

2016-03-12

My health ordeal #1, It starts

Hi all,

The Lord is so very gracious, yet the more I know Him the more I don't know. I'd like to share some things I've been dealing with in my own health the last 2 months, some of which raise questions unanswered, and I hope the process will provide comfort for some, answers for others, some humor and grace for all.

Where to start?

Last fall I was contemplating our schedule for the first 3 months of 2016 because I often make one or two driving loops in the US during February and March, before heading to European conferences in April.

As I was thinking about planning trips and asking the Father if He had any preferences, He said: "Don't plan on any trips the first 3 months of the year; you'll have some health issues you'll have to deal with."

That sounded rather ominous, and as I thought on what that might mean, without words but somehow knowing in my spirit, I knew it had to do with my heart.

Wondering, wondering?

He said nothing else, and Barb and I had recently updated our wills and such, so you can imagine my imagination running from 'How much are burial plots?' to 'But you already told me over a year ago how old I could live to if I wanted', to 'Am I going to have open-heart surgery?' and everything in between.

I was putting in a French drain around part of our house at the time and hired 3 men to help me unload the 5 tons of rock into the trenches, and the boss started telling me how the Lord brought him through a quadruple bypass, and I thought to myself and Father, "Is that what I'm going to be going through? How will Barb handle it, how and what are we going to do with Chris during recovery? Is that what you have for me Father?"

Then on November 22nd, less than a week after the Father had said that to me, while I was thinking on these things and we were about to have all 3 of our sons and both of our wonderful daughters in laws and all 7 grandchildren at our home for Thanksgiving - me wondering if that was the last time I'd see the kids who live out of state - a good friend, Lou P in Florida sent me an email he had no clue the impact. He simple wrote:

Good morning John, thinking about you this morning. Daniel 12:13 the Message Bible. Blessings! Lou

Here is the verse in the Message Bible: "And you? Go about your business without fretting or worrying. Relax. When it's all over, you will be on your feet to receive your reward."

I immediately felt all those questions lift with this assuring Word, and told the Father, "You're so good to me, and to have him email me that right before the kids get here letting me know everything will be okay...thank you Father...you're so, so good to me..." and other expressions of thanks and worship to Him.

Lesson: The Father will always confirm what He tells you, for in the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses is every word confirmed. If He doesn't quickly confirm something by an independent source, do nothing until He confirms. In other words, if someone prophesies to you that He wants you to move half way across the world, don't do it unless that is something He has already told you or been dealing with you about. Personal prophecy in the NT is not new information to the receiver; it will be something He has communicated to you personally and privately in your heart, first. (See Paul's life: Acts 9:16, 20:22-23, 21:4, 11)

Question: So why just tell me about it rather than going ahead and healing me of the issues?

I had one other time since age 18 I had something in my body that wouldn't be healed when I commanded it to be healed. That was in 2007 when I had a hard bump on the back of my neck that over the course of 2 months, did not obey my command to wither and die away. Our policy with our kids was always we'd lay hands on them for any sickness right away, but if they weren't healed in 24 hours we'd go to the doctor.

But as an adult I use my own judgement. So after giving that bump 60 days to disappear and it not happening, I went to a dermatologist and was told it was a basal cell carcinoma, the dermatologist saying if there is any skin cancer to get, that would be it as it doesn't spread unless completely ignored for years.

At that time I weighed 304 pounds (138k) and when they had me set up in the office my blood pressure was too high to do the cutting out of the bump. They wanted to put me on medicine, but I asked for 30 days because the Lord had been dealing with me about my weight, and I considered this the wake up call about that, which got me into the doctor - for if that basal cell had obeyed the Word and disappeared, I would probably have continued to not take my weight seriously. This got my attention.

The Word and Spirit are always together and always in agreement. The name of Jesus isn't magic, for in Matthew 12:28 He said He casts out demons by the Holy Spirit - who actually does the work of healing and deliverance. So if you speak the name of Jesus repeatedly over something, but nothing is happening, it is because the Holy Spirit isn't involved, and you had better stop and find out why.

So over 30 days I lost 29 pounds (13k),

I dropped from 304 pounds (138k) to 275 (125k), and when I went in to have it removed, my blood pressure was in the normal range. How? I walked at least 6 miles per day (10k), and limited my food intake.

Lesson: Our responsibility is to do what we can in the natural, rather than for fear of what the natural might uncover, ignore it in the hopes God will do something that would allow us to not deal with the natural. That is the sin of presumption - the sin of making something that is your responsibility, God's. He won't budge, so face the fear and deal with it.

And then came January 12...

As I said, the above was in 2007. But over the last couple of years our youngest son, Brian, had been urging me to get a physical, with his brother, Jason, in agreement, with encouraging words like "Dad, you're getting older, you need to get a physical...", his urgings were always kind and respectful, but they hit me in my ears like "Dad, you're an old man, and you being way old and getting older old man, you really need to have a doctor examine you from top to bottom because you've never had a full physical and you don't want to be caught by surprise, old man."

But after promising yet delaying, and my weight hovering at 277 pounds (125k) no matter how many calories I tried to cast out of my food (wish it was that easy), I made an appointment for January 12, 2016. Everything the Father had told me and Lou's email was bouncing around my brain without a clue what it all meant.

I also wondered; 'Why just tell me about an upcoming health issue instead of healing me?' and secondly, 'What condition in my body are you trying to arrest my attention about so I can deal with it?'

So...

The medical practice that has been our family doctors since 1993 is an openly Christian company, with nearly all doctors taking part in medical missions, so there is always prayer with the doctor at the end of the visit, and peace over everything. That said, my doctor looked at me and told me I was obese at 277 pounds, a rank of '30' in the government's Body Mass Index (BMI), my blood pressure was high. He said I needed to lose 20-40 pounds (9-18k)...and then he listened to my heart...good long listen. The kind of lingering over your chest that makes you wonder what he's doing lingering...

"Hmmm" the doctor said...."We need to do an EKG. Right now." and the next thing I know some woman is shaving chest hair off me like she was prepping for the spring shearing of the sheep as I lay flat on my back, followed by being hooked up to wires like some 7th grade science experiment. "You have Atrial Fibrillation, or AFib, and I want you to see a Cardiologist next week."

He put me on 1 low dose (81mg) aspirin in the evening and gave me a chart to track my blood pressure at home, and made me return in a week to check my results. He said with AFib the blood can slow down and pool in the chambers of the heart, an aspirin with help thin the blood a little and keep it moving.

What is AFib?

The cardiologist explained that the heart has 4 quadrants, the atrial being the top part, and fibrillation being a fluttering caused by wild and crazy electrical signals firing in (my) top left quadrant. With a resting heart rate of 53-59 my overall electrical health is very good, but in that top left quadrant I had the electrical equivalent of a room of kindergartners running around after having cake and ice cream and then cookies on top of that.

I've run out of room - I'll pick it up here next week. Blessings,

John Fenn

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2016-03-19

My health ordeal #2, But wait...

Hi all,

I was sharing the news I learned on January 12, I have Atrial Fibrillation, or AFib, and high blood pressure.

Of course there was blood work. My grandmother had a pin cushion, a little red puffy pillow she stabbed about 50 pins and sewing needles into as a safe place to put them in her sewing basket. That had nothing on me. First they wanted base line readings from blood work, then the next week more blood to measure the baseline against. Then more blood just for this test, and another poke to check that level. It got so I was on a first name basis with the blood lady. By the time I was done we were practically sharing family photos, birthdays and anniversary dates with each other.

With my cholesterol low, right where it was in 1989 and 1990 when I'd donated blood and they checked cholesterol levels, blood sugar good, testosterone good, liver good, kidney good, and every other chemical and system in normal range - and no lack of energy, the cardiologist felt pretty good about the condition, but noted he would like my blood pressure lower and that losing at least 20 pounds would help. He set up a heart echo, which is an ultrasound, of my heart to look inside.

All this is taking place

In quick order week after week, sometimes 2 visits a week to check this system and that in my body. I'm just giving you the fun parts of the last 2 months. Far be it from the System to put all doctors under one roof, which are all about a 2 hour drive from home, so a couple of times I was like a mouse scurrying hurriedly from one appointment to the next trying not to be seen, dodging traffic to get there in time, hoping to just slip in and out, and please can we be done yet?

On the way down to one of the appointments my sister called and proceeded to inform me our grandmother on dad's side, Grandma Jo, had AFib all her life...I was shocked at this news. Now I was dealing with a generational 'curse', wasn't I? Or was it just the way life is in a fallen world?

I get my height from my grandfather on dad's side, and I knew I got my white (gray, maybe?) hair from grandma Jo who was white haired by age 40, but thanks grandma for that AFib - I really needed that!

Heart Echo

I realized when the Father chose to inform me I'd have health issues to deal with rather than heal me, He expected me to deal with them - otherwise He would have healed me outright. These seemed to be AFib and blood pressure. Though I laid hands on myself and commanded in Jesus' name my AFib to be healed and my blood pressure to lower - nothing happened - the Spirit wasn't part of my use of the name, because the Father had chosen to tell me rather than heal me - so deal with it John, was the course charted.

I focused on the fact He was walking with me, and in me, as I went through the various disciplines that were poking, prodding, measuring and generally making me feel like a lab rat. I would sit there and think, "You know, you could just zap me and I'd be all better - and you know my cholesterol is good. So why make me go through the process?"

The trouble is, having discovered I was fat, it was no big revelation except that clearly the Father was getting my attention to deal with it as my blood pressure is related to my weight. And with the discovery of the AFib, it meant some serious discipline. Evidently He had planned through March for me to lose the weight and have all other systems checked out, so I set myself to endure the discipline.

The heart echo was fascinating. The technician pressed a small wand against my chest in various places around my heart, and suddenly my heart was on TV - looking at the inside of my heart, and with full color watching blood coming and going, valves flapping...and I came away amazed. During the consultation the cardiologist said my heart was 'in great shape', nothing layered on the walls, nothing on any artery (she also echoed my carotid and aorta arteries) - clean as a whistle, exercise all you want.

Observation:

Clearly genetic, I gladly accepted the genetics of my height and white hair without thinking them a curse of the generations, but now the AFib gave me second thoughts about selectively choosing to call one thing a blessing and another a curse handed down the family line. I was examining myself for selective theology.

Question: So if I inherited AFib from grandma Jo, is there no cure? Is that one reason the Father told me I'd have health issues to deal with - that He wasn't going to heal it no matter what I did to receive healing because it was in my DNA? The Father has been silent thus far.

Both my Primary Care Physician (PCP) and the cardiologist said AFib can't be cured on its own - but the cardiologist offered to 'reset' my heart - a nice way of saying "We're going to knock you out, electrocute you to quiet those electrical kindergartners running around in that top left quadrant, and hope that fixes it and then wake you up again. You won't remember a thing. It may work, it may not."

So in late January I started to lose weight as that part is in my control - I had stopped my daily 2.1 mile (3.5k) walk - until my heart echo because both doctors said until then they wouldn't know if I had blood clots, or pooling of blood around the heart, or clogged arteries, or if the valves were working correctly. I knew I needed to lose weight and that was something the Father wasn't going to do for me, it is my job.

So now I'm hit with not only being called obese by my PCP - I could have taken 'fat' as I would admit to that - but I was being told to get down close to my college weight. I told him "That's not going to happen. But I will get down to where I was at age 35, which is about 235." (107k)

I am SO glad the Father let me know ahead of time, and that He gave Lou that word to assure me however scary it seemed. Realize that my eyes are 20/20 or better, I've never had a cavity, and I've lived my life since I was a teen commanding my body to obey me and the Word and it has done it. This is new territory for me.

How I've lost 20 pounds, 20 to go

The one area I let my body have its way, admittedly, is food. We eat well, and good food not boxed, organic and such, but portion control is always the issue with me - So what if that cow was grass fed only - Why eat 1 hamburger when 2 would taste so much better? It made me feel better about eating more of that healthy critter! But being 6'6" tall (1.98m) I can carry a lot of weight and not look TOOOO fat...at least I'd like to tell myself that. The mirror has another opinion, but had chosen to ignore it.

So in the morning I drink some sort of juice and if I'm really hungry for something solid, lol, I put 2 bananas in a large plastic cup, add a spoon full of almond butter and the same of peanut butter, 8 ounces of milk (236 ml), and smoothie it to a liquid the consistency of paint. Lunch or by 2pm (14.00) is my big meal, and calling it big is generous. I eat what I want, just less. In the evening I may have some nuts, tea, or nothing...or a few bites of something. I've lost 20 pounds (9k) and by the end of March I hope to have lost another 15-20, as I'll have restarted my walking, and being spring, plenty of exercise in the yard.

Barb was amazed my heart echo showed the clear arteries of a 17 year old, as I am a carnivore. God put canine teeth in my mouth and I use them as intended. Protein and dark veggies is what I like, and my favorite dark veggie is dark chocolate of at least 72%. Carbohydrates rarely interest me.

AND THEN, as if things couldn't get any worse

...my doctor about fell off his chair when I answer his question, "No, I've never had a colonoscopy."

"What?!? You're almost 58 years old and you've never had one? We recommend having a colonoscopy every 5 years starting at age 50. I want you to see Dr. _____ next week to schedule that."

Clean as a whistle is a good thing to hear from your heart doctor after that heart echo. To get the next 'clean as a whistle' statement was more involved. I'm out of room for today - next week I'll conclude with where I stand now, more questions and observations, and some lessons learned. Until then, blessings,
John Fenn

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2016-03-26

My health ordeal #3, Where no camera has..

Hi all,

They told me the preparation for a colonoscopy was the worst part of it. They lied.

It was scheduled a few Friday's ago, and the last solid food was that Wednesday. At 2pm Wednesday I pulled a box of Macaroni and Cheese out of the pantry that we keep for Chris, who loves the stuff, and downed my last meal. That night I took an innocent little orange pill prescribed as part of the preparation - it was an overnight laxative. So harmless looking I thought. Gentle they said. No problem they said.

That night my stomach and intestines felt like a Nazi Panzer division was approaching from one side, and whatever food I had in my system was fighting hand to hand combat in resistance. Whatever the battle going on inside me, it was so loud I was concerned of waking Barb if I went to bed. It was about 2:45am before things quieted down enough I wouldn't awaken her with battle noises.

By Thursday noon, the Panzer division had won and there was nothing left in my system, but still at 4pm I had to pour a bottle of some liquid into a large cup, mix with water, and drink it and 2 more equally large size helpings of water. 48 ounces (1.4 liters) in total. All at once.

Then I had to repeat that 4 hours later. That wasn't a fight with a Panzer division - there was no more fight in me, no troops to resist that liquid, which was a medical drain cleaner essentially. I slept on the sofa as I was up and down visiting the bathroom so much that I thought about writing limericks on the walls. Funny what you think of in the middle of the night.

That wasn't bad at all compared to going to the hospital. I knew it was real rather than a bad dream when the nurse told me as she closed the curtain around the bed in pre-op, "Take off all your clothes and jewelry and put on the gown with the flap open in back. It's best if you sit your bare fanny on the bed."

I remember thinking, "Women go through this sort of thing all the time, right?", and right on cue Barb came through the pre-op door and immediately laughed at my new attire, as she said ever so kindly, "Remember, you didn't have to do this, you're doing it to yourself." I appreciated her sense of humor if not her sarcasm.

The warm blankets they placed over me as they put an IV in the top of my right hand and a blood pressure cuff on my left arm helped me feel more comfortable, but I think it was actually a relaxing drug in the IV that caused me to relax. Then all the nurses started talking about where they were going to have lunch. I had last eaten 48 hours earlier. I laid there listening as they went into lavish detail about this restaurant's dishes and that new place someone tried out and said was amazing...my nurse even acknowledged their conversation and apologized, but went right back to join them - torturers dressed up as nurses.

When they wheeled me into the examination room they introduced me to the doctor, whom I'd met a couple weeks ago in an earlier briefing about the procedure, followed by 2 male nurses, then 2 female nurses. I knew time was close when they told me to turn onto my left side, exposing my back side to these complete strangers. I was somewhat comforted in the knowledge I was the last one of the morning and they all wanted to get to lunch, so we were agreed we all just wanted to get out of there as quickly as possible.

I remember saying, "Ladies and gentlemen, you're about to boldly put a camera where no camera has gone before", and they all laughed and continued laughing as the male nurse at my side injected something into the IV in my hand...the next thing I knew I was awake and dry heaving with nothing to vomit, in post-op, with the nurses saying something like, "C'mon Mr. Fenn, wake up, we're hungry and want to get to lunch." - maybe they didn't actually say that - But I knew what they were thinking it.

In the mean time the doctor visited Barb in the waiting room, presenting her with 4 full color snapshots of the inside of my colon, telling her essentially I was as clean as a whistle and he will see me in 5 years. That detail was mostly lost on Barb, who didn't even want to touch a photo of her husband's colon without a gloved hand. Well, as I said, clean as a whistle at both ends, having lost 20 pounds (9k) but needing to lose 20 more pounds, and will talk of a heart reset in 6 months - that's where I stand.

I go back to the verse Lou sent me from Daniel 12:13, on November 22, "And you? Go about your business without fretting or worrying. Relax. When it's all over, you will be on your feet to receive your reward."

The process may help someone

After the Father told me not to schedule any trips the first 3 months of the year, I wondered why He didn't just heal rather than inform me, but then knowing His ways, I understood it could be healed by doing something within my area of responsibility, or was curable medically, or I'd just live with it.

I had shared last week after my January diagnosis of AFib and high blood pressure I went home, laid my right hand over my heart, and said words to the effect; "Heart and electrical system, I command you to be healed in the name of Jesus. I command my body to obey the Word and me and be healed, reset, or

systems do whatever is required for the AFib to be gone, and blood pressure return to normal levels, in Jesus' name." The next week at the doctor's appointment he listened to my heart, and the AFib was still there, along with high blood pressure.

When I speak the name of Jesus yet the Holy Spirit has not been sent by the Father to do the work that I am commanding in Jesus' name so there is no change, I have found it means I have to deal with the issue in the natural - you'll remember I shared about the basal cell carcinoma of 2007 that way.

I don't want to do the electrical 'reset' procedure on my heart unless it is the Father's process and means by which the AFib will be cured. Having done what I know to do in the Spirit and nothing happening, and seeing results with my blood pressure going down as I have lost weight, I can only conclude I have to deal with the AFib to the extent I wish to, in the natural.

The process continued - February's visitation

The curious thing is, the Lord visited me after my initial diagnosis but before my heart echo and colonoscopy, and I shared part of that visitation and accompanying vision in this space in February. In the visitation the most He said about my health was, "I'm pleased you are taking this seriously and disciplining yourself (eating/weight). Relatively few do in situations like this, in matters of the body. I'm very pleased. Continue with what you are doing." In other words, you've lost 20 pounds, you're on the right track, continue.

And then He proceeded to talk of what will happen in the US through next year, some things the EU will go through (I'll share at the Dutch conference), and things about the body of Christ. That was it - no laying hands on me to heal me - just a mention of my health and then right into why He was visiting me.

When you are in the Spirit the seemingly important questions you have while in the flesh don't come to mind. It is so natural, being in the Spirit, so normal, you almost don't realize it (remember Peter who wanted to make tents on the Mount of Transfiguration)...so it wasn't even a disappointment He didn't lay hands on me, the questions came after He left and I wondered to myself, "Why didn't you ask Him to lay hands on you?"

That only re-affirms the conclusions above.

Final thought

I continue to worship and give thanks for the Father's grace, and I feel like I have clarity by His choice not to heal me directly, rather to let me go through medical processes. I am taking responsibility for that which is in my control, for by allowing my weight and blood pressure to rise to the point of obesity coupled with a genetic predisposition towards AFib, I caused it though I was partly in ignorance.

I did it to myself by eating too much, so the only way out is to eat less to drop the weight. As of this writing I've lost 20 pounds on my way to another 15-20, and my blood pressure is lower, but not quite at 120/80.

That doesn't help those who become ill through no known fault of their own, but if He showed me this grace for something I did at least in part to myself, I believe there is that same grace for those who in innocence become ill with a condition or disease. Seek Him first, not a cure, for the cure is in Him. Though we all have questions, part of faith is trust, and must be as Paul stated in II Timothy 1:12, "For I know in whom I have believed, and believe He is able to keep that which I have entrusted to Him until that day."

New subject next week, until then, blessings!

John Fenn

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