

## A Deeper Experience

### DAY 8—THROUGH THE VALLEY

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**“The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit” (Ps. 34:18).**

We were on a two-week mission trip in Iloilo City, Philippines, when I was called to the business office of the church. “Missy, you have a call from the United States—come quickly!” My heart pounded as I ran to the office and picked up the phone. Breathless, I said, “Hello?” On the other end I heard a teary voice say, “Jodi, Danny is dead!” I clutched my chest in disbelief. “How? What happened?” I asked.

My youngest brother, Frank, broke the news to me that our oldest brother, Danny, an alcoholic and drug addict, was found with a needle in his arm in a motel room. He overdosed on a deadly cocktail of heroin mixed with alcohol. In shock, I hung up the phone and fell weeping into my husband’s arms. I was too far from home to rush to my family’s side and had to wait another week until our mission trip was over.

During the long flight home, childhood memories flooded my mind. I remembered special moments playing with my brother. I remembered how protective he had been of me. I thought about Danny’s life, of the choices he had made. My heart had ached for him to have a better life, to know God and find peace and contentment.

Danny always found it easy to make friends. He seemed to be the “popular” one. But when he entered high school, his friends were the ones who partied, drank alcohol, and experimented with drugs. It was not long until Danny became an alcoholic and drug addict, which made him a frequent visitor to the county jail and court-ordered detox centers. Finally, a court-appointed attorney warned Danny that if he didn’t get out of town and away from his friends, he could potentially end up in prison. So Danny came to live with my husband and me for a while.

While he was in our home, Danny showed an interest in spiritual things. He participated in our family worship and even enrolled in a correspondence Bible study course. He knew all the right answers and completed his lessons in record time. His life was taking a different course and, believing himself to be stable, he returned home. Soon, he was back with his old friends and into the drugs—this time deeper, using stronger drugs, which eventually took his life. How it must have broken God’s heart to see the one for whom He paid the redemption price in that condition, degraded to a slave of habits. “Divine love sheds tears of anguish over men formed in the likeness of their Maker who will not accept His love” (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 13).

I felt sorry for Danny. Watching his struggle with addiction was devastating to our family. Many times he took advantage of our parents, stealing from them to support his addiction and lying to cover it up. They could not allow him to keep living in their home, so then he became homeless. How it broke my mother’s heart to think of her son sleeping on the street in the winter, eating in shelters, if he even ate at all, wandering the streets in search of more drugs. She gave him many “second chances,” but he never changed. He died alone. I am so weary of this world and Satan’s manipulation of those who are weak and without Christ. It was never God’s plan that humanity should go through life suffering pain and loneliness, enslaved by Satan.

I often wonder if Danny believed that God loved him. I wonder what was going through his mind in those last moments of his life. Did he call out to God? Will he be saved? I will never know the answer in this life, but I am confident that our Heavenly Father had His hand over Danny from the time he was born. I know that God’s love was his constant companion, ever drawing him with lovingkindness and offering him salvation.

### SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR THE PRAYER TIME

#### Praise

- Lord, we praise You for the gift of Jesus, who died to redeem us and our loved ones.
- Lord, we praise You that You hear us when we talk to You and that You answer according to Your will.
- We praise You for Your life-changing power.

**Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin**

- Father, please show us which sins to confess privately. We claim Your victory over those sins.
- Forgive us for times we have been unwilling to follow Your will written in Your Word.
- Thank You that You forgive us according to 1 John 1:9.

**Supplication and Intercession**

- Father, we intercede for those who may be victims of circumstances or controlled by addictions. Please break the chains that bind them! May we win them back to You through our love and concern.
- Lord, please give us understanding, compassionate hearts for family members who have taken advantage of us. Help them to see Your love through our actions.
- Please teach us how to proclaim our fundamental church beliefs with clarity, creativity, and biblical authenticity. May the love of Jesus be at the core of everything we believe.
- We ask You to prepare young people to plant churches for the 789 people groups in the 9 countries of North American Division.
- We ask You to prepare volunteers to serve the 70 people groups in the Israel Field.
- We ask You to raise up medical missionaries to plant churches among the 830 people groups in the 11 countries of East-Central Africa Division.
- We ask You to raise up prayer warriors to intercede for the 2,568 people groups in the 4 countries of Southern Asia Division. We especially remember Hope TV India and Asian Aid School for the Blind.
- We pray for the work of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division's publishing houses.
- We pray You will do as You promise in Psalm 32:8, by leading and guiding us as we do the Ten Days Outreach Challenge.
- Thank you, Father, for sending the Holy Spirit to convert the seven people on our prayer lists.

**Thanksgiving**

- Lord, thank You that Satan has no power over us.
- Thank You that You provide a way of escape so that temptation cannot overwhelm us (1 Cor. 10:13).
- Thank You that if You set us free, we are free indeed! (John 8:36).
- Thank You, in advance, for answering our prayers.

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**SUGGESTED SONGS TO SING**

"Does Jesus Care?" (SDA Hymnal #181); "Hiding in Thee" (SDA Hymnal #525); "Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary" (SDA Hymnal #476); "We Would See Jesus" (SDA Hymnal #494)

**PROMISES TO CLAIM AS YOU PRAY**

- "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).
- "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Ps. 147:3).
- "I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.' Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence" (Ps. 91:2, 3).
- "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).