

Letter 55
An Engineered Vacation
2011-12-31

Dear Dan,

By now the reader/hearer will have learned of the injuries and subsequent ongoing disability to my left leg, from my pelvis down to my foot. Part of this involves ongoing pain that never stops, and fluctuates with use.

So it is, even to this day that I rely on my right side, my “good side”, to take up a lot of the slack produced by my left, injured side.

In early 2002 I suffered great foot pain in both feet. I went to a podiatrist to see if there was any help. The doctor diagnosed what I already knew, that my left leg had shortened due to atrophy. He further diagnosed the reason for the atrophy which was something called “compartment syndrome”, where blood flow is reduced or cut off to tissue for a period of time due to internal bleeding, causing damage due to lack of oxygen. This happened when I took the hit from the Jeep Cherokee. I remember that the surgeons had to wait for days to let my leg drain before they could set the broken leg bones with titanium rods.

To help solve the foot pain, the podiatrist prescribed that I use an additional insole and a heel lift in my left shoe. I tried this and to this day the pain in both feet has never returned. Thank you Jesus.

But it came about in the Spring of 2009, in May, that I was working in my usual capacity at (G6), performing my usual cleaning duties. I was in a room with office chairs, and was moving them around as I cleaned the variety of surfaces. I turned to do something and then I took a step backwards. My right heel partly stepped onto the wheel support strut of an office chair, with my heel on the strut and my toe slightly on the floor. In an instant of surprise the chair moved back away from me, briefly making me feel as if I would fall backwards. At the same time, as I stressed certain muscles to stabilize myself from falling, a sharp pain moved from my right hip down my leg, immobilizing the muscles so that my leg stopped moving. In that moment I discovered a part of the nervous system I didn't know I had. It's called the Sciatic Nerve.

The first thing that went through my mind was that now I no longer had a good leg. Both legs were less than optimally mobile. Both legs were now “bad”.

I found that I could very carefully walk, with jabs of pain in every other step, and with every jab of pain my right leg would become immobile.

I made it down the hall, heading to where a chair was so I could sit down. Just before I turned the corner, I cried out to God from years of pent up pain, grief, and anger, and yelling silently said;

“GET OFF THE FUCKING STICK AND HEAL MY FUCKING BODY!”

Two things happened at once then. First, I was both surprised and ashamed that I had yelled that way at God my Father. Second, I took two or three steps and the pain vanished.

A week later, I was in the same area cleaning, and I was washing a part of a wall. I took a step backward and WHAMO! The pinched sciatic nerve made its presence known once again. This time I did not yell at God. I did try to continue to work. I discovered that if I avoided all but the most direct motion with my right leg, I could avoid the pain.

Somehow I made it through that night, and I made it to work the next night. But after the first two hours I realized that I could not work with the symptoms occurring every other time I bent over to clean. I called the supervisor, and obtained his permission to leave. I wasn't sure how to approach this new injury, so I went to Dennys to think.

As I sat there with a cup of coffee I contemplated before the Lord what had happened and realized that the injury was caused at and aggravated by the workplace. So I went back to work and got the paperwork to file a Labor & Industries claim.

I went to my own doctor, who sent me to a specialist. He ordered an MRI, which showed that I had an additional lumbar, L6, which most people don't have.

But that was not the cause of the pinched nerve. He prescribed physical therapy, and then suggested I take two months off from work to allow my body to heal. He wrote the orders that essentially gave me a two-month paid vacation from work. Two glorious months away from the Kingdom of Darkness. Praise God! It was worth every painful step.

This time off was not for me alone. It was a Divine choreograph that allowed me to serve my wife in several things that otherwise I would not be able to do. Because of the looming necessity of having to go to various Dr.'s appointments and therapy sessions, I changed my sleeping pattern from "graveyard" to a day person.

One of the first things I did after that was to take (M) out to lunch to her favorite restaurant at the real lunchtime of Noon. What a blessing. Then the first Sunday morning that I was awake I went to a Sunday Church service at (U7). It was during this time, and about this Church that I had the dream referenced in Letter 08.

After the first month of recovery (M) and I had opportunity to join her family at a resort in Eastern Washington for a weeklong stay. This is something that her parents and sister and her family do every summer, but we don't on account of how difficult it is for me to get time off from work at (G6).

Throughout my two-month recovery we did as many things together during the day that time and budget allowed. I also took some daylong bicycle excursions.

Because of how the L&I benefits were coordinated with my own leave benefits at work, I ended up taking home more cash than I would have otherwise with normal wages. So we were able to better afford the motel and restaurants during the time at the resort.

Finally, after two months, I went back to work. And I have never had a reoccurrence of the sciatic nerve pain since.

As I look back, there is no question as to how this whole time off was Divinely engineered for the benefit

of all. My wife (M), her family, a mutual friend (CB8) and I were all beneficiaries. Upon my return to work my supervisor noted that it had been unusually quiet in my work area as well, so my absence was not so sorely missed. I remain grateful.

How great a God we serve that uses all things for Good and His Glory. Amen!

Blessings...

Romanus Theophilus