

# Adventuring with God

with Jeanne Hedrick

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***“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”***

Deuteronomy 29:29

Which part of this verse did you focus on? More than likely (like me) you focused on the second part – how God reveals to His children certain things that are ours forever. A fabulous thought, making us feel special and loved. These revelations, we think, will equip us for life and ensure success for both us and our children to follow.

But sometimes life bumps into us in such a way that we’re reminded, in a painful way, of the first part of this verse. There are indeed “secret things” that belong to the Lord alone. He’s the only one who understands these things and He has not chosen to reveal them to the children of men. The truth of this has become evident as Tony and I have struggled to understand why the Lord has not healed him of his sciatic nerve pain.

It’s funny how our theology seems so neat and tidy – and is held with such conviction – until the unexpected happens. “Yes, yes, physical healing is part of the redemption purchased for us at Calvary. Of course it is for today! After all, we’ve seen many instances of it, both in us and in others we have known personally. Permanent, life-altering change came in such a way that it could only be God! Look at Marsha...”

Marsha was always the definitive case in point for us in forming our theology of healing. She came to our Bible study through the invitation of a friend. Suffering from the effects of a late stage brain tumor, Marsha had already been through surgery but it had not helped her prognosis. The doctors gave her no hope of recovery. She had also been through “death therapy” to prepare for the inevitable. She awaited her fate with no

expectation of an afterlife. Her view was that she would be put in the ground and rot away like any other physical creature. Knowing this, her Christian friend wanted to expose Marsha to the truth of Jesus Christ, hoping that she would accept Him before it was too late.

After listening to Scripture for a few weeks Marsha made her decision. We were thrilled when she expressed an interest in knowing Jesus personally. Following that prayer, we moved from joy to shock when we heard her declare that Jesus had saved *and* healed her. We hadn’t considered that possibility... but she had heard right. God did save and heal her. She began to put on weight and recovered fully from the cancer. She never got it again either. She died later of unrelated causes. A vibrant Christian to the end, she was a constant reminder of how God heals today.

We saw many more instances after that of God intervening to bring about physical healing, sometimes even in our own lives. So when Tony encountered his recent back problem he had no doubt that he would be healed. After all, didn’t God want to get the glory for doing that (rather than the glory going to some secular doctor)? Surely, we thought, he would be put right in time to attend to his upcoming mission trip....God wouldn’t want him to disappoint our brothers and sisters in Italy, would He? But week after week dragged by, with the pain ebbing and flowing in no discernable pattern. Our hopes would soar, then crash down again. As we approach our four month mark we are trying to sort through some possible reasons for this delay:

- Is there some unconfessed sin that needs to be acknowledged and repented of? (Something besides what we have already confessed? If so, you'll have to show us, Lord!)
- Is there some other lesson to be learned? (Once learned, can we expect God to answer with healing?)
- Is this the result of Satan seeking to curtail Tony's effectiveness? (If so, we must resist him and press on.)
- Or is this some kind of "thorn in the flesh" sent by God to put Tony in a place of dependency and humility? (If so, his response should be to relinquish his expectations for healing and throw himself upon the grace of God.)

You can see our dilemma. Any one of these possibilities could be true, but God has not chosen to reveal which one (if any) is at work in our lives at this moment. So we have no choice but to trust in His goodness and believe that whatever may be responsible for our circumstances will work some ultimate good – either in us or in His body, the church.

We may never know, if He does not choose to reveal the reason to us. It may well be one of

those "secret things" that He reserves for himself. We are left with a somewhat tattered theology about healing, not as crisp and orderly as before, knowing He does heal in this life but unsure of how and when to expect Him to do it.

God's secrets. How they keep us from lofty views of ourselves and dogmatic views that separate one Christian from another! Nobody gets to know everything about what He is doing and why. And while frustrating at times, it is good that things work that way. We are forced to trust in our heavenly Father in the most difficult of circumstances, relying upon His character and faithfulness. What He has revealed to us is wonderful and should enable us to act in accordance with His will for us. What He has not revealed is outside of our responsibility. We can safely leave it in His capable hands. Here's how one disciple summarized his duty before God. It's good advice for all of us.

"Cheered by the presence of God, I will do at each moment, without anxiety, according to the strength which He shall give me, the work [He] assigns me. I will leave the rest without concern; it is not my affair." (Francois de Fenelon, 1651-1715)

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*Be still, my soul! The Lord is on thy side; Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;  
Leave to thy God to order and provide; in every change He faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul! Thy best, thy heavenly Friend thro' thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

*Be still, my soul! Thy God doth undertake to guide the future as He has the past.  
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake; all now mysterious shall be bright at last.  
Be still, my soul! The waves and winds still know His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.*

*Be still, my soul! The hour is hastening on when we shall be forever with the Lord,  
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone, sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.  
Be still, my soul! When change and tears are past, all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.  
(Katharina von Schlegel, translated by Jane L. Borthwick)*