

Being God's Voice for One Another

Rise & Shine, November 17th

Ephesians 2:10

For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Questions:

1. When have you sensed God's presence in some event or circumstance that seemed very ordinary?
 2. When have you decided that some happy outcome in your life that could be called "luck" or "coincidence" was actually the work of God? What made you believe that God was in it?
 3. How is prayer related to how God works in your life?
 4. Have you ever been surprised by the means God used to answer your prayers?
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In the News

Woman's Story of Texting Dead 'Father' and Getting Reply Goes Viral

For four years, Chastity Patterson, 23, of Newport, Arkansas, has been mourning the death of Jason Ligons, who, while not her biological father, had been so much like a father to her that she called him "Dad".

After he died, Patterson continued to text his phone every day to update him about her life. While she didn't expect a response, the daily texting was a way of dealing with her grief. In her message on October 25, the night before the fourth anniversary of Ligons' death, she told about how she'd beaten cancer and hadn't gotten sick since his passing. She also wrote about falling in love and having her heart broken, joking that Ligons "would have killed him."

But then, she received a response. It was not Ligons, but a man, identified only as Brad, who had been receiving her daily messages these past four years.

"Hi sweetheart, I am not your father, but I have been getting all your messages for the past four years," Brad wrote. "I look forward to your morning messages and your nightly updates. ... I lost my daughter in a car wreck August 2014 and your messages have kept me alive," the response read. "When you text me, I know it's a message from God."

"I have listened to you for years and I have watched you grow more than anyone," Brad said. "I have wanted to text you back for years, but I didn't want to break your heart."

He said he wished his daughter would have become the woman Patterson is. "I'm sorry you have to go through this but if it makes it any better, I am very proud of you!"

Patterson posted the exchange to Facebook, saying. "Today was my sign that everything is okay and I can let him [Ligons] rest!" Her post was then shared more than 288,000 times and picked up by several media outlets.

Brad probably came to receive Patterson's messages after the company that supplied the phone service reissued it some time after Ligons passed. Sometimes reissuing occurs as soon as 30 days after the number is surrendered. Phone companies say reusing the numbers is necessary because with so many people wanting phone service, there aren't enough numbers to retire the previously assigned ones and issue every new customer a fresh one.

After Patterson's story went viral, some questioned whether Patterson had made up the story. She explained, "I shared my messages for my friends and family to see that there is a God and it might take four years, but he shows up right on time!" she added.

Isaiah 55:8-9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Romans 14:13, 18-19

Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another. ... The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval. Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

Prayer for Self-Dedication (BCP p.832)

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to *you*, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly *yours*, utterly dedicated unto *you*; and then use us, we pray, as *you would*, and always to *your* glory and the welfare of *your* people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*