



**PART FIVE:
TRYING TO TRUST GOD**

Spiritual Experience

BUILDING A FOUNDATION OF FAITH AND TRUST IN GOD (Instead of relying on your own understanding.)

There was a point in time in my life when I had the feeling that God was literally saying to me: “Walk off this plank and I’ll catch you.” To which I felt like saying: “Yea. Sure Big Guy.”

Let me tell you a bit about it.

MY MOST PAINFUL DECISION

"They got married and lived happily ever after." Of all of the lines from all of the fairytales this one is a standout fib. Anyone, whether in a marriage or in a relationship with a significant other, learns the truth long before they have been together for 20 years, indeed many of them cannot make it near 20 years before they throw up their arms and call it quits.

"Why Lord, why?" has probably been the most common question that the divine sources have been hearing from earthly combatants who find themselves imprisoned in less-than-perfect relationships. Why indeed. Our relationship lasted 28 years. That woman deserves a medal, but then so do I. Why do relationships turn from a steamy honeymoon to a cold arctic night...sometimes over and over again? I'm not the only one who ever sought the answer to that question. A lot of people have offered explanations but the only one that ever sat well with me was the analogy of the tumbler.

The owner of a tumbler seeks to find semiprecious stones of a certain size and shape. The tumbler is opened and the mixture of water and sand is placed inside then he adds two semiprecious stones closes the lid and turns on the motor. The stones are left bouncing around in the sand and water and bouncing off of each other for an extended period of time. From time to time the owner stops the machine to examine the progress with the stones. If there are still rough edges on the pieces they go back into the machine and the power is turned on again.

Finally, one day the owner of the tumbler stops machine, opens the lid, and examines his prize...two perfectly polished semiprecious stones. Now they are taken and placed on a soft velvet cloth where they are to be admired by their proud owner. There is no more need for the two of them to remain in the tumbler together.

Although I was in God's tumbler for 28 years in all honesty I can say I wanted out 18 years earlier, alas, that was not to be. I guess I still had too many rough edges.

Yes, I had indeed been looking forward to escaping from this relationship for a very long time but it was only as the relationship was coming to an end that I became aware of a horrific price tag attached to my freedom.

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A friend who was very well-connected to divine sources alerted me to the fact that when I would leave my wife that my precious, beloved daughters would turn against me. They would side with their mother and blame me for the entire thing. I was also told that my youngest, my son, would not take sides in the breakup.

Those children were my reason for being; they were the very reason, and at times perhaps the only reason, why I stayed as long as I did. The thought of losing my daughters was something I couldn't even bear to look at. All I could do was to take life one day at a time as the departure date drew nigh.

I knew that under no circumstances was I prepared to leave the marriage until the youngest was out in the world and standing steady on his own two feet. Then and only then did I feel I could go...but look at the price I was going to have to pay.

At this point in time my two beautiful daughters had both chosen their life partners and were gone. It was when my son was beginning to show signs of being stable on his own two feet that I found the pressure cooker in our marriage increased the heat substantially. In all honesty I sensed full well that if I did not soon get out of that relationship that they would come, put me in a white jacket, and take me away to a mental institution. That was not going to happen.

A series of God sent coincidences resulted in me being granted an opportunity to help someone else who was in difficulty. My best friend and his former girlfriend came up with an ingenious solution just as I was reaching the end of my rope. One final heated argument at home and it was all over. The next day I was gone...but that departure was bittersweet to say the least.

As the car put more and more miles between us the more painful became the thoughts about my daughters. Somewhere on that highway between home and my future home I made a decision, a very painful decision. I could not think about my daughters anymore because to do so brought excruciating pain. I had to “emotionally freeze them out of my life”, a decision which troubled them greatly as well.

Shortly after arriving at my new temporary home I experienced a most interesting phenomena. It was a very hot morning when I went out and jumped into my car, started up the motor, put it in reverse, then glanced up towards my review mirror. There was no mirror!?

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The blistering heat had melted the adhesive that had held the mirror to the windshield. I looked down and sure enough there it was lying on the floor. In amazement I reached down and picked it up. Then suddenly a realization hit me. “No looking back.” I was to move forward with my life and not for a minute look back. It was the only way I could heal and go ahead. Thank God for his little messages delivered in breathtaking ways.

FINDING THE NEEDLE IN A HAY STACK

When my marriage was drawing to a close and the pressure was getting unbearable I was passed a simple message. The words were as follows:

"God is preparing someone for you and you for them...and when the time is ready the two of you will come together." The words brought a strange comfort to my soul but they gave me absolutely no indication as to when this mysterious event was to unfold.

About a year before the marriage came to an end my wife decided that she wanted to leave me again. This time she packed everything that she wanted in the house. I loaded it into my small station wagon and then drove her to my daughter's home 1000 miles away.

After unloading everything at my daughters I vividly recall driving away from the house, but mysteriously, I have absolutely no recollection of that 1000 mile drive back home. It seemed as though the car drove itself home.

For the next six months I lived alone and cherished it. In church I met a lady who became a very good friend. In later years we confessed to each other that we both wondered if something serious was unfolding between the two of us because there was a mutual admiration and respect that neither of us had ever known before. She had a long list of qualities that I very greatly admired and those qualities I never forgot.

It was around this time that I was shown an exercise on manifestation that made a great impression upon me. It involved taking a piece of paper and drawing a line across the top and another line straight down through the center of the page. On the top left I was to write what I do not want. On the top right I was to write what I do desire. The instructions were to complete the left side first and only when I could think of nothing more that I did not want, was I to turn and start to complete the right side of the page.

My objective, written across the top of the page, was to manifest the perfect mate. I had no difficulty listing down the left side of the page the qualities that I did not want, so that when it came time to do the right side of the page it was easy to identify the qualities that I did desire. My new lady friend had exuded them.

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Once completed the instructions were to take a pair of scissors, cut the page up the center and throw the left half of the page into the garbage. The right side of the page was to be placed in my bedside table so I could review the list last thing at night and first thing in the morning. I did all of that. Soon thereafter the following happened.

My 50th birthday saw a major snowstorm sweeps through the area and down to the east coast. When I got home from work I checked the answering machine and lo and behold there was a message from my ex. It seems that she was about to board a train for Hamilton and wanted me to pick her up at the station.

Ironically, if I had been home when the call came through I probably would've told her don't bother getting on the train but the timing was not in my hands. As I listened to the message she would have been halfway back and there was nothing I could do to stop it. I did go to the station and pick her up but I certainly did not want to do so. She sensed that very clearly and for the next six months there were no arguments.

It was when the arguments started again that I left and now, here I was, halfway to my destination armed with my piece of paper detailing the lady that I was looking for. All I had was the assurance that when we were both ready we would come together. The only facts I knew where that the population of the USA was in excess of 250 million people. Assuming that one half were female meant there was in excess of 100 million ladies to be found. How on earth was I to find the one that I was to meet. The thought boggled my mind.

The only information that I was armed with was the name and address of my buddy's girlfriend in Amarillo, Texas. She was due to go in the hospital for back surgery when her mother, who was to have been the one to look after things, suddenly became ill herself. Rosie had asked if I could come and look after things for her until she had recovered from her surgery and that was all I had to go on.

I had met Rosie about a year before when she came to visit my buddy in Hamilton. The four of us had gone out dancing for the evening and we discovered that we made a friendly foursome. My reception in Amarillo was warm and friendly and Rosie was more than a little relieved to know that her help had arrived safely.

When she learned about the church that I had been attending back home she very quickly and very enthusiastically recommended that I attend the church this coming Sunday as a new Minister had just been transferred from her home area of

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Lubbock, Texas. Rosie couldn't say enough about this new Minister so I promised to attend.

In the meantime, I explored a few of the unique stores to be found in Amarillo and being a fan of Western clothing I bought myself a new Bolo tie, one with an eagle on it.

Sunday was a day I shall never forget. The warm welcome at the church made me feel totally at home. I spotted a couple of ladies who tweaked my interest but I said nothing. After church I stood outside the door and one of those ladies walked straight up to me, reached up and took my Bolo tie in her hand, and after studying it for a moment she asked: "Why do you wear the eagle?"

"It's my sign." I replied. Nothing more said but I did get a chance to have a close look at this mysterious lady.

I did get a chance to inquire as to whether or not there was a prayer group in the church, more commonly known as a mastermind group. I was told yes, there was, and they were meeting the next evening. I was told that the group would vote to see if I could join them and if I returned the following Sunday I would have my answer.

Sure enough the following Sunday I was advised that they would be delighted to have me join them. I was given the name and address of a lady from the church who was hosting the event in her home the very next evening.

I arrived a little early the next evening and was delighted to discover that the lady who answered the door was the same lady who had held my Bolo tie in her hand the first Sunday I had attended the church. Being the first to arrive she invited me to take the seat of my choice in the circle of chairs in her living room. I was later told that I walked straight to the seat that used to be occupied by the member of their group who had just moved away thereby making a vacancy in the circle.

After the last member of the group arrived and was seated **we** got down to business. One by one each individual spelled out for the group what their particular prayer request was. Everyone in turn would hold the vision of that prayer request being satisfied.

When it was my turn to speak I pulled out my precious piece of paper and I listed all fourteen qualities that I was looking for in a mate. As I had my head down

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reading my list I failed to notice that our hostess for the evening was turning beet red as she recognized herself as the lady I was describing. In a nation of 250 million people here I was seated in the lady's own home announcing to all present that I was looking for *her*.

Later she confessed to me that she knew I was "the one" that first Sunday when we met because of the Bolo tie and my answer to her question. How is that for finding a needle in a haystack?

And yes, she was everything that I had written on my list and then some. Thank you God!

Three things I learned from that experience.

First: "When God closes a door he opens a new one."

Second: "Where God guides, God provides."

Third: "God's guidance is impeccable and breathtaking."

Yes, beyond any shadow of a doubt...you *can* have faith and trust in God.

FATHER KNOWS BEST

Do you remember that old TV series *Father Knows Best* from the 50's? Nice sentiment but how many of us took the title seriously. I think we all have the hang-up of believing that we know what's best for us. Oh, what a rocky road we live when we think we know it all!

My first experience that could be catalogued under this title comes from my later teenage years, you know, that period of time when we know it all.

My good friend Jimmy invited me to his house one afternoon to take a look at his latest toy. I need to say that Jimmy and I had spent the summer together in army camp and a number of years thereafter in the reserve army, first learning and then instructing on the use of firearms. I think we both thought ourselves rather knowledgeable in that department. That in its self should have registered as a warning not to get too cocky, if you can pardon the pun.

Jimmy's new toy turned out to be a shining new 22 revolver. I had never seen anything quite like it before as my only experience with revolvers was Roy Rogers and Gene Autry on the local theater screen. Yup, I had seen six shooters before.

To give me a proper demonstration he loaded up the revolver and busied himself emptying it into the target. Then it was my turn. Old bright eyes is passed the loaded revolver and under Jimmy's careful guidance I learned how to hold and aim it properly and then the fun began.

Bang! "1". Bang! "2",...I called out the shots to myself until I heard...Bang! "6". It was then that I gently lowered the revolver to my side and slowly squeezed the trigger... Bang!... "7!! Seven what you mean seven?! Oh dear God what have I done to myself."

I was afraid to look down, afraid that I had just shot myself in the foot. Slowly I lowered my gaze and there at the very edge of the leather of the sole of my shoe was a very neat hole in the ground. Thank you God!

I mean, every boy my age knew that revolvers were six shooters! Jimmy was laughing. "Dummy", he delightfully crowed, "Don't you know that 22 revolvers take 10 rounds of ammunition?" No I didn't know, but I never forgot. However, in time I did forget one fact. *Everything* I know is not correct. I only think it is.

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I had passed my 50th birthday when my 'know it all' attitude tied my shoelaces together and down I went. My marriage had just ended and I found myself in Amarillo, Texas. One of the first things that happened was that my hostess offered me free tickets to fly to Las Vegas, Nevada and stay at one of those fancy hotels. It wasn't going to cost me a cent. In my mind Las Vegas equaled gambling and I don't gamble so I refused the offer. Twice more I was offered those tickets and on every occasion I turned down the offer. They were never offered again.

After meeting a very special lady, I wanted with all my heart and soul to have my divorce in hand ASAP. It took me two years to secure my divorce and the tensions that surfaced because of the lack of it ultimately contributed significantly to the death of the relationship. It was around that time when I learned a shocking piece of information.

Had I taken that generous offer and gone to Las Vegas I would have learned that Las Vegas is the only place in North America where one Canadian can get a divorce from another Canadian while one of them is still back in Canada. In other words, had I gone to Las Vegas I would've learned that truth and I would have had my divorce in less than 60 days. What a loss!

Yes, my Heavenly Father knows best. I had only my self to blame for my hardheaded know it all attitude. As a result, I totally disregarded His divine guidance and I paid the price dearly.

Father knows best? Yes, I learned that but I also learned one other very important thing. If in life you are offered something more than once then pay very close attention to that offer. If it is from divine sources it will be offered three times, but no more. I have noted this phenomenon several times in my life and on every occasion when I seized the opportunity there was a profound blessing hidden in it.

Yes, God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform. Those are not idle words. Father *does* know best.

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Candles and Blue Jeans

One of the great benefits of living past your 65th birthday is that you reach a point where you're not afraid to share some of the things that happen to you in your past because of embarrassment. What I'm about to tell you is perhaps a classic example of what I mean.

Amarillo, Texas will forever stand out in my memory. One of the reasons was that I was taught a very important lesson there when least expected.

I had met and fallen head over heels in love with a remarkable lady. To say that I was on my best behavior in order to make the greatest possible impression upon her is an understatement.

One day, the two of us decided to investigate a craft sale that was being held in one of the local malls. After poking through a few booths we came upon a beautiful display of carved candles, a phenomenon which was quite new at that point in time.

The two of us entered the booth and each went our own way staring at the incredible beauty and craftsmanship on display. When I got to the back of the booth a very attractive young woman busied herself with a new box of candles that had just arrived. Dressed in a typical brightly colored casual Texan top and blue jeans she was indeed a treat for the eyes of this guy from the Northeast.

As my luck would have it, just at that moment, she picked up the box, turned around backwards, and bent over in order to set it down on the floor. Now I had seen women before who looked real good in blue jeans but never before in my life had blue jeans looked that good. No one had ever held a candle to this gal's assets.

I tried hard not to stare but, alas, I don't think I was very successful. I did however congratulate myself that I kept my mouth shut ... firmly. She stood up and turned back around to face me ... my eyes of course were back admiring the curves of the candles.

I had taken but a few steps away from the event when I came nose to nose with "my sweet tang." She looked me straight in the eye and said: "Did you see anything you liked?"

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That is the only time I can remember telling her anything but the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Who put those words into her mind for her to deliver to me? To this day I don't have the answer but I got a few suspicions...and the first one is...God certainly has a sense of humor.

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GOD WON!

When I felt exhausted and emotionally drained due to the separation from my Twin Flame I received yet another piece of wisdom and guidance through the Healing Circle at church.

I was told, “The battle is not yours. It is God’s!”

Surrendering to God what is His to do and not trying to fix it all by myself has been a major challenge for me. Too often I would place the problem into His hands and twenty minutes later pick it back up again. I learned that “GOD WILL NOT WRESTLE A PROBLEM OUT OF YOUR HANDS AND SOLVE IT.” You have to surrender it to Him completely and just go on your way with whatever demands your attention next.

The greatest blessings came when I was able to totally surrender a problem and then get out of God’s way.

By far the greatest example of this came when I had a big problem with the unemployment insurance office.

I was between accounting jobs when I took temporary employment in the next town driving a taxi.

It was a very hot summer and temperatures were at record highs with no breeze at all. The owner of the taxi company ordered us to never turn on the air conditioning because it cost money to run it. I was sitting at the local train station waiting for my next call to come in and watched in envy as the competition’s taxis drove in and out ... windows closed, air conditioning on.

Being an accountant who worked indoors all the time I was not accustomed to this incredible heat sitting in a metal vehicle on a black asphalt parking lot. I got sick ... sunstroke.

The next day I phoned the taxi company to tell them I was ill and could not drive in an un-air-conditioned vehicle any more. I then promptly got a job in town driving a taxi that was air-conditioned. I scarcely missed a day’s work.

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But the unemployment office, in obedience to their rules, terminated my unemployment insurance claim because I “resigned” from my job. The unemployment was essential because the taxi driving job was such that some drivers would work an entire shift and not earn enough money to buy a pack of cigarettes. The unemployment check would be reduced by the amount we earned and therefore provided a very low but steady base with which I could support my family until I got my next accounting work.

Now, thanks to UIC, I had only the pocket change from my new job to live on.

I appealed the decision and lost. *Then* I surrendered the problem to God and got out of the way.

About six times a young and relatively inexperienced lawyer from the Legal Aid Office took the Government of Canada to court and won. Each time the government, who had endless money with which to secure the services of a lawyer, appealed the decision and forced the young lawyer to take it up to the next level of the court system.

It all ended on November 12, 1995 when Randy Schroeder phoned and triumphantly announced, “*We won!*” By a unanimous decision the three judges of The Supreme Court of Canada agreed that I was unjustly disqualified. It was almost four years in coming to settlement but at last I was vindicated and they paid the withheld funds.

Randy crowed like a little Bandon rooster when he said I was now famous and stood as the winner in a landmark decision.

But he was wrong on one point. *We* did not win it. **God did!**

And incidentally ... I never had to once set foot in the courtroom.

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THE MAN FROM PENNSYLVANIA

Into every life a stranger walks and leaves his or her mark upon your heart. Such a soul was George Shaffer. From the minute we met there was a bond. George was the father I felt I never had and he was truly a gift from Heaven.

Not long after we met, George revealed to me his most unusual upbringing ... a story I shall never forget. You see George's mother died giving birth to him.

As George related the story ... the doctor was feverishly trying to deal with the very critical situation. The instant that George cleared the birth canal, according to his mother's sister who was seated in the room, the doctor tossed George onto the table and said to her, "You look after him. I am going to try to save the mother."

The doctor was unsuccessful in his efforts and God gave George a new mother right on the spot.

Raised by his aunt, George always felt that no matter what befell him; God would always help him in his time of need. He insisted that I should adopt the same attitude toward God.

Later George worked to keep my spirits up and keep me going in my chosen field of work at that time ... as a singer/songwriter. He kept telling me stories of times when God came to his aid.

Like the winter day when George was driving down a rural Pennsylvania road in a blinding snowstorm. Always cautious in his driving, George was not going very fast when the front right tire went off the edge of the road sending him sideways and over the edge a bit.

George got out and surveyed the situation and discovered he could not back the old model "T" back onto the road because the front right wheel was off the ground ... the car resting on three wheels and the snow.

Undaunted by the situation George surveyed his predicament then turned to his heavenly Father in prayer.

He said words to the effect that, "Father I need your help. Thank you for saving me the day I was born and thank you for saving me now. Amen."

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With that George said he simply leaned back against the side of the car and waited.

It wasn't long when an old car chugged to a halt behind George. Four men dressed in their Sunday best clothing stepped out of the car and asked, "Having a problem sir?"

George stated his challenge and then one of them suggested that he (George) get back into the car and that the four of them would push him out. And they did. They literally picked up his car and put it back on the road.

Delighted with their help George got out of the car and thanked his benefactors profusely. They simply got into their vehicle and drove off into the storm.

At that point George felt a strange nudge, so he walked around his vehicle and to his utter amazement ... there were no footprints in the snow. None ... except his own.

God had sent four angels to get him back on the road and on his way home safely. For George there was never a doubt. God responds with Love to his requests to look after him in his time of need.

Now I have tried to imitate George's faith but in all honesty I have not quite been able to duplicate his results. But I know the problem is not God failing me. It's me failing to hold the faith in Him. May you be able to do better than I.

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I LOST IT

Realizing that “I had lost it” in terms of maintaining my composure and faith in God’s help I decided that it was time I made a new commitment. Therefore, I prepared the following declaration:

October 1, 1994

Father,

I now make the mark of perfection my goal.

Help me please to learn like a marksman all the secrets of control that I too, like my beloved brother Jesus, might ascend. (Overcome).

I ask my brother for his help.

I ask that I be granted the strength to weather any and all storms that come my way and that I be granted the courage to change everything I need to change.

Be with me Father with Thy Amazing Grace as I pick myself up, dust myself off and continue in the race.

I Love You.

Lead me on.

A son,

John

IE: If at first you don’t succeed...try and try again.