

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

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1. Phlebitis Prayer:

We had just returned from hiking near Moosehead Lake, Maine, when my doctor told me that I was in a "potentially life threatening" situation. Phlebitis in my leg had not previously been a problem for me, but the long trip back from Maine (seven hours driving on the first day, six on the second) with insufficient pit-stops were major factors in my getting this complication. A deep vein clot developed in my right calf. I tried to exercise-the-clot-out upon return for ten days but eventually decided to see the doctor. The ultrasound doppler indicated a DVT (deep vein thrombus). I expressed concern that this was a busy time, but the doctor said (and I repeat) that this was "potentially life threatening."

Heparin was the medicine prescribed upon entering Chestnut Hill Hospital in Philadelphia, but additional pain developed in my left lung on a Saturday and became more demanding on Sunday morning. A lung scan revealed that the clot (thrombus) from my leg had moved to my lung; it had become a "pulmonary embolus." The left lung, involving an estimated 25-33% of the upper lobe, had received the brunt of impact.

Among the options was streptokinase therapy. My wife and I prayed for wisdom and decided to go along with this, which would involve a 36-hour infusion of the drug by IV (intravenous). It began around 10 p.m. on Sunday evening. I had been scheduled to speak in Ocean City, NJ, on that day, teaching God's Word to others, but it seemed, however, that Creator Christ had something different in store. I was to be on the receiving end of learning.

The first ten or twelve minutes of the procedure were fine, but for the next fifteen minutes the pain in my left lung became excruciating. Every muscle in my body that could seemed to respond in sympathy. I had experienced coronary pain some years prior, but this lung pain was much more intense. It was as if a 3-inch-wide sword-blade had been jabbed into my left lung through the rib cage and held in place. Writhing in pain, I wondered, "Will this continue for 36-hours?"

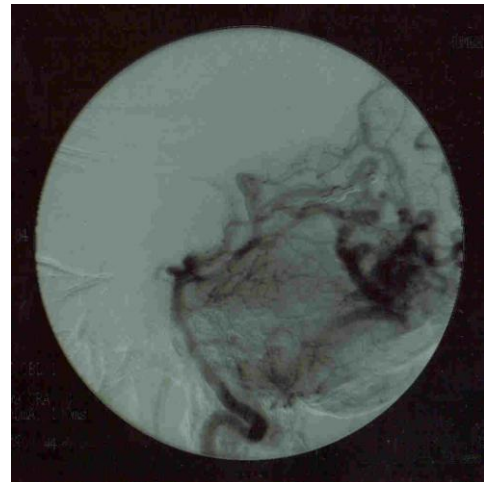
Squinting my eyes, I thought of Creator Christ who had been crucified long before. I knew He understood exactly what I was going through. I was having a little taste of what He had endured on a cross, but I could not take it. I asked Him in silent prayer then and there to help, and He graciously responded. Jesus had promised never to leave or forsake His own, and I experienced the truth of those words. One of His other creatures was there sympathizing with me in that Intensive Care Unit. She gave me two Tylenol. The pain gradually subsided so that I did not even need Tylenol for the rest of the night.

This was grace from the Creator to me personally. I did not deserve such love, but He gave it anyway. Jesus was there and faithful. Since all healing comes ultimately from the hands of the Creator, He also is the One who restored my lung from all pain. I am breathing normally, and my leg is restored. The Lord Jesus was and is my Healer and Sustainer. My lungs are still healthy. Appreciation can be given to others who assist Him, but He ultimately is worthy of praise.

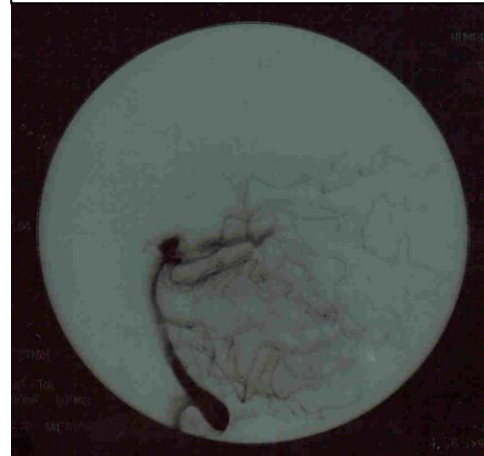
2. Answered Prayer for Son Peter

Of course, there have been many interactions with Creator Christ over the years. My wife's recovery from leukemia is one. Answered prayer concerning her health when I thought possibly the next day might bring word of her continued decline or even death. Answered prayer also for my mother who experienced open heart (aortic valve) replacement surgery at age 94 and was also at the point of death but she passed her 98th birthday in 2005. Lump in my throat intimacy, however, came with the announcement my son's deliverance during the summer of 2004.

Peter's brain AVM (ArterioVenous Malfunction), according to Children's Hospital's Dr. Sutton, was apparently completely "obliterated" by Dr. Hurst (of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania). This meant that Phase 2 of Peter's planned surgeries was postponed indefinitely. The news forced Dr. Sutton himself to do additional research--what to do when AVM's get completely plugged. Apparently, AVM's are obliterated only about 5-10% of the time. He said that he had "never seen it before himself." He cautioned that we cannot "declare victory" yet. Peter should have another arteriogram done again in six weeks to make sure things are still clear. [This was done and confirmed the earlier diagnosis; the AVM was still obliterated.] If clear, then another could be done in a year. If that is clear, then "we may be done with this," he said. He concluded that there was no proof that additional surgery was needed. There certainly was no reason to go in and mess with Peter's vision, which was checked by a vision specialist and determined to be good. Any negative effect of the surgery apparently was so minimal that it was not detected.



Notice that the dark mass in Peter's AVM (upper right) has disappeared in the picture below!



During the revealing session with Dr. Sutton, I was emotionally affected. How good God was to us in answering our prayers beyond our expectations. I told Dr. Sutton, probably with quivering voice, that I had mentioned to Dr. Hurst before the surgical procedure on Peter that many

people had been praying for him as well as for Peter. I do not remember Dr. Hurst's reaction, but Dr. Sutton's commented that Dr. Hurst deserves some credit, too. I agreed with him, adding immediately that Dr. Hurst was one of God's gifts, too. I also thanked Dr. Sutton for his previous surgery on Peter, adding that he, too, was one of God's gifts.

But What Proofs do I Have that People Were Praying? One person wrote to my cousin, "Thank you for sharing your prayer request for Peter and his family. I will pray and have forwarded the request to many including Max Lucado, a close family friend of our daughter-in-law's family in Texas.

Another wrote, "I'll make it a point to be on my knees around that time." The next day, someone wrote, "Praise God, Paul. I was praying all morning." Yet a fourth person wrote, "This morning at breakfast we said a special prayer for Peter, you and the family, and the Drs, etc. We have been in prayer for him for some time but especially today." A fifth wrote, "We've not stopped (and will continue) to hold you and your family in our hearts and before the Throne of Grace."

Rarely do I get through on the telephone to my son, Paul, in Africa, but I called him and got through on the first try. I wanted to pass the good news on to him, too.

My son, Peter, at age nineteen, had been baptized a little more than a week prior and was asked at that time if he had a verse of Scripture to share before being immersed. He quoted from Matthew 28:20: "And, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Just as the Lord had been with me during my difficult procedure (above), He was also with Peter and the surgeon.

Skeptics say things like "Time heals all wounds" or "Isn't Mother Nature wonderful," but these implicitly deny credit to Creator Christ. Jesus created "Time," which of itself can heal nothing, and Mother Nature is a nonentity. Doctors who do surgery depend on Jesus for their every breath and heart beat, whether or not they realize it.