

# The Family Report

*Loving God...*

*Loving You...*

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## ***“I don’t deserve hell...”***

I have always thought it interesting how something seemingly meaningless can change one’s life forever. How a normal day can be turned upside down with a simple phone call or action and have a lasting impact.

One instance that comes to mind is a phone call interrupting homework one Saturday morning in which I passed along an e-mail address which didn’t even exist. I never, in my wildest dreams, ever imagined I’d be married to the person the corrected e-mail was given to a year later. But, it seems that is how life happens.

And while the event (if it is even big enough to be called an event) which prompted me to write this was not life changing in the sense that I will move 800 miles and commit myself to an-

other person for the rest of our life, it did initiate a significant mental and spiritual shift for me.

I was driving home from Kentucky and scanning through radio channels. K-LOVE was in the middle of airing a tribute to Rich Mullins, a well known contemporary Christian artist who died in a car crash ten years prior. I quickly recognized it because I had turned it off the day before in search of something more happy and upbeat. Tired of driving and looking for something to listen to, I resigned to playing the sad and depressing program my last couple of hours on the road.

I didn’t really know much about Rich Mullins, and still don’t know a lot, but I soon realized just how humble this Christian “star” was. I was impressed and touched by a story

recounted by John Rivers of one year at the Dove Awards when Rich donned an apron and began serving food with the wait staff. He disguised himself so quietly that few people even recognized him.

Soon after that, a clip of an interview with Rich Mullins began to play. I think my mind had drifted somewhere to calculating approximate gas mileage and exactly how many more minutes it would be until I made it to my driveway when I heard one thing he had to say, “but, sometimes I don’t even think we deserve hell.”

I tried to rewind the interview in my mind. I think it had something to do with God’s grace. The only thing I really caught was that last line, “I don’t even think we deserve hell.”

*Continued on following page...*



***Our last movie night was tons of fun!!! We watched “Something to Sing About” and enjoyed wonderful fellowship. Thanks to every one who came and helped out. Hats off to Aaron for the great banner!!! (pictured left)***

I've had friends who have confided in me that considering some of the things they have done, they felt as though they should be punished in such a way. There have been moments in my own life when I have feared that if I was judged then I would most definitely be cast into a lake of fire. But that simple, yet profound, sentence raised several questions in my mind.

Have I ever felt as though I deserved hell? After much reflection, I must embarrassingly admit there has never been a time in my life in which I have felt as though I did something which warranted hell. As mentioned earlier, there have been times when I understood I was in such a state that I would receive hell as a punishment. But, only because God was so harsh and strict and stubborn. Not because I deserved it. After thinking about it, I'm not sure what I thought I deserved in those moments. I've always realized my inability to ever be deserving of Heaven. Maybe I thought a third option, sort of an eternal earthly limbo, should be created for me. More pathetically, I probably thought I should just be forced to experience such travesties as a B or, I hesitate to even speak it, a C in a class. Or to not have enough money left over after bills to go out with my friends. That would really teach me a lesson.

Before I address my problem with humility, I want to pause here to express just how thankful I am and undeserving I feel for the literally countless blessings God has given me, salvation being at the top.

I was just driving along

thinking I was being a good little Christian. I had prayed that God would bless my trip, and had already thanked Him several times for everything going so well. Now, I am hearing from some one who died ten years ago that I am just a little bit too boastful. Actually, that I have a rather large pride problem.

Now there have been several instances throughout my life in which God has really humbled me. Sometimes through His rich blessings, other times through what I viewed as hardships. But, as I look over my life and recount those instances, I don't think there has ever been a time in which I have been more humbled than driving home alone that night.

The singer and songwriter's words still rang in my ears. Probably to compare my "list of good deeds" with the amount of work he has done for the Lord would be a joke. I know that's not what it's about.

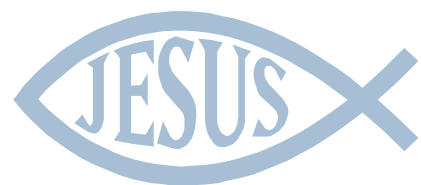
A flood of memories came rushing to my mind as I considered some one so humble as to suggest something worse than hell for himself. I thought of all the times in my life when I didn't stand up for Jesus the way I should have. I thought of all the times that I did things with the full knowledge that I was disappointing God. I thought of all the times I let Him down. And worse yet, the times I didn't even care I was letting Him down. The record really is much too big to measure.

All that wouldn't be so bad if God was just a dead beat dad to me. If He was never really there for me, if He never really cared for me, or never sacrificed

anything for me. Fortunately (for me), though, that is not the case at all. As rebellious and hurtful as I have been, God has never shown me anything but grace, mercy, forgiveness, and unfailing love. I thought of the ultimate sacrifice Jesus gave for me. Not just dying on the cross, but everything else leading up to it. I thought of how hard it must have been for God to see that. But, He did. For me.

I've known of people who thought they could be good enough to get into Heaven. Some who thought they were good enough, deserving of it. While I didn't think that of myself that night, I did have a big change of heart. I had to humbly (and embarrassingly) agree with Rich. If I got what I deserve it would probably have to be something worse than eternal torment in a lake of fire and brimstone. I cannot express how thankful I am that God is not giving me what I deserve.

I share this story not because I think any one else has a problem with their pride, but because something as simple as this may touch some other person's heart the way Mr. Mullins statement touched mine. And, well, because "I heard something on the radio the other night that really humbled me - Rich Mullins said that he didn't even think we deserved hell" didn't take up quite enough space in the newsletter.



## ***Prayer and Praise Report***

We have a wonderful privilege and honor to go to God in prayer. As you pray, please remember the following people:

**Carolyn and Edward**, Vicky's parents, are dealing with several health issues.

**Keith**, Coeta's brother, is sick. Also, for **Coeta**.

**Ollie A.**, Coeta's friend, is battling cancer.

**Nita M.** is having eye problems.

**Vince**, Stacy's brother, has scar tissue on his brain. Also, for his wife who is recovering from surgery.

**Cathy M.** is suffering from emphysema due to smoking cigarettes.

**Jennifer M**, Paulette's niece, is emotionally struggling after being left by her husband. Please also remember the two children involved. They are currently staying with Paulette.

**Shirley**, Luther's daughter, is suffering from lupus.

**Ladonna and Lauren**, both Henry's friends, are suffering from cancer. Lauren is a freshman in high school and is only 15 years old.

**Wes**, Stacy's uncle, is also battling cancer.

**Kevin**, Randy's brother, is battling an addic-

tion to drugs.

**Olivia M.** has cancer. She is only 5 years old.

**Gary D.'s father** is recovering from a stroke.

**Fay B.** is currently undergoing treatment for cancer.

**Randy M.** is dealing with heart trouble.

**Frieda D.** also is suffering from heart problems.

**Dan**, Randy's co-worker, recently had a stroke.

**Brenda**, Stacy's cousin, is going through a divorce. She has two children.

**Johnny**, Rick's brother, is serving in Iraq.

**Ray**, Wes's friend, suffered a stroke.

**Karen**, Wes's co-worker, has cancer.

**Grant T.**, Randy's nephew, was recently diagnosed with Crohn's disease.

**Tonya**, Teresa's sister-in-law, is recovering from surgery.

**Boris**, in Tambov, Russia, is recovering from cornea transplants. We

want to always remember the entire **Tambov congregation** in our prayers.

**Nellie**, Pat's mom, is suffering from a blockage in her neck.

**Frank**, Jean's stepdad, has a spot on his lung.

**Dan and Denise**,

neighbors of Todd and Alicia, are currently separated.

**Leland D.** is recovering from a stroke.

**Rick** is having some stomach problems

**James O.** is in the last stages of brain cancer.

**Jean** is experiencing adverse reactions to a new insulin medication.

**Gary's mother** is suffering from brittle bones

**Pearlie T.**, Wes's co-worker, is suffering from seizures.

**Wayne** will be having a surgery soon. Also, **Justin**, Wayne's son, will be going to Iraq in March.

Additionally, remember **Mike and Jim C., Beth and Michael** (friends of Kat and Don), **W.D.** (Randy's neighbor), **Pam** (Stacy's sister), **Ann** (Wayne's mom), **Garcia's father**, **Sarah** (Jeff and Lona's neighbor), **Don** (Randy's brother), **Clara** (Paulette's mom), and **Val V.**

We also don't want to forget to praise God and give thanks for all He has blessed us with.

We are thankful that everything worked out at work for Rick.

We are also thankful that Bob, Henry's brother is showing improvement. We want to continue to pray for him.

Praise God!!!

## *Our Vision*

### **Community**

It is our vision to become an active member of our immediate community; to provide hope, help, love, acceptance, and spiritual encouragement.

### **Growth**

It is our vision to welcome new people into the fold, and help them discover the gifts and talents that God gave them to be used in proclaiming Christ to a lost and dying world.

### **Faithful to God's Word**

It is our vision to remain faithful to God's word, to place Christ first in everything we do, and to allow ourselves to be led only by His Word and Holy Spirit.

### **Concern for Others**

It is our vision to become intimately aware of the needs of our congregation and community and to actively try to meet those needs.

### **Evangelism (Reaching the Lost)**

It is our vision to focus intently on ways to reach the lost in our local community and in foreign lands, and to send missionaries from the body on short and long term mission projects.

### **Leadership**

It is our vision to have scriptural leadership; to have elders, deacons, and teachers within the next two years.

### **Family Atmosphere/Relationships**

It is our vision to maintain and promote a true family environment where all may feel they belong and everyone knows each other's name.

**Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.  
Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.  
~I John 4:7**

### ***Schedule***

Sunday, 09/30: Luke speaking  
*Lunch following services*  
*Men's and Women's Studies*

Wednesday, 10/3: Todd speaking  
I Thessalonians 1

Sunday, 10/07: Gary speaking

Wednesday, 10/10: Luke speaking  
I Thessalonians 2

Sunday, 10/14: Wes speaking  
*Lunch following services*

***Please join us in  
worshipping God!!!***

***Sunday morning: 10 am  
Wednesday evening: 7 pm***

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