

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 476

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about a well documented miracle in the life of Lois "Debbie" Doebler Parvin. I first read about her in the book *The Lord of Possibilities* by LeRoy Lawson. Here is her amazing story directly from Lawson's book:

*"In 1977, Chicago Tribune Assistant News Editor Charles C. Parvin and his wife celebrated by leaving their home and job in Chicago to serve for a year as missionary volunteers in Korea. The couple in their late forties felt compelled to go as an act of joyful gratitude.*

*Several years earlier Mrs. Parvin, then thirty and the mother of three children, a dancer and singer with her own studio, fell one morning and was unable to rise. Five months later her rapidly worsening condition was diagnosed as a rare degenerative condition related to muscular dystrophy. The Parvins were told that within a year she would be bedridden and within five years dead.*

*This went on for fourteen years, while she suffered constant pain, frequent stays in the hospital, and the side effects of the thirty pills a day she had to take. Her weight rose from 120 to two hundred pounds, and her weakened skin tore at the slightest bump. She had two hundred stitches in one of her legs.*

*To support her, Parvin took the night shift at the Tribune, took care of the children by day, and taught school in the afternoon.*

*By November 1972 the fight seemed nearly over. The doctors were helpless. But one night – and she insists she was not deluded by drugs – Mrs. Parvin, a devout Christian, said she saw Christ surrounded by light. He told her that she was healed, but that she should tell no one.*

*Improvement came immediately. Parvin noticed it too, but they didn't dare talk about it for weeks.*

*When she returned to her doctor, he said, 'You must be in remission, but I have never seen one in this disease before.' She informed him that she didn't have the disease anymore. Moreover, her heart damage, her ulcer, and her hernia were also healed. In June 1974 she discarded her wheelchair. She was a new woman.*

*The Parvins wondered how they could appropriately thank God. Then through the United Presbyterian Church they applied to the Volunteers-In-Mission agency and were sent to South Korea, where they work in hospitals and Bible studies. While there they supported their youngest child, Scott, as he went through college (with the last of their savings) and also underwrote the cost of high school for three South Koreans*

*Their children are now embarked on religious careers.*

*My reason for telling you their story, however, is to be able to quote the Parvins' summary of what has happened to them. They quietly say, 'There's a quality of joy in our lives'.*

*It is the joy of everyone who has been made whole by Jesus Christ."*

The story is well documented. John Saar wrote about it in the Washington Post on July 22, 1977. He pointed out that the Parvins lived a single room while in Korea and that Debbie "Was a warm and vivacious woman who looks ten years younger than her 48 years."

Since this story happened before you were born, both Charles and his wife Debbie are now dead. FYI, Charles died July 29, 2006 at the age of 78, and Debbie died September 28, 2021 at the age of 92. When Debbie was healed and liberated from 11 years in a wheelchair she adapted Nehemiah 8:10 as her "life verse" - **"The joy of the Lord is my strength."** Like righteous Abel, even though she is dead, she still speak (Hebrews 11:4). The testimony of her life still inspires!

Hebrews chapter 11 is called the “Faith Chapter” of the Bible. It lists some of the many great heroes and heroines of the faith. “Some” of these faithful ones were delivered from the mouths of lions, and “others” were eaten by the lions and died as martyrs. However, these “all” were commended for their faith (Hebrews 11:39). The book of Acts gives a classic example of this dichotomy. The apostles James and Peter were both in the inner circle of apostles. They were with Jesus on such occasions as the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-13). Both were imprisoned by the wicked King Herod. God, however, allowed James to die as a martyr in that prison, but sent an angel to miraculously deliver Peter from the same prison (Acts 12:1-19). This in no way indicates that Peter was better than James or had more faith than James. It merely demonstrates that God has different plans for each one of us. The important thing is that we remain faithful until death regardless of how we die.

What happens to us during the few short years we spend on earth, as you know, pales into insignificance by comparison with eternity! Faithful martyr Jim Elliot nailed it when he said: “*He is no fool who give up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose*”!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce