

Upward Bound Ministries Newsletter

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Charlie's Chats

Greetings Upward Bounders! I finally have some good news to tell you concerning my progress! Let me get right to it.....

The Latest on My Condition

I am happy to report to you that I have had my best month since the accident! Finally, I can actually see some real progress in my speech, as my speech therapist and chiropractor have been working hard to get me back to where I can speak fluently again. Between the prayers from my friends, speech therapy, special cranial treatments, determination and faith, I am finally seeing light at the end of the tunnel!

For the first time, I have been at near 100% fluency for almost an entire month! I only have small spurts here and there where my speech goes south, but I am able to recover quickly, which is something I have never been able to do before! I have so well, in fact, that my last meeting with my speech therapist was today!

The Tourettes noises still persist, and the medication hasn't made too much of a difference yet. But they told me from the beginning that it might take up to 2 months to see any changes. The important thing is that I have showed no major side effects from the medication. That's a huge deal for me, as I do not take medicines well! So God is with me, strengthening me every day, and getting me better. I am very grateful! It's nice to be able to give a good report after all these months!

I Passed a Big Test!

OK, are you ready for this? For the first time in 9 months, I actually performed this last Sunday! My own church allowed me to try out some songs for our children, just to see if I could hold up. My two Praise Team Members, Laura Anne and Hannah Lee, were here with me the entire week and performed with me Sunday. We did 3 sets in the morning, as we have 3 Bible Study hours. We just did three songs in each set, but I was also allowed to give the testimony of my accident and recovery progress between songs. Each of my sessions lasted about 30 minutes. My main goal was to just use this experience as a gage to see where I was at, and whether or not I even had a chance of making steps toward a comeback this fall.

I am happy to report to you that my body helped up just fine! I didn't stutter, make those awful noises, scare any kids, fall apart or collapse, have any relapses – all those things I feared in the back of my mind going in to Sunday.

I was quite rusty after a 9 month layoff, and I realize I have much to work on to get back to the professional level I was at. But I keep reminding myself that the test was not for perfection – the test

was for endurance. And even though I got tired, I was able, by God's strength, to pass my very first test back on the stage! I am so happy I can hardly contain it! God is going to give me my dream back!

My girls did fantastic, as I knew they would. They even did sign language to one of Rachel's most beautiful songs, as we just sang with Rachel's original version, and the folks loved it. *(Rachel still has an impact in this ministry even though she does not tour with me any more. I love her and miss her. She would have been proud of my two "Praisin' Chickadeez"! haha!)*

I was able to share the testimony of my accident, show pictures, and tie in some great illustrations relating to the accident and recovery that really helped the kids. I got tons of feedback from the teachers telling me how powerful the whole thing was! So it's obvious that God isn't through with me yet! In fact, I think He wants to use me in deeper ways! Praise God for His goodness!

More Perspective

I hope you have been encouraged by this portion of my newsletters. I have had many of you say how blessed you have been with my openness and honesty about my feelings and recovery. I think that is important, because we all go through times of uncertainty, and we are all human. We need to hear not just the "right answers", but we need to hear from someone who has been there or is going through the fire, and see how they arrive at those answers. They don't always come easy, do they? To just give answers is to take a bit of the humanity away, and I think people want to hear from somebody they can relate to. That's why I have added this section to my letters.

Well, I want to share with you today on how to have a winning attitude through adversity – how to *honor God on the inside even if you are knocked down on the outside*. Our perspective on things means a lot, especially through tough times. With right perspective and attitude, and with God's strength, we can overcome anything! Here's what I am learning:

1. **I am learning that contentment all starts with my attitude.** It's all in how I choose to see things. For example, I can complain about the price of gas, or I can thank God I have a car to drive. I can look at all the things that were lost as a result of this accident I had, or I can thank God for what I still have left. **It's all in my perspective.** *Every day that I live with a negative attitude, dominated by my discouragements is a day I have just wasted.* Life is too short to waste my days! **God wants me to be a winner, not a whiner!**
2. **I am learning to always find some reason to give God thanks.** I don't have to keep my focus on what's wrong. I can focus on what's right! I can either complain that I can't do all the things I used to do, or I can thank God I still have the breath of life! I can complain about not being able to use my right hand to its fullest, or I can thank God that He chose to spare my right hand so that I can play the guitar! **We should actually spend more time thanking God for things than we do asking Him for things.** He says to *"enter His gates with thanksgiving"*. That means it should be the first thing we do as we enter His presence! The more I thank God for what I do have, the more it seems He gives me what I don't have! **I am learning not to magnify my problems, but to magnify my God, who is above all things!**
3. **I have learned it is important to never waive the white flag of surrender!** Philippians 4:13 says I can do ALL things through Christ Who gives me the strength. That means conquer any problem, overcome any obstacle, hit any curve ball thrown at me in this life! When I face adversity, I can have the attitude of a winner. **I can get back up on the**

inside when I am knocked down on the outside! No adversity can keep me down. I keep getting up every time I am knocked down. I will never quit. It's just not in me to quit because of what God has put in my heart. I will get back up in my heart, my mind, my spirit and my will. That strength comes from the Lord, who says "*I will strengthen you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand*". *Isaiah 41:10*.

4. **I am learning that God will never waste anything I have gone through. He will use it to my advantage.** Joseph spent 13 years in prison, but he kept his faith and his excellent attitude, and God promoted him in the end. Joseph did not have to end up starting all over. God brought him out much better than he was before! But had he not gone through his adversity, he would not have been in a position for God to show His favor on him and promote him to a higher level. **I will come out of this thing better than I was before – I am convinced of that!** This ministry will be more powerful than ever. Had I not gone through some tough times, this couldn't have happened.
5. **God will restore everything to us stolen by our enemy.** Job 42:10 says that the Lord restored the fortunes of Job, and increased all that he had two-fold in the end. He also said that the *latter part of Job's life was more blessed than the first part*. And if you remember, I have been praying that prayer for myself a long time before this accident ever happened. I prayed to "finish strong", and "for God to make my second half more significant than my first half". I believe God is going to restore what I have lost over these 9 months. He did it for Job (not to compare myself with Job, because who can?), He did it for Isaiah and his people (Isaiah 61:7), and he'll do it for me and you, as long as we keep the right attitude and perspective, and take the high road through our trials! God WANTS to restore everything stolen from us by the enemy. And when God restores, he doesn't leave us as we were before the trial – **He brings us out better off that we were before – especially in a spiritual sense.** And that's exactly what I want, to be more spiritually effective than I ever was before!!
6. **God has given me a winning spirit!** Through Christ, I am a winner indeed! I am going to come out of this thing a winner, a conqueror, more spiritually effective than ever before. I know this to be true. God has proven Himself faithful and will continue to do so! **I'm not a victim – I'm a victor! I am not simply a survivor – I am more than a conqueror!** I don't want anyone feeling sorry for me in this recovery process – I want them to learn from my example that **nothing can keep us down when God is alive in us, working in us, through us, and for us!** There are folks out there who have gone through far worse things than I. And they survived with the same mind set and faith. Our God is faithful. He is in control. It's about *Him*, not about us. And because I understand a lot more about God's character through this ordeal, I know that God is going to make my second half more significant than my first half. My second half will be more fulfilling than I can imagine. God will answer my prayers and I **WILL** finish strong!

Thot for the Day

Get up on the inside, even if you are knocked down on the outside!

**Cya here, there, or in the air!
We're Upward Bound!
Uncle Charlie**