

**IN REMEMBRANCE
OF
HOWIE DOWELL**

*“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you,
that you should go and bear fruit,
and that your fruit should remain...”*

John 15:16 NASB

Howie, God’s servant, went to be with his Lord on January 20, 1995. A phrase often expressed about him is, “There is no one else like him!” How true, how true. It was my privilege to be his wife, friend and soul-mate for thirty three years. For a number of those years, God partnered us as fellow adventurers in the life of faith.

The Lord brought Howie to Himself on Easter Morn of 1976. He was 37 years old. I also became a believer at about the same time. Eleven years before, as a young man and a new father, he was diagnosed with an adult form of muscular dystrophy. The disease is rare, hereditary, progressive and terminal and one of the few diseases known to man, which worsens in succeeding generations.

Two significant things occurred at the time of our conversions. We were both given a great thirst for Scripture, about which, we previously knew nothing. We took the Word of God at face value and tried to find ways to apply its teachings to our lives. Secondly, people who were deeply troubled began to flood into our lives, which was also a new experience for us.

As a three year old Christian, God abruptly snatched Howie out of the work force and thrust him into the life of a trailblazer. He would have been considered by most, including himself, as a unlikely candidate for that position. But God had prepared him for this call by stripping him of many earthly securities: a job, financial stability, his own health, as well as his son’s health. Eventually, even Peter’s life was taken from him. As a relatively new believer, Howie was becoming a broken vessel, who was quickly cast upon the Lord and His Word as his means for survival. God’s plan had brought Howie to the end of himself, which was the dawning of an understanding of how to draw on God’s limitless resources.

God created an evolving ministry to needy people, which initially, neither of us sought. Our home became the arena where the reality of God and His truths were the magnet that drew many people, by word of mouth, to receive the munificence of God.

Howie, greatly weakened, physically limited, often exhausted and frequently in pain from the devastating effects of the disease, led our home with love, power, decisiveness, perseverance and a poured out life for God and others. Christ loosened his grip on a temporal focus and replaced it with an eternal perspective that was foundational to his philosophy of life. He viewed all that he possessed as belonging to his Master for the purpose of furthering His kingdom: his home money, time, energy and material goods. God taught us how to rely upon Him to meet our financial needs. We chose not to charge for our services nor to solicit funds.

He was a man of integrity and no pretense. He was *real*, warts and all. His unconditional love, fatherly admonitions and unwavering faith pointed people toward knowing Christ and developing a deeper life in Him. He was extremely confident in the Lord and His Word, and he chose to serve them both selflessly. Bearing a disease that obviously was ravishing his body, he never focused on himself nor indulged in self-pity. Instead, he was thankful for and happy about his Savior's plan for his earthly existence and for the abundant life he had received because of it. He would frequently hug me, saying, "Dennie, our cup overflows!" Because he was focused on God and others, people often remarked, "I forget he has a disease."

Howie was also a man who would not stand out as a leader among unknowns. He was often a man of few words, who did not call attention to himself nor speak of his achievements. He viewed his God as extraordinary, but not himself. His extraordinary God imbued him with a quiet power and strength of character that impacted hundreds of lives. I chose for his eulogy the words of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians.

"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."
2 Cor. 12:7-10

I am grateful for the incredible journey of faith God gave to both of us. May His truths, contained in this book, be the life-giving and life-changing force they have been to Howie and to me.

*"When the sun goes below the horizon he is not set;
the heavens glow for a full hour after his departure.
And when a great and good man sets,
the sky is luminous long after he is out of sight.
Such a man cannot die out of this world.
When he goes he leaves behind him much of himself.
Being dead, he speaks."
Beecher*