



The Rest of God

by Don Roe

Charlotte and I went on to a retreat center for pastors and missionaries last month. It was a time of rest and prayer and reconnecting. The emphasis was on the idea that "self-care isn't selfish". I would really like to share this with our staff next summer. We get so busy serving God that we neglect to enjoy the life He has given us.

The opposite can also be true—we can get so wrapped up in our own lives that we lose sight of God. My most memorable Christmas was pretty difficult. I was 20 and my younger brother had died that fall. After the funeral I had to make up weeks of missed university work in a very short time. With exams finally finished I made the decision that I would not bus home to B.C. but would stay at the university and spend some time alone to get my head back together. I thought it would also be a nice gesture to help out at the children's hospital. Thankfully, as a man, I didn't have to wear the pink uniforms the other "candy strippers" wore. I spent each day hanging out with the kids who didn't get enough attention. The three weeks around Christmas is a busy time and the hospital sent every child home that they physically could as they were very short staffed.

Sheila was bitter. She was 15 and "too old to be with these little kids". She appreciated having a 20 year old guy around to complain to and she had lots to complain about. I don't know why she was admitted to the hospital but she couldn't

leave because there was no home to go to. She was bored, missed her friends and was tough as nails—until Christmas morning. The staff had got her a present, which she didn't open, and when I went to see her she poured out all the hurt and disappointment in her life. Nothing compares to the "happy holidays" for emphasizing being alone, unloved and unwanted. I wasn't able to do anything to help; but I was there.



Any man's mind can find another's weakness; it takes God's mind to find their strength

James was a pretty normal 11 year old. During a hockey game he had went into a corner after the puck and another boy checked him. His stick went between his legs so when he went down it broke his femur. He couldn't go home for Christmas because his leg was in traction. I played board games with him, helped him with his homework and talked with him a lot. His parents visited often and on Christmas they brought his younger brother and tried to make the day as special as possible. But James was nasty and rude to them. Mouthy and bratty and obnoxious. It was like he couldn't wait until they left and at the end I am sure they must have felt the same! As soon as they left, however, he started bawling. He really loved them but he was so disappointed with being stuck in the hospital that he couldn't help himself—he just dumped it all on them and chased away those he wanted to be with most. I am pretty sure I would have behaved similarly in his situation.

Kyle was like a little ghost. He was 9 but very small. He had leukemia and was dying. He walked around the hospital halls, almost invisible, and no one could even give him a hug because his skin was so ten-

Because kids are worth it

der that it would cause him pain. He also never talked, but he watched me very intently; especially when I played with the other kids. On Christmas morning his parents visited. It was very sad. They were emotionally very distant. You could tell they were protecting themselves from the pain of loving him, knowing they would be losing him so soon. His expressionless face never changed as he dutifully opened his presents the half hour they were there. After they left he came over to me and gently hugged my leg and cried for a few seconds. That was all but I am still crying inside 30 years later.

Benny was 8, the youngest patient unable to go home. He didn't speak English and I didn't know Cree so we communicated through puppets. The puppets had many exciting adventures all over the hospital ward, most of them very violent. The nurses were most appreciative of the time I spent with Benny as he had a tendency to get into a lot of trouble if left alone. He was not really sick, he had a broken arm, but he couldn't go home while the cause of the broken arm still lived there. On Christmas morning he had one present from the nurses (something nice) and one from me (a fighter jet). The puppets were very subdued that day just flying quietly around in the jet. I think at one point they even flew back to the reserve because the puppets were looking around for a party but didn't find one. Every person in the ward cried at least once during the day as they dealt with loss and disappointment in their lives except Benny. But I found out the next day from the staff that he had cried himself to sleep after I left for the night.

After the festivities I went

back to my little dorm room and had another cry though I can truthfully say that I have seldom been happier in my entire life. Sharing those emotions with the children brought me out from under the dark cloud I had been living under for two months. I had never felt so close to God. Never understood the concept of loving another so much that you would give you life to help theirs. Before that Christmas day I remember being



...in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. *Isaiah 9:1-2*

disappointed with Christmases, even with all the presents and loving family, thinking that something was missing. That evening I talked to God and discovered what it was. For God, Christmas is about giving everything to His children whose lives were empty without him. I had found the rest of God. Joy to the world! The Lord has come!

Unlike most camps we encourage our staff to stay at camp during the summer weekends. There are many staff who find more rest with their Christian

community of friends here than at home. When we drove one of our cabin leaders to Winnipeg this summer they had to climb in through a broken window in the back of their "home". I was not happy to leave this teen, still in high school, home alone for the weekend in a dangerous neighbourhood. Yet the life experiences they have give our staff great insight into the needs of the children they serve.



Yutah joined us from Banff this year

Please continue to pray for the children and staff throughout the year. "Those walking in darkness have seen a great light". There are a great many hurting and broken people in this world looking for some relief from their pain. I pray each one will also get to know the rest of God.

Greetings From Our Corner Of Heaven

by Charlotte Roe

Again, My Thoughts

As we come into the season of Christ's birth, I find myself in deep introspection these days.

Most of us go through our many years of life planning and hoping for God's best. With fervent prayers and petitions we entrust God with our goals and dreams, and we often have a picture of what our lives should look like. What we don't realize, however, is that God is the one that puts these goals and plans in us and walks with us as we attempt to reach them. Its only when we forget to check with Him daily to see if we are headed in the right direction, do we get off course. The reason I'm rambling on about this is this very thing happened to me.

Don and I had the great pleasure of attending a retreat center in early November. It was called Kerith Creek and was specifically for pastors and their wives and missionaries, to have a rest. It was awesome and I would recommend it to everyone. They did a good job at teaching us to rest. Don's comment to me at the end of the week was, "I took two naps on Sunday and I wasn't even sick!" Anyways not only did we have a lot of free time to rest, we also had private counselling sessions. This is where the bottom fell out of my plans.

My plans were simple: go to the retreat center, get husband healed, our marriage gets stronger, our relationship with God soars up to Heaven, and we live happily ever after. It seemed like a great plan to me! Well I guess God had different reasons for us at this retreat. It turns out that I had some issues as well. My biggest issue was that I wasn't accepting Don the way God made him. I found out that Don is a pretty great guy, go figure! But I had to get my head around the wonderful things about him instead of seeing all the things that needed changing. This is not an easy task. The plan I had for our marriage had to die, so that I could focus on the plan

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. *Jeremiah 29:11*

that God had for us. I believe this is called dying to self. We need to learn how to do this if we want to learn how to depend and trust in Him.

I had to mourn the death of my plans before I was ready to receive His plan. It was hard, but worth it.

Dying to self each day is much easier when running a camp than working on a marriage. I have already learned that this is God's camp and rarely do I take that job away from Him. There is way too many issues for me to handle, so I totally depend on Him and it makes camp life more fun. Now to put this into practice in the other parts of my life.



Charlotte and Judi; camp cooks

Family Stuff

I'm going to be a Grandma! I know it's only been six months since the wedding, but that just made the news more wonderful. Kris is due at the beginning of June, so I will have a whole month to bond with my grandchild before camp craziness sets in. It was very enjoyable hearing from Kris these last three months

as she was giving us updates; "It's the size of a kidney bean"; "It's a four inch shrimp"; "It weighs as much as eleven paper clips", and the best one of all; "It has a heart beat, I heard it myself!" Pray for them, even though there is excitement they are apprehensive about being parents.

Margo will be home December 15th. She is deep in writing papers. We haven't heard from her very much, so that probably means she is busy and having too much fun. We are looking forward to seeing her. I miss her a lot.

We will finally be painting our basement these next few weeks. So if there are people out there that like painting, come on down! Bekah is looking forward to moving downstairs to her new room. It will be nice to finally use



Bekah and her dog

the extra space made by moving the house onto a basement. Another blessing is that we now have a new maintenance garage and we have an automatic garage door opener. This is a luxury that I have never experienced before. I'll never have to scrape the van ever again! Praise God for the volunteers that came and made this happen. You are very much appreciated.

Our Faith Journey

Jake & Martha Friesen



Praise

- ✦ For the opportunity to go on a retreat and nourish our souls
- ✦ For protecting our families
- ✦ We are still amazed at how fruitful the summer was
- ✦ For all the volunteers that keep this place going

Prayer

- ✦ For Jake and Martha's health as they continue to perform hard physical labour
- ✦ For the ongoing spiritual battle that is taking place in the lives of the campers and staff
- ✦ For opportunities to share the good news of Christ's coming

Needed

- ✦ Electric heater for our hot tub
- ✦ Help/advice in buying a commercial convection oven
- ✦ Vacuum cleaner for mini-lodge
- ✦ Two 17' Kevlar canoes
- ✦ A commercial cheese grater

and wanted...

- ✦ A large coat rack
- ✦ Materials for a water / toboggan slide at the lakefront
- ✦ Golf cart / quad
- ✦ Tools (drill press, wrenches, etc)
- ✦ Opportunities to share about Gimli in churches or youth groups

Want to receive the newsletter, in color, by email? Corrections or changes? Please tell us, we want to keep in touch!

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**Because kids
are worth it!**

Praise be to God as we celebrate Jesus' birth this holiday season! We have been blessed with an extended fall season which has allowed us to complete a lot of the maintenance and building responsibilities that are outdoors. The hosting season is well underway and we continue to see how this ministry changes lives and blesses families. GBC plays host to the annual widows banquet which has become an amazing

outreach opportunity for those that have lost loved ones. This also creates an opportunity for widows to connect with others that have walked this same journey. Families in the Arborg community are not only involved in serving and preparing this wonderful meal but also take this opportunity to present God's Word and to minister to this group. This fall also marks our first anniversary in our maintenance / site management role at Gimli Bible Camp. A glimpse back reveals an incredible learning process as we took on major building projects (Director's house and maintenance shop) and worked hard to replace and/or fix items that were well overdue for repair. These projects were not as simple as building something new, but also included demolition and restructuring--it was a large undertaking but God has taken care of us physically and mentally and spiritually through this process . Thank you

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." *Matthew 1:22,23*

to those that have given and supported these projects financially and prayerfully. We know that God will bless you for your commitment and support. We continue to be thankful for safety throughout this year as well as



good health. Pray with us that our bodies will remain healthy and that we will be to serve God in such a way that is glorifying and honouring to him. We are here to serve and to be his sheep. Our desire is to seek His will for our lives. We hope that this holiday season, each of you will be blessed in a special way and that you will cherish what is

most important -- the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-23

Overheard at camp:

One angry 13 year old boy to his best friend; "How do you expect me to feel? You're ditching me for some girl!"

From a 9 year old when I told him we'd been married for 25 years; "What? without any divorces?!"

