

Keith first wrote about Sue and her son, Marvin, in Waves of Adversity. Sue's faith and love for Christ made such an impact on Keith that he followed-up with this beautiful prosaic writing How Are You?

## HOW ARE YOU?©

By Keith Z. Yezdanian

**H**ow are you? We often ask this question and we are often asked this question numerous times a day. It seems to roll off our tongues without much thought. And our answer to the question goes something like this: "I'm good and you?" This question and reply has become so common place and routine that it doesn't carry much weight, much like the money in our pockets...*If I could only see your reaction to that statement.* It's not the monetary value of the money that I am talking about, that's another message in its own. It's the four words printed on the money that I am relating to. Have you forgotten those words? I'll help you; the four words are "**In God We Trust**". In God We Trust, pause and read those words again. Did they just speak to your heart as they did to me? Do you, Do I, really trust God? Do I trust Him with my present situation and my future? Do I trust that Jesus truly died for me on the cross? Those powerful words and their meaning pass through our fingers everyday and are rarely ever noticed and unfortunately forgotten by many.

Someone once told me that when I find a penny on heads I should pick it up. And if I find a penny on tails that I should flip it over and give it to someone. But the best advice that I was given about a penny is this; when you find a penny on the ground pick it up read the four words on it and remember its God's way of reminding you to trust in Him.

How are you? Pause and read those words again. Now did they speak to you like the words, In God We Trust? They did I am sure, by just reading them you were forced to question yourself on how you are doing. These three words "how are you" just became more than a kind smile, a pleasant nod or a quick handshake. They stirred up emotions, thoughts and memories. They became alive from deep within you. I have asked this question countless times and I have answered it when I was asked. I always thought that I was being sincere when asking and quick to answer so I would not bore someone with my thoughts and feelings. Much like the penny on the ground, you can pick it up, give it to someone else or you can stop pick it up and read it.

Now my penny came in the form of a kind lady named Sue that I met at the University of North Carolina (UNC) Hospital earlier this month. My wife was having surgery and the estimated time for her surgery was 4 to 6 hours. So while I was waiting I decided to get some breakfast. And this is where God decided to reveal to me the meaning and power behind **Proverbs 18:21: The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.** I am not sure why on this day and in this setting He decided to teach me this lesson. So as I was standing in line staring at the choices to satisfy my hunger something told me to turn around and as I did my eyes met the eyes of a little old lady. As I looked down into her eyes and with a friendly grin, I asked her as I did countless times that morning to receptionists, passer-bys, nurses, doctors and my own wife and with thoughts of eggs, sausage and bacon on my mind I asked, "How are you?" I was not prepared for what was to come next.

My body started to turn back towards the clumpy eggs, sausage and bacon without hearing a reply to my question, "How are you?" My eyes strained to keep my head from turning away from her dim lit eyes and towards the food. Something was telling me you're not done yet and with a puzzled look on her face she replied, "I'm, I'm...not doing well. I'm about to lose my son." With those words this little lady caused a catastrophic avalanche of thoughts and

emotions in me. I am sure she saw a look of calamity in my eyes as I realized the penny I just picked up had four words written on it. So as I quickly came to the actuality of the situation and the meaning and power of **Proverbs 18:21**. I stumbled out the words, "I, I would like you to join me for breakfast and I would like to pray for you". With an even more confused look on her face, she looked over my tattoos and baggy pants and she agreed. In my new sense of reality I ordered sausage and gravy I had forgotten all about the eggs, bacon and sausage.

As I sat and waited for Sue my fingers nervously ran through the pages of my Bible, I couldn't think of a scripture to share. I wondered what I could say to someone with a son eight years older than me. What could I say to someone who was losing their son? As Sue came and sat down she refused to eat, she wanted to eat by her son Marvin's bedside and yet there was a sense of need. Sue started to share her story, two weeks ago her son had become ill at church and later that day he was taken to the hospital. His health continued to deteriorate and they transported him to UNC. Marvin had a brain aneurism and the doctors had exhausted all options. As Sue struggled to share that Marvin has a daughter and that their lives were about to change forever she shared the hope of Christ and her thankfulness in her situation. Sue shared that Marvin loves the Lord and that she understood that God had other plans for her family. In the midst of turmoil Sue's Faith and love for Christ allowed her to minister to me. As I marveled at her strength I still couldn't help but wonder why I have been taking those words, how are you, for granted? As we concluded our conversation of Faith and of loss we prayed together and I believe that God ministered to me that morning through two Angels named Marvin and Sue.

I lived a little over a week at UNC with my wife in her room. I ate my meals at the same place each day but I never saw Sue again. I inquired about Marvin and Sue in an attempt to get some assistance for them. But, I was never able to obtain any information from the hospital or staff about Sue and her son.

Before that morning at UNC I never understood how much those three words meant. I never knew that those words, with true compassion behind them, could possibly save a life. And those same words with no true compassion behind them could destroy a life. I am not sure but I believe the life saved that day was truly my own. I believe that God taught me this lesson not just to help others understand the power of one's tongue, but it was to teach me the power of my own tongue and the damage it can cause in the life of the ones I love. He also used this encounter to show me the importance of education not only in the theological but in the discerning of the heart and spirit.

I continue to pray for Marvin and his family wherever they might be. And I continue to thank God for sending Sue into my life to contribute to my growth. I also ask God to allow me to grow in His Word and His Service. I pray that He will no longer allow me to use "How are you?" as a mere greeting to passer-bys and only allow me to ask someone how they are with compassion and concern. I pray that He continues to bless you and show you His uncompromising Love & Compassion. AMEN

*"How Are You?"* was written 20 January 2010