

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Answer

John took a breath, leaned back in his chair, and said: "By the way, that's about the best salmon I've had in a thousand years. Good wine, too. Reminds me of some good German ones back in the 30's. I appreciate your hospitality."

"Thanks. That means a lot coming from you," I beamed.

"Now on to the question," said John. "The question Elizabeth asked is not usually of great concern for a person who is healthy, active and gliding along in life. But sooner or later every soul in his or her progress reaches some type of life crisis or problem and looks to the skies at some invisible being and demands: 'Why me, God?' Or it may be, 'Why my wife?' or 'Why my child?' or 'Why my parents?' He wants to know why this suffering seems to single him out and not others who seem to richly deserve it. He hears that God is love, but if He is loving, then why would He allow this?"

John paused a moment then continued: "If and when you finish the 36 principles, the answer to this will be fairly clear in your mind. For instance, when you understand who and what God is, it will be a great help. But for now we will stick to the basics."

"There are great truths hidden in some of the maxims of this world. For instance, you have heard the phrase 'no pain, no gain?'"

We both nodded.

"This statement is as good as scripture. Do you think there has ever been an Olympic champion who got where he was without a great deal of pain? How about a successful businessperson, an inventor, a great actor? They have all had to go through painful experiences or make painful sacrifices. But in the end, the pain produced gain.

"Now an interesting point here is that these successful individuals volunteered for the pain because they had faith the pain would produce gain. The runner painfully pushes his body because he believes it will result in a stronger body and eventually the joy of accomplishment and victory.

"Let us imagine that various parts of your body have their own life and consciousness. See your lungs as one entity, your heart as another, your muscles as still another and your brain as a fourth entity. You are the whole person and are in charge of the general decision-making as to what is good for the whole. Let us say that the brain wants to read a book, the muscles want to sleep because they are tired, the lungs want some fresh air and the heart wants some romance. The problem is they cannot do all of these things -- they can only do one of them. Who gets to decide? If the brain decides all the time, the whole body will spend all of its time reading and will never get fresh air for the lungs. If the heart forces the body to spend all free time in romance, then the brain will be bored to death. It is fortunate that decision-making is turned over to you -- the whole person running the body. You make decisions for the body by taking the whole into consideration. Your decisions may not be perfect, but they are much better for the whole than if power were turned over to a part."

"So are you saying that I am a part of a greater whole and that this greater whole is making me suffer for some greater benefit of something greater than myself?" Elizabeth asked.

"That is part of the answer," John nodded. "Now to visualize more clearly, let us suppose that

you decide that you are going to be a champion long-distance runner. When you start your training, no one of these four **lives** I mentioned will be happy. During running practice, the brain will have too much blood rushing through it to even be able to think. The lungs will feel like they are on fire and ready to explode. The muscles will ache and feel as if they cannot go on, and the heart will pump like crazy, thinking it is being tortured. All these little lives are shouting out the question:

Why is this happening to us? What is the purpose of it all?

"Then comes the time, months later, that the body is in perfect tune and ready for the competition. What do these little lives feel about being pushed, now? The brain notices that it gets more oxygen and thinks and functions much better. The lungs are happy they have to breathe about half as frequently as they used to and that breathing is much easier. The muscles are aware that the weight of the body seems much lighter, and they no longer need so much rest. Finally, the heart, like the lungs, seems to be able to rest more and does not have to beat as often or with as much effort as it used to. In the end they all think the same thought: *We've been through a lot of pain, and we didn't like it at the time, but now life seems easier, fuller and more rewarding.*

"Now," said John, moving his chair closer to the table, "we'll move this analogy closer to home. It may seem to us that we are the highest lives in the universe and that what we do only affects ourselves. But it does not. Each of us has invisible links to family, friends, city, state and every other life on this planet and even the universe. These are all various higher bodies in which we interact and produce effect. We are linked to these other lives through the Holy Spirit, who is the final judge as to circumstances that will be brought into play to benefit the whole."

Elizabeth wheeled back from the table. "So, you are telling me that the Spirit of God decided to make me ill to benefit the whole in some way?" she asked angrily. "Well, I don't think my illness is benefiting anyone or anything. In fact, it is keeping me from doing many good things I have always wanted to do." She looked ready to leave the room.

"It may seem that way," John replied softly and patiently. "But for greater understanding, you must realize that there are two of you who are undergoing a painful experience here. In some ways, your husband suffers more pain than you do. When a loved one is suffering through what appears to be no fault of his own and can do nothing about it, that helplessness is very painful. Believe me, I know. I was in Joseph's situation long ago."

After a long pause Elizabeth sighed, her eyes slightly tearful. "You're probably right. He also has to work much harder than he used to, in order to take care of everything. Now I even have him doing housework. Believe me, that is proof he loves me. Then I probably bring him additional pain by complaining too much..."

"You don't complain as much when you are ill as others do when they are well," I assured her.

"Actually," said John, "the analogy so far applies more to Joseph than it does to you. Like the story of the four little lives, Joseph, through no fault of his own, found himself married to a person with an incurable disease. He is like all of us to some degree or another. We find ourselves in situations that we had seemingly little, if any, power in creating, and once we are there, we just have to deal with it the best we can. Like the brain, he had to forego pleasant studies. Like the lungs, he had to work harder to supply oxygen or money to keep everything running smooth. Like the muscles, he had to be more active and take on a larger load. Like the heart, he had to put romance on the back burner and concentrate on just keeping your relationship alive by pumping harder to keep life-giving energy circulating between the both of you. Later, just like the four little lives, Joseph will find that he has more freedom, power and strength than he ever had before."

"That's all very interesting," said Elizabeth, shaking her head, "but I'm still in the dark as to why I have to suffer this disease. Don't tell me that it is just so my husband can have a growing experience."

"Not at all," John replied. "However, that may be part of the reason the Spirit sent a charge of energy that caused Joseph to fall in love with you and marry you. But the benefits of your disease for Joseph are merely side benefits that we all pick up on the road of life if we handle our situations correctly as they come up."

"You've gone all around my question but haven't answered me yet. Why don't you just blurt it out and tell me?" Elizabeth pleaded, her voice shaking.

John looked into Elizabeth's eyes and replied softly and slowly: "Whenever you meet a true spiritual teacher worth his salt, he will rarely answer you outright. Instead, he circles around the core thought so when the answer is finally manifested it will be understood. Now that is what I

am about to do. Why do bad things, such as your illness, happen to good people?

"As I said before, you are a part of a greater whole that is joined together by the Holy Spirit. Each person in an individual life has one major lesson he is supposed to learn, one ability or talent he is to develop and one quality he is supposed to enhance. This triangle of learning is never easy and is always a struggle. For instance, if a certain person was born with the natural ability to play the piano, the lesson would generally not be directly connected with it because internally this is something that is already mastered. Instead, the piano may be a distraction to tempt him away from his real lesson, which may be in an opposite direction such as heavy construction. If he is driven by his soul to become a famous musician, the lesson could be connected with the fame and not the talent itself."

Elizabeth interrupted: "From the time I was young I had a gift for drawing. I never took any classes, but I could draw most anything in moments, and it would look great. Just as I was thinking of developing this talent more fully, I got this disease. Now my hands shake too much to be able to draw."

"This ability that you naturally had was your temptress to lead you astray from your true calling to improve yourself and to be more useful to the whole, thus becoming a whole-ly (holy) person."

"So what am I supposed to learn?" Elizabeth asked.

"As I said, the thing you are supposed to learn is something you are usually not very talented in and that you naturally resist, to some degree. When the degree of resistance becomes too great, and you are not hearing or seeing the messages that the Spirit is sending you, then the message must be sent more strongly. If it is resisted again, you may be sent a life-threatening illness such as yours which forces you to look upward and shout out, 'Why me God?'"

"I've done that before," said Elizabeth. "So what am I resisting?"

"Think," John suggested. "Think of situations you may not like that seem to keep repeating

themselves, forcing you to do or work at something you don't particularly want to do."

"I know what mine is," I spoke up. "I've always enjoyed doing creative things, especially writing of all types, and I've always been forced into situations where I have no time for creative endeavors and always wind up doing something in sales or business to make the money I need. I used to hate sales and business, but now I'm becoming good at it. Now, I appreciate business and sales talent as much or more than I do the talent of an artist."

"And that is why you are healthy," said John. "You eventually gave in to the forces pushing you toward your lesson and are making progress. As long as you are making progress in your lesson, your soul does not have to send you great pain to move you ahead."

"So what is Elizabeth resisting?" I asked again.

"She must examine the experiences of her life, look within, touch bases with the still, small voice, find out what she has avoided doing, and do it."

"How will I know when I have found it?"

"It will feel very right and good when you finally yield to it," said John.

"So what is the lesson of her disease?" I asked.

"Every disease is a teacher," said John. "You must look at the disease, see where it is located and the effect it is having in order to discern its lesson. For instance, heart disease must be trying to teach us something connected with the heart. The heart is the seat of spiritual love. If it is time for you to learn the value and expression of love -- which is an octave higher than passionate love or possessive love -- and you resist, then the heart becomes weak as a message to you that your expression of love is weaker than it should be."

"But I've had some friends with heart problems, and they seemed like pretty nice people," Elizabeth exclaimed. "On the other hand, I've known some cruel people who seem to not know what love is at all, yet have healthy hearts. How do you explain that?"

"The cruel people you mention are not yet ready to learn about spiritual love, so their souls do not even attempt to teach them by bringing them pain in that direction. Maybe the cruel person needs to start with a simpler lesson. Perhaps he is just supposed to learn the value of giving and receiving affection. Maybe he is suffering through tremendous pain and rejection because he is not getting any affection from anyone. Maybe this rejection just about drives him crazy until finally he yields and gives in to it. For him that is a big step, but for us we wonder why anyone would have a problem with it."

"So what's the lesson of cancer?" I asked, becoming even more interested.

"Ah, cancer," said John. "Many great souls have died of this, one of the most painful of all teachers.

"All disease falls into two categories. First is congestion. This is caused by holding in too much, such as in suppression or denial. The second is inflammation. This is caused by not holding in enough and releasing more energy than you take in. Cancer is caused by congestion. The person holds in or suppresses energy or feelings that need to be released, and this holding in produces a growth which is symbolic of the unreleased desire or feeling.

"Let us suppose that you see yourself as a nice person and find yourself in contact with a rough individual who hurts your feelings. You have three choices. First, you can hurt his feelings right back; second, you can release your hurt by telling that person how he made you feel; or third, you can be a nice person and avoid conflict by pretending that everything is OK.

"This third alternative, that many take, is by far the worst choice. First, it encourages the rude person to continue in his behavior, and second, it is a deception that the Spirit of Truth will not allow to forever remain in an evolving soul. People think the most frequent lie is, 'The check is in the mail.' But in reality it is the communication which says, 'I'm fine. You did not hurt me,' that is

the biggest lie.

"Lesser souls are allowed to lie and get away with it. Like children they get away with certain things because of their lack of understanding. But when a person reaches a certain stage of progression, this greatest lie is no longer tolerated and the lesson must be learned.

"Cancer is caused by many types of suppression. Hurt feelings, as I said, is a big one, denial of feeling is another, and lack of sexual fulfillment due to lack of communication, miscommunication or guilt is another. All involve deception of some type."

"You're circling around the answer again," said Elizabeth. "I can see that this method of teaching does have the effect of stimulating interest. Now I'm more curious than ever about what you will say about my illness."

"That is as it should be," John smiled. "Every disease has both physical and spiritual ingredients affecting the problem. For instance, people think that contact with germs produce certain illnesses, yet two people can inhale the same germs and one can get sick and the other one not be affected. Perhaps the one who did not become ill was in better physical shape, but more often than not he was in more harmony with his soul in that area where the disease has a lesson to teach.

"Multiple Sclerosis was very rare before a hundred years ago, and even today rarely occurs in the less civilized societies. Part of the reason for this is our overprocessed and depleted foods. Another is the chemicals and poisons to which modern civilization is currently exposed. You have heard the theory that mercury fillings can bring on MS, and there is a grain of truth to this, but Joseph has more mercury in his mouth than you have, yet is unaffected. The difference lies in the spiritual reason.

"The seat of the problem lies in the brain and the nervous system. In MS there is a loss of a fatty protective layer between the brain and the nerves, causing a malfunction or loss of communication between the brain and the all-important nervous system.

"Spiritually, our nervous system needs a certain amount of protection from our thoughts, brain activity and our fears, which our brains and feelings tend to amplify."

"MS is basically caused by failure to correctly direct thoughts and fears into their right place. The patient must realize that unchecked fears and thoughts can run rampant and destroy the protective layer over the nerves. When unchecked, thoughts and fears interact directly on the nervous system. A physical correspondence can take place, and the person can become ill."

"So I did not get MS because I somehow do not let my thoughts and fears affect my nervous system?" I asked.

"You create the protection you need by shifting your attention from destructive thoughts and fears. This shifting of attention gives your nervous system its needed rest. On the other hand, Elizabeth suppresses unwanted thoughts and fears. This gives her the appearance of resting the nerves, but its effect is opposite. Instead, she has another deception producing a destructive effect. By deceiving herself and pretending certain thoughts and fears do not exist, a dangerous situation is created and we have another disease of congestion as a result."

"So what thoughts and fears do I pretend do not exist?" asked Elizabeth, leaning forward.

"Unfortunately, it would not be right for me to fully explain that to you at this time. I can teach you around a principle, but you must do a certain amount of soul searching yourself, or you will be denied a great growing experience." He paused a moment and said: "Here, let me touch your forehead."

John reached across the table and touched her forehead with the fingertips of his right hand. "Let the energy flow for a moment," he said, closing his eyes. He took a long, slow breath, and exhaled softly and evenly.

We were all silent for a short time.

"There," said John. "You will feel stronger for a few days. I do this for you to give you faith that you can be healed."

"I do feel stronger!" Elizabeth said, obviously surprised. She looked at John with great emotion in her eyes. "If you are really John the Beloved, can you just heal me like people were healed by Jesus?"

John paused, in thought of his past. "Many healings were permitted at that time because it was extremely important as a witness to the Son of God. The good that resulted outweighed the bad, but there were some problems for those who were healed, but who were not ready. It is also very important that you be healed so you can help Joseph with the work he has to do, but the problem is that you will need the benefits of the knowledge and ability gained from the healing to fulfill your own mission correctly."

"Does this mean I can be healed?" she asked eagerly.

"Definitely, but both you and your husband must do your part. You are in a race against time. You must achieve healing while your brain-body interactions are still intact, or it could be too late. If you and Joseph can solve the first three keys of knowledge before this happens, you will be healed. On the other hand, you may be healed early if you apply yourself through correct action, thought and faith."

"Doesn't telling her something like that increase fears and unwanted thoughts?" I asked. "Won't such stress make things worse?"

"If handled correctly, it will force her to deal with her thoughts and fears, so she will learn to put them in their right place," John answered, standing up to leave. "This is as far as we can go now. It has been a pleasure."

As I was opening the door for John to leave I asked, "How did you know I have more mercury fillings than Elizabeth?"

"You will find out at the right time," he smiled.

"Let me drive you home," I offered.

"That's all right. It's a nice night for a walk."

"But it must be five miles to wherever you live."

"It doesn't matter. Walking and arranging your thoughts is a very healthy thing." As he walked into the night he reminded me of Kane in the Kung Fu series. This time, I thought he did disappear in the distance, but I wasn't sure. After all it was fairly dark.