

NBC Devotional
December 15, 2021
“You Can Make It With the Help of God and God's People”

New Year's greetings to President Dr. Scott Sherwood and all of you valued brothers and sisters!

This has been a very challenging year in the Jim and Dorothy Diehl home. FIRST, COVID created numerous problems (as it has for all of you)! NEXT, Dorothy continued to slip deeper and deeper into dementia, so we were forced to take her to a Memory Care facility on July 21st.

NEXT, on August 4th, I had surgery to remove a cancerous tumor from my bladder. The follow-up procedures of putting Mitomycin chemo into the bladder once a week for six weeks was a pure challenge. NEXT, on August 27th, something happened in Dorothy's heart, and she became unresponsive. She was ultimately taken to a Hospice Care Facility. Three days later, August 20th, around 1:30 pm, Dorothy took her last breath and the angels of God took her to her eternal home. I certainly wasn't prepared for that to happen so suddenly! However, I praise God that she is with Jesus, our son Dave, both sets of our parents, and a million more saints of God!

To say the least, life has greatly changed for me! I've never lived alone in all my life. I again have had to learn the truth: **We can't make it through the tough challenges of life without God...and God's people!**

I've read dozens upon dozens of scriptures about the faithfulness of God when we are going through challenging times. Just a few for today: Isaiah 43:1-2 - *“Fear not, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you...”* Lamentations 3:22-24 - *“Because His compassions fail not, they are new every morning; Great is Your Faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul, Therefore I hope in Him!”* I've even felt like I could identify with Job when he said in Job 23:10 - *“But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.”*

I know every one of you has also had challenging situations this past year. Aren't you thankful we have a loving, compassionate, caring God to hold on to! Thank God for God!

But I've also needed God's people! I can't explain the lift I received in my soul in reading those 251 cards and the love and care written there. Then, the wonderful people who sit up and down the isle where I sit for church at Denver First Church. That's my support group! Their handshakes, hugs, and offers to help will never be forgotten. I'm thankful that even many of our neighbors have stopped by, expressed their care and prayers for me, and many of them even bring food! Even though they are not Nazarene, their prayers make a difference too!

The Lord has impressed one word on my mind and heart from these who are God's people. The word “knit.” Speaking of David and Jonathan, in 1 Samuel 18:1, *“The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.”* Paul was writing to the Colossians in Col. 2:2 where he said, *“that (our) hearts may be encouraged being knit together in love.”* What a ministry Christians can have to one another when their heart has been knit

together with your heart and soul. If you have a handful of “God’s people” who are knit together with your heart, you are fortunate indeed! That’s the kind of love Peter wrote about in 1 Peter 1:22, *“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.”* I can’t thank God enough for the number of “God’s people” whose hearts have become knit together with my heart through this challenging year. “God...and God’s people!!”

Christmas and New Year’s are the very best times to express your love and deep appreciation to “God...and God’s people.” Join me in reflecting over the year of 2021 and take time to thank God for His faithfulness to you. Possibly write out a love offering check to God and put it in the offering plate at God’s house. Reflect on “God’s people” who have walked with you and helped you carry the load this past year. Gertrude Stein wrote: “Silent gratitude isn’t very much use to anyone.” Write some thank you notes. Send them. Email them. Text them. Even better yet, go tell them! We can’t live the victorious Spirit filled life living like Lone Rangers! We need “God...and God’s people!” If our world needs anything, we need Christlike Christians who genuinely care and love others and are willing to express it!

Brothers and Sisters, WE CAN MAKE IT with the help of “God...and God’s people!” Don’t miss the moment. Start today (if you haven’t started already) expressing your love and gratitude to our faithful God... and to those in your life who make up the group known as “God’s people.” You can warm someone’s heart this January with such an expression of love and gratitude, then keep it up for the other 11 months of the year.

I love you and all the brothers and sisters who make up Nazarene Bible College! Just remember, no matter what... We CAN make it through the tough challenges of life with “GOD...AND GOD’S PEOPLE!”

Dr. James H. Diehl, General Superintendent Emeritus Church of the Nazarene