

THE WIRE – How to Handle Life's Trials

“Pray, but don't pray too hard,” the doctor said with reservation. . . . “This is the most extreme case I've ever seen, and I don't want you to get your hopes up”. . .

The words hit us like a ton of bricks.

My wife, Carla, just learned that her teeth, gums, and bones in her mouth were rapidly deteriorating. She could lose five of her front lower teeth and may need implants.

The doctor told her that she had a rare and unique case caused by a post orthotic permanent retainer on the back of her lower teeth. The retainer wire untwisted over time and contorted her teeth out of place.

If you've ever had braces and a permanent retainer wire glued to the back of your teeth after the braces were removed, you know what I'm talking about...The purpose of the wire is to ensure that your teeth stay in place long term. A very common procedure.

Back to my story.

There was a glimmer of hope. Carla's doctor was world-renowned for his periodontics results. He'd developed a radical procedure that combined skin and bone grafting and braces. The doctor's technique restored many people with gum and bone loss.

But hadn't ever seen a case like Carla's.

With the grim diagnosis, Carla became depressed and embarrassed. You can imagine the despair, anxiety, and hurt she experienced.

We began to pray amid Carla's gloomy trial. We believed that God would hear our cries and heal Carla. We saw the doctor's doubt that prayer would make a difference as a challenge. We decided to turn to God, put our trust in him and fervently seek his healing.

I wrote in my journal. . .

The doctor encouraged us to "pray, but not pray too hard." He doesn't want us to get our hopes up. But we serve a great and generous God. He can do a miracle for Carla. Wouldn't it be awesome if the doctors who see this as a great case study see God work a miracle and have no other explanation for her healing? Please Lord, do this. Please heal Carla's mouth. Please help the teeth to move back into place and restore her bones. Help her not lose her teeth. If not, you are still my God, and I pray that Carla will continue to trust in you and grow in her faith.

Carla endured lengthy oral surgery. The doctor expertly grafted skin and bone to re-establish her teeth. Then, braces were put on to keep the teeth in place. She said it was the most excruciating pain she'd ever experienced, including childbirth.

Initially, her outcome was uncertain. Carla frequently visited her periodontist, orthodontist, and dentist to evaluate her progress. Always hoping for good news but being prepared for the worst.

And, we continued to pray and boldly hoped that God would work a miracle.

Over time, Carla's mouth healed. She didn't lose five teeth. She didn't need implants. Her bone and surrounding gums were restored. Her teeth stabilized.

Through the skilled physician's hands, God was faithful. He led Carla to the periodontist who could help her. Despite the

dire prognosis, God did a miracle and healed Carla.

Carla was a true champion through the whole trial and process. She never gave up hope. Carla maintained an incredibly positive attitude and trusted God with the outcome.

And, she kept her beautiful, contagious smile that lightens up every room and makes the world a better place.

During one of her last check-ups, the doctor told her, “you’ve made great progress. You’ll probably be buried with your teeth!”. . . A funny way of saying your teeth are healthy and permanent.

And interestingly, Carla’s mouth became famous! The doctor now shares her case study worldwide and helps other doctors apply what he learned.

God is faithful, and we are thankful for his healing Carla’s mouth.

Through this and many other challenging circumstances, I’ve learned three principles about handling life’s problems:

1. **Trials Are Meant to Bring the Best Out of You:** The Bible says, “Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that your faith-life is forced into the open under pressure and shows its true colors. So, don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work, so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way. (James 1:2-4 – The Message). God brings trials into your life to separate the pure from the impure. He puts you in situations that reveal your true character (e.g., integrity), shows your devotion to him, and helps your faith grow. God wants the best of you.
2. **Live Life with Bold Hope:** Have you ever heard the phrase “hope is not a strategy.” I agree with the statement but

always counter with, “but hope is essential.” Why? Hope is the expectant confidence in a positive outcome or future. Hope shapes your ability to navigate through current circumstances. Hope helps you be a better problem solver, remain flexible, be optimistic, handle disappointment and manage stress. Where do you find hope? God! The Bible says, “May the God of great hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope!” (Romans 15:12-13 – The Message). Trust in God, and he will enable you to live life with bold hope.

3. **Above All Else, Pray:** When you find yourself in dire circumstances, talk to God. Tell him about what’s happening and seek his help. He will either calm you or calm the storms of life that surround you. The Bible says, “Don’t fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God’s wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It’s wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.” (Philippians 4:6-7 – The Message). In all events, pray, and God will help you.

I acknowledge that not all circumstances or trials result in immediate, tangible, or positive outcomes like Carla’s. But I encourage you to understand that trials are meant to bring the best out of you, live life with bold hope, and above all else, pray. If you turn to God and look to him, he will help you.

Want to learn more about leveling up your leadership skills? Please visit my website, prestonpoore.com, today!

Cheers,

Preston