

THE ULTIMATE CAREGIVER

Back in February I had an appointment with my financial planner to purchase an RRSP before the deadline. Yes, it may surprise you that even ministers who used to be former accountants will use a financial planner. During my appointment, the financial planner took time to review various forms they have to keep on file for every client they handle. Most of the forms we reviewed together were ones I have had on file with them for the better part of 30 years.

This time there was a new form they wanted me to fill out. The form required me to name a caregiver they could contact in case the financial planner was beginning to worry that I was declining in my ability to make good decisions or properly look after myself. The first two people who came to mind for me were my wife and my daughter. The financial planner proceeded to say that it could not be either of their names on the form. That eliminated the two most obvious ones. The planner asked whether there was a friend, or colleague, or an independent person who could be this contact person.

I was honest with my planner that nobody's name was coming to mind because I am the caregiver for so many people at this moment in my life. This is my reality being a father, a husband, a son, and a pastor of a congregation. There was one name that came to mind, but I do not think the planner would have allowed this person's name on the form either. Just as the planner would not accept my wife or my daughter, I doubt they would have accepted Jesus as my caregiver.

I have no problem, nor complaints about being the caregiver for so many people. I am glad that others can find comfort and support in me being their caregiver. I relied on my wife Nadine as my caregiver when I was ill for two years back in 2007-2009 and am not too proud or stubborn to admit that I rely on Jesus as my caregiver always. There are certain qualities we look for in somebody to be our caregiver. We look for that person to be:

- reliable
- trustworthy
- caring and compassionate
- concerned about our needs and well-being

Jesus fits all of these requirements and more. In fact, Jesus teaches us not to worry with Him as our caregiver. We find this truth revealed in one of Jesus' teachings

during His Sermon on the Mount. Jesus brought up many subjects in this sermon and one of them had to do with worry. Jesus acknowledged some of the worries we experience in everyday life such as having enough food to eat, or clothes to wear. He pointed out how birds do not plant food or harvest but the Father provides them with the food they need. Jesus next pointed out the lilies in the field and how they do not work or make clothing but the Father cares so wonderfully for them. After pointing out these two examples of the Father's care this is what Jesus said to His listeners:

And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown in the fire tomorrow, He will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? (Matthew 6:30)

Jesus knew that people would have worries about these matters even when they were not in care-giving situations. When we need a caregiver in our life, our worries extend beyond just these matters. Regardless of what stage or situation we are currently facing in life, the point that Jesus is making is not to worry because the Father will certainly take care of us. Jesus is not only giving us a name here as a possible caregiver to consider, but a recommendation and guarantee that the Father will certainly care for us. As I mentioned before, there are certain qualities that we look for in a caregiver. When we look back at the list above, it is easy to see that the Father perfectly fits every one of these requirements and many more. Our Father in Heaven is the perfect giver of care we can ever have. No matter whether we are almost 16 years old like my daughter, 57 like myself, or 92 like my mother we can all be blessed by choosing God as our caregiver. If we do, we can relieve ourselves of a lot of worry each and every day as long as we do what Jesus suggested in His sermon:

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need. (Matthew 6:33)

A month has passed since I met with my financial planner and I still have no idea of a name to give them as a possible care-giver. I have shared my care-giver's name with each one of you. I hope you will be blessed as I am by the best caregiver of all.

Keep Safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean