

Dear Gary,

Hopefully you can read my letter, most people can't read my writing. All of us are praying and expecting you to be home by the end of November, and we are very excited and anxious. Mother has told us all about the favor you have with an influential judge so our prayer is whatever he does will end this ordeal completely.

As for me, my prayer has always been for you to have grace as well as wisdom and favor. You have always amazed me with your incredible optimism in the most difficult & challenging of circumstances but there is still need for this special grace. Spiritually, like David, after Ziclaz, you have learned how to "encourage" yourself in the Lord.

Perhaps, I have prayed this way because I have felt so helpless, not knowing how to help you. Because I have not known what to do, I have done nothing, which is without excuse and causes me much grief and guilt.

[REDACTED] We feel she doesn't want us to have any influence in their lives as our beliefs are so different. That said, we still love Shannon & the boys much, and want you to know we will be there for them, if the opportunity avails itself. Also, if there is anything I can do, please let me know, I would love to do something, just be specific please, for I am clueless.

To fill you in on my world/life, this next February, I will be a grandfather to six, and have found this to be so fun and fulfilling. London, Daisha have two each, and Shannon has one more on the way. Angelina, will be 13, this December, and like your Channing, is a great volleyball player. She even plays on the varsity team, as she has a mean serve. Shana & her husband (Jason) are moving to Lake Jackson, about 1 1/2 hrs away, so I will not be able to see them at church anymore. As for the church, it is essentially the same size numerically, but the members are mostly new converts. The folks you know are dwindling, primarily due to going home to be with the Lord. It is so fun saying good-bye to friends of a lifetime.

My personal life is very full and busy, I essentially work 7 days a week, though on Mon, Wed, and Sat. I only work half days. Being a single parent / taxi to an active middle schooler, forces me to think young, but feel old. Can you believe how old we are? Crazy isn't it!

This month Kelli will be gone five years. It is still a journey, and though it is now familiar, it is still difficult. My greatest pain is watching my children having to face the joys and sorrows of life w/o her. As for me, though I am ready for companionship, I am not yet ready to seriously date. - And of course, finding someone who loves God and His ministry enough to be interested in me is indeed rare. Kelli, was indeed wonderful and perfect for me. Miss her so much.

As you have noticed daddy is weakening all the time both physically and mentally. Mother is doing well, but daddy keeps her busy. She is constantly "reeling him in" as his antics and unfiltered comments are growing more and more comical. It is such a funny man, it seems everything he now says is funny. Though they are both tiring more easily they still manage to love and support me in such meaningful ways, I don't want to even think of them not being in my life. Having watched her support & love for you I know you feel the same way. How blessed we are to have such wonderful parents. Hope I can be half as good to my children as they are to us.

When you get home we'll catch up on everything else. Sorry you have to spend this Birthday away from your family but, we believe this will be the last time. Until we are together again may you experience God in the way and measure you need Him and may your birthday be filled with His peace, His Joy and His Love that cast out all fear".

Love you Gary, and do beg your forgiveness in my inexpressible as a brother. But do remember you are always in my heart & prayers. As odd as this may sound, I still consider you as my best friend.

Happy Birthday & See You Soon!
Johnny

