a result of his spirituality.

Gary would invite readers to review the role of spirituality in their lives. He promotes basic Christianity which he has concluded to be reasonable and pragmatic.

Grit

Doing a hard thing, perseverance, tenacity, fortitude, not giving up, positive & powerful passion for a long-term goal, resilience, strength of will, determinism, endurance. That's grit. That's Gary.

Grit is one of the strongest determinants of success in school and life. Other qualities are important but are often insufficient without grit. Most of us can give examples in our own lives when grit reaped rewards. I don't know where Gary gets his grit and he will admit that many times his grit was weak yet grit has been integral to his story. Perhaps Gary's story has been an inspiration to you, instilling some grit into your life. Perhaps you can say "If Gary can do what he did, I can go on and not give up".

Gary makes me think about grit. Despite its positives and as Gary has discovered, grit can be problematic. We cannot depend on grit as it can fail and grit be "bad".

Bad grit, examples

- Harmful grit: goal hurts others.
- Futile grit: unattainable/unrealistic goals causing frustration and disappointment). "Our greatest fear should not be of failure, but of succeeding at something that doesn't really matter" (New Tribes missionary)
- Selfish grit: Goal may be worthy but motive bad.
- Blinded grit: not considering criticism or opposing ideas.

I don't see any bad grit in Gary's story although he may. If Gary inspires grit, I think it wise to be careful to make sure our grit is not bad grit.

Failed Grit

One of the problems of grit is that it does not always work. For all of the Olympic winners there are many who tried just as hard but lost. Circumstances out of our control sabotage. Unrealistic expectations infiltrate. We may attain our goal only to lose it. I think of Gary getting a college degree only to have the victory quickly demoted with the tragic death of his mother and sister. His driving a car victory was relatively short-lived. He has spent numerous hours in physical and occupational therapy to gain function in his left hand but to no avail. And ending with many years in a nursing home would prompt in many of us the question “Was the grit worth it?”

I will leave the answers to the reader except to suggest:

- Ultimate success is contentment in failure, peace in trouble, joy in pain, hope in desperation. Ironically, failure is necessary for this success. Applying grit toward attaining this ultimate success seems a worthy endeavor.
- Grit needs to be buffered with times of rest and letting go of control. One of Gary’s favorite verses as he mentioned is from Saint Paul who wrote “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”. But Paul I submit did not really mean “anything” rather is referring to what preceded this statement namely that he has learned to be content in all circumstances. That is something most of us would say is impossible. But Paul compares it with “all things” and that he achieved it with supernatural help. Failure despite lots of grit is hard to handle, especially when the goal is highly desirable. Being thankful and content when grit fails is a prized possession. Gary inspires me to realize this gem.

Final Thoughts

Thank You, Gary!

- For inspiring me to keep positive and not give up while at the same time being thankful and staying positive even when my grit fails.
- For reminding me that my physical limitations pale in comparison to yours and many others.
- For making me thankful for all the little things I tend to take for granted
- For your example of patience.
- For the lesson you teach that what's on the outside is not the real person and that I need to more and more seek to know a person at an inside level.
- For giving me a fuller view of the disabled and disadvantaged.
- For your sincere loving thoughts and prayers for me, my family and friends
- For our friendship and comradery
- For reminding me of the Christian hope of heaven and that the maladies of our earthly life somehow have meaning and that "it will be worth it all".

The following are some poems and writings of Gary. They were added to this paper after his death. It appears they were written when he was in his 20s, probably some or all as part of his university studies. Presumably someone typed them out for him. There is one poem available written in his own handwriting. I have included one page of this. Jim

An Uncertain Mind

Flying so high and yet the flames of
home still print a shadow in my mind.

Love that I thought was less, now has
a meaning that I can't touch. The
beautifuls laying among my path don't
seem to be in my mind.

The new faces will hang in my mind
but they can't take the place of the ones
I love.

Trying to tell my mind love is
everywhere, while my ears listen to the
echoes of home.

By Gary Schell

An Uncertain Mind
from Gary's Notebook

FLYING SO HIGH
AND YET THE FLAMES
OF HOME STILL
~~THAT~~ PRINT A ~~REMEMBER~~
A SHADOW YET
MY MIND.

LOVE THAT I
THOUGHT WAS SO LESS
NOW HAS A MEANING

NOURISHING OUR FAITH

The responsibility of a shepherd is to care for and watch over foolish and scattered sheep. He works alone without any fellowship or the safety of having people around him. The shepherd is responsible for the creatures, who are sure to get lost and be killed, because they strayed away from the one who protects them.

We too, as human beings, sometimes stray away from our shepherd. We go beyond the boundaries of God's pasture. When we go astray from God's presence, no matter how far we might wander, He will come searching for us until He has found us. When He has found us, He will rejoice that we are back safely in His pasture. No matter how bad we have been or what kind of trouble we have been into, God will welcome us back into His presence with loving forgiveness, God will look after us and provide our every need; that is His promise. When God was in the world, as His son, Jesus, He said, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11, NIV).

How grateful we should be, for God has given his assurance that all his lost sheep will be found. May we constantly be in the presence of the good shepherd.

Gary L. Schell

about
X DEAD ROADS

Gary Schell
4 Blanchard Ave
Simpson 13901

When the sun comes up again, my feet won't be on this land;
Where they will be is unknown;
All that I know is that manhood is upon me.
I have to feel it and know the fullness of it.
If my shoes continue walking, the prime of my life
Will have had its day and leave me without anything to show
That I have been through it, for my surroundings now
Don't offer anything but dead roads.
I may find myself on soil that holds beauty
Which vibrates through the sky and I can cling to
Without any difficulty.
Or I may find myself on soil that is squalid, which scars
The sky with hate and it would make me think my search
Was worthless.
Then I would wonder if the surroundings that I left held
What I was looking for but was too sightless to see.

THE WALK

We walked along while the day cradled its morning
In treasured warmth.
The vibrations from it hit our webs,
But we couldn't tell whether it was genuine.
Our walk continued while wonder seeded our minds
Like a plague, and we went searching in imaginary fog.
Reality, then, was hard to grasp, even when we
Touched it,
We wondered if we actually held it, and our fingers
Began to tremble in fear.
Growing in the fog, we lost our direction for the
Day and our feelings were
nothing but meaningless fantasies.

A POEM TO AUTUMN

Standing here in the midst of November wind
wondering where you have gone. Feeling sad for
I thought I would get to know you and would enjoy
the beauty that you have. But all that is left
of you is fragments which will soon be covered
with the cold snow. All the beauty you painted
on the leaves will remain in my memory when winter
shows its anger. But it won't be the same as
if you were here for the cold that winter sheds
can't be wiped away by the warmth your skies give.
The skies you provide September and October with
are beautiful which no other season can give.
The variety of colors you show are the loveliest
my sight has ever held. Why couldn't you stay a
little longer for I cherish the beauty you give.

GARY SCHELL

STARING

I stare into the night and wonder
about what I can't really comprehend.
The night fog circles my mind like a mad tornado
that brings shivers to my bones.
The fog leads my thoughts down on the
cold pavement where they turn smaller
than they really are.
When that happens, my body turns solid
and nothing can force it, not even a pin.
As I stand there the night tries to
speak to me, but I am thoughtless
and I only send waves into the dark air.

Somehow the aroma of love surrounds me,
but my fingers are frozen instruments
that can't feel it.
I can sense the warmth passing me by and
my bones bend trying to grasp it,
but when they get an inch of freedom,
the solidness captures them back,
then a whimper of sadness comes.
My mind breaks away from the ice
and can comprehend a little,
enough to know that something valuable
passed me by and I couldn't catch it.
When my senses come back again
I stand by the window with a lost feeling in me,
wondering where it came from.

THE HOPE OF SPRING

May all of the wonder of Spring
bring new life to you,
so that each blessing God has planted,
in this season will shine on you.

May your faith be renewed
through the beauty that lies
upon the hills and the colors
shade fresh meaning upon your life.

May each morning of this season
bring new love to your sight,
which will stay in your heart
after Spring has gone.

FEELING WORTHLESS

Occasionally the leaves
Have to take more
than give.
The breeze supplied
sometimes is not enough
to show me that they care,
while they might think it is.
For it seems only
Their own interests are held, not mine.
No matter how hard I plea
I don't receive any attention
for my emotions.
Then I feel like a
worthless petal.
If they were thoughtful,
They would show some
interest and lean to my feelings.
Maybe the leaves do care,
But in my eyes
Only their own welfare
Concerns them.

STARTLING BEAUTY

There were hills in back of me
unknown to my sight until today.
Among them I felt an ease which
I didn't think could be found around here.
The stillness had a fresh ring
which my ears never captured before.
The ring was soft as the wind
that was guiding the clouds.
The depths of the hills
brought wonder to my eyes
for I never saw such startling beauty before.
Looking over the valley, there was land
covered by discolored leaves.
As I stood enjoying the stillness,
I felt sad, for those hills were
unfamiliar to me.

Would You Be Happy If You Had Everything

If man had everything in the world that he wanted, there wouldn't be no more reasons for him to live because he has already accomplished everything in life he has been living for.

What a dull life it would be, because he would have everything that he wanted and gone everywhere he wanted to go, and done everything that he wanted to do.

Some people think if this would happen to them how happy they would be. BUT would they? Some people also think that the people who have a newer car and an up-to-date home and every other convenience of today are more happier than they are, but the people who think this might be more happier than the people who have everything of today.

A boy found an old bicycle in a junk yard. He took it home and fixed it and made it look like a brand new one. He was more happy with it than if it was a new one.

Happiness can be found anywhere and anytime, but it is up to you to find it and you don't need the best things in the world to do it with. Just look around you and you'll find a lot of things to be happy about.

Gary Schell

MY POOR MOTHER

The dreams my mother once had
Are now ancient dust
And she wonders if she really did ever hold them.
In her quiet moments when loneliness is the only thing
She can touch, tears fill her eyes, for she knows the fragrance
Of life is slowly losing its scent.
The man of her life, who was the foundation of her dreams,
Thought better love could be found in other women
And he was a friend to a bottle.
She had hoped that her children would be
Something she could be proud of, but my sister
Barely makes enough to put food in her mouth
And I am wrecking my brains trying to be somebody that
I can't be just so I can gain some fame.]
Today, when she opened a birthday greeting,
Tears came to my eyes because her life has't been
Like the big, red rose that was on the card.

PRECIOUS GIFTS

Receive Him today and
Experience the many gifts He has to offer
That will never lose their value or fade.
Experience the new life
That will never shed darkness.
Experience the warmth
That will never have a cold draft.
Experience the friendship
That will never stop becoming brighter.
Experience the happiness
That will never have a touch of sadness.
Experience the joy
That will never stop flowing.
Experience the peace
That will never be covered by clouds.
Experience the love
That will never tarnish.
Experience His precious gifts
For tomorrow they might be all given out.

Do Your Part For Christ

I wonder how many of us are really aware of the sacrifice that Christ made for us? Do we think Easter is the only time to honor him. If you do, how wrong you are! Christ made a tremendous sacrifice for us; we should honor it all during our lives.

The first step is to be a faithful church member and to participate in special services. The true Christian ought to take part in community affairs because he wants to help in whatever ways he can be of service.

You may say what does this have to do with being a true Christian? There are other ways to honor Christ besides going to church. You might be doing something and you don't know it. You might be honoring him. Such simple acts as saying "Hello" to somebody you don't know, making someone happy who is hospitalized, doing something for a person who might be unfortunate, or getting people to realize how much Christ means to them. No matter what time of the year it is, let's show Christ how grateful we are to him by doing these things for our fellow man.