



## Who is God When Life Stinks?

### Horrific News

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We began to pack up the food and supplies needed for our stay at the beach condo. It was still early morning on this Sunday, and several of us wanted to check in with our families. Cell phone reception was usually poor at Sue's house—she often has to stand outdoors in the front yard to receive her cell calls. Somehow, today all of our cell phones were working, and we dialed or chatted while cleaning and packing.

Martha had dialed her husband, Dave, in Colorado. It was not yet church time there, and Dave had just returned home from an early morning run. He mentioned to Martha a pain in his chest, and asked if she knew where his medicine was. Seven years earlier, Dave had a mini-heart attack, and under the tender care of his RN wife, plus careful monitoring, he seemed problem-free. But they always kept a current bottle of heart medication, just in case. Dave could not find the bottle, and although we were not aware of what Dave was saying, we could hear Martha's voice becoming urgent. "Dave, you need to call 911!" Martha was thousands of miles away from her husband and wanted him to get help NOW! Dave stayed on the phone, despite Martha's urgings, and told her that he would walk over to the neighbor's house. Mike, who lived next door, is an EMT and would know what to do.

We were trying to be respectful of Martha's privacy in her phone conversation, but the anguish on her face was obvious. We stood around the room, anxiously waiting for Martha's next response. But Martha was holding the phone to her ear, waiting for Dave's response. He had said he was crossing the yard to see the neighbor... but when she called "Dave! Dave! Please answer me!" there was no reply. Why?

Then, after one or two minutes, Martha heard the troubled voice of her neighbor's wife. "Martha!", she exclaimed. "Dave has collapsed in the yard and I'm calling 911."

By now, Martha was shaking, and we all began praying for help to come quickly. Martha reached the children in their house by another phone. They had been getting ready for church and were unaware of what was happening to their daddy. We could hear over their phone the sirens of rescue vehicles, and Martha asked her son to explain what the paramedics were doing. "They are bending over Dad..."

This continued for what seemed like forever. Martha, as a nurse, was very mindful of how many minutes were ticking by...

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Meanwhile, we sisters were doing all we could to get help. We had given Martha the house phone to use and we were copying off phone numbers from her cell phone directory. Several of us began to call her neighbors, her pastor, her in-laws in town and her older kids who lived out of state. We needed someone to be at the hospital with Dave, someone home with the kids, and we needed LOTS of people praying! All her friends from church were not home, but we left urgent messages for prayer—although details were still unknown to us all.

Two of us were on the computer, searching for any airline flights that would get Martha home quickly to be with her man. Oh, how deeply I understand her pain. To be so far away, at such a critical time, was tearing her heart apart.

Martha looked up at the clock on the wall and started to sob. “It’s been too long, too long,” she cried. We kept praying—“please, God, don’t let this be true!” But then, one of our phones rang. It was Mike, Martha and Dave’s EMT neighbor on the phone.

He talked firmly but gently to Martha. His words were measured and difficult. Several sisters stood around Martha holding her. I picked up the extension phone when I saw the incredulous look on Martha’s face, so I could listen in on details and help.

“We’ve done everything we can for Dave”, he slowly said, “but I’m so sorry, Martha. Dave is gone.”

***NO!*** I wanted to scream! How can this be? For eight weeks now I’ve watched God’s hand hold Death back into the corner of Bob’s room. It had lurked... it had threatened... it had even stolen Bob’s pulse on several occasions. Bob’s health was still uncertain but we had dramatically seen death’s power suffocated over and over.

Now death had “won”! Was God not looking? Why didn’t his power show up there on Martha and Dave’s lawn? Were we not praying hard enough?

Why, God, did our precious young brother-in-law leave this world on a quiet, Sunday morning while his wife was thousands of miles away?!?!

### ***WHY, God, WHY?***

Yes, it is okay to ask God “why”. He is the designer and giver of life, and we are his precious children. We can ***ask***, and he understands our hurt. But as our loving father, he cannot be ***demand***ed for an answer. My questions would linger unanswered...

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**"Where then does wisdom come from?  
Where does understanding dwell?**

**It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing,  
concealed even from the birds of the air.**

**Destruction and Death say,  
'Only a rumor of it has reached our ears.'**

**God understands the way to it  
and he alone knows where it dwells."**

**Job 28:20-23**

From: Robert S.  
Date: August 5, 2007  
Subject: Gone to Glory

Dear Friends,

Many, but not all of you will remember my brother and sister-in-law Dave and Martha Rust. Yesterday, after attending church with my son, Robert, up here in Valdosta, GA I received a call from Janna who had gathered with Martha and her other four sisters in Charlotte to spend the next four nights together at Myrtle Beach for their "sisters reunion".

They had received a call @10:30 a.m. EDT that announced to them that Dave Rust my brother-in-law (age 52) had graduated suddenly and unexpectedly to Glory after suffering a heart attack following a short jog in Golden, Colorado! 911 had been called, CPR administered, along with other measures but Dave was taken to his Heavenly rest. Needless to say, his death shocked Martha, her sisters, and our extended family. We are just beginning to deal with the reality of it all. It certainly changed plan A for the reunion too.

They were able to get Martha and one sister Beth on a United Jet back to Denver last night so she could be with her remaining 5 or 6 children at home. I share this with you for a few reasons.

One is for prayer for comfort in the midst of calamity, joy amidst the sorrow, and help for the hurting wife and children. Happily, Dave was a godly lovingly affectionate husband to Martha and Father of their nine incredible children. Today they are gathering in Golden to grieve, weep,

and mourn the loss of their Daddy and Martha's best friend and only lover. Would you weep for those who weep today? As you weep lift them up in prayer time and again this week. Thanks.

I also wrote in part to remind us of the challenge of Proverbs 27:1. "Do not boast about tomorrow for you do not know what a day may bring forth." Recently, and time and again, we have been made acutely aware of this instruction. So while you have today, give an extra hug to your children. If you have a spouse, love them again and again, for you and I do not know what a day may bring forth.

As Job has written in chapter 1:21b ..."The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

God help us as we grieve through our loss and heaven's gain despite our frustration and questioning of God's timing of the death of this saint and faithful brother and father!

May the Lord guide and keep you in His care this day and this week.

Lovingly in Christ,  
Bob & (Janna)

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