

Spiritual Rehab

Pastor and evangelist Charles D. Brooks preached a powerful sermon. An eminent, beloved, and trusted man of God, Brooks wailed convincingly at the podium and sent Bible pages fluttering with every gesture. Seekers assembled under the big green tent—me included—hung on every word as he told faith-stirring stories, like the one where the mailbox contained the rent money, or the neighbor brought food, or the trigger didn't fire, or the doctor's report came back negative.

I don't remember everything Brooks referenced as my spirit rode high, but I do remember glancing down at the man sitting just beyond where Brooks was preaching. He was another beloved and trusted man of God. His short, soft curls had only recently become prematurely gray; his normal chestnut brown complexion was also a flat gray. His face was gaunt, and the suit he wore bore the hallmarks of a pre-occupied mind. This was my dad, in his fourth year of a five-year battle with cancer.

This was the night my faith collided head-on with life. That night I sustained a broken heart and have been in spiritual rehab ever since. All that I was taught and all that I knew to do in faith—the prayers, the fasting, the waiting, the staying busy and faithful, the relationship-building with God, the obedience—seemed not to matter. Before I knew what "Word Of Faith" meant, I used Bible verses as precedents in my prayers. I pleaded my case to God day after day, but this way of "case-making" ceased to make sense to me. Why? I wanted God to move and answer in a different way, and when He didn't I didn't go away angry. I slipped into faith arrest. To borrow a medical term, I "coded."

I share this difficult moment in my life with you for two reasons. You should know that if God could breathe life into my faith again—and He did—He could certainly do the same for you. My "faith rehab" included acute care, counseling, and the healing balm of His unwavering concern for me. I "work out" each week in a group of brothers and sisters in varying stages of brokenness and wholeness.

After painful, faith-stretching exercises, I put on the warm rub or the cold blast—that is, the warm realization of His nearness to me, or the cold understanding that for now we live in a world of conflict and decay that touches my life. God knows when to let me experience each. I, in turn, am learning to trust His treatment plan. Though I'm pretty sure my nickname in heaven is "Training Wheels," I'm back on my feet, thank God.



I tell you this for another reason. One of the most astounding promises the Bible makes is that God "is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all

that we can ask or think, according to the power that works in us” (Ephesians 3:20). This Scripture specifically refers to the miraculous way in which God helps us to know know all about Him—the height, length, breadth and width of love that would be incomprehensible otherwise. It’s something like that delicate flower that manages to catch a fleeting ray of sun and a drop of rain, yet pushes its petals through a crack in the pavement. While I want to give you the reasons for the faith that He has given me (and given me again), let me assure you that the faith planted in you by God will respond to His pulse in His time.

Pray as you seek God in His Word. Research Him with an open mind. Wait to hear from Him, and when you do, follow His lead. God is going to do something in you and for you.