

The Way

by

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Journalism 4

WELL, see, my wife, Elaine, she was admitted five months ago. I guess you've probably worked with her, haven't you? Yeah, thank you. I would like some coffee. Well, I don't know just how all this started. There's no history of mental illness in her family or anything. All I can say is that it must be God's will. Maybe we're being punished for something. I don't know. But we've led good Christian lives—read the Bible every day. Gone to church. Given to the missionary fund.

You know, I always told Elaine, "Elaine, take your problems to the Lord." That's where I take mine, you know. You see, other people, all they can say is that they're sorry you're troubled. But the Lord—that's where you get real comfort. Whenever somebody I know has troubles, I show them a passage in the Bible that I think will help. You know, we're just here to do the Lord's will, and I think I can do that best just by showing people where to turn when they're low. But Elaine, she didn't seem to be having any problems. Least I didn't hear about them. I'll tell you, it was a real surprise to me when she had her breakdown. I never even knew.

Oh, yeah, when we were first married she'd tell me about her troubles at the office where she worked and with the children, and I'd give her the best advice I knew, "Turn to the Lord." Well, lately she never said much and I just figured God was turning things out all right for her.

Children? Yeah, we have two sons. David, the oldest, he's twelve now. Fine boy. A real Christian. He helps the Sunday school teacher with one of the classes every week. Maybe he'll be a preacher some day. Or a missionary. He'd be real good at that. And Daniel, he's ten. He's a bright little guy, too. Can recite just about any passage from the New Testament you'd want to hear. I always wanted two children. A lot of people have several, you know, but I

figured on two to replace me and my wife. Like the Bible says. Elaine, she wanted more than two. She seems to get along pretty good with kids. But the Lord only gave us two. I figured that's enough.

What? Well, I believe in a literal reading of the Bible, don't you? I mean, seems to me that's the only way there is to read it. You don't accept parts of it at face value and turn other parts around till they suit you. Some people do that, though. Well, now, my wife, for instance. She used to point out passages to me and try to put some meaning in God's words that wasn't there. She didn't used to know The Way. Why, she even read all sorts of books about Eastern religions. Said there wasn't any harm in knowing about them. But I've always said Jesus is our Saviour. All those other religions, worshipping their idols. What do you need to know about them for? Just teach them about the Lord and we'll all be a lot better off. Elaine, she was reading about — oh, what is it? That meditation stuff. Said it would help her relax. But that business is just some sort of crazy religion, too. And it's not Christian, I can tell you that. So I just kept sharing with Elaine and showed her how I live my life for God, and after a while she didn't bring up any funny ideas anymore. And she didn't say anything when I threw out all those books she was reading.

But, see, Elaine doesn't show her faith like I do. I think maybe that's what started these mental problems. Seems to me, the joy of knowing God and His plan is so great, you've got to let it out and share it with others. But Elaine never talked about it much. She kept it too much inside, I guess.

Yeah, well, she's changed a lot since we got married. She used to be kind of flighty, you know? Of course, that was before she became a Christian. She was always wanting to be going out somewhere — sometimes even to bars or to those racy movies they have nowadays. But I told her those things were just the work of the Devil and she'd have to fight against the temptations. She quieted down a lot the past few years. Kept to herself a lot. Almost too much. And then, all of a sudden, she just broke down one day.

I can still remember, I came home from work and Elaine, she was fixing supper. Just a regular day. And then I told her about this new fellow who'd started working with our company that day. I said to her, "Elaine," I said. "You'd like him. He's a Christian." And she just turned around and looked at me. I'd never seen such a wild look in her eyes before. And, you know, she was wearing a cross around her neck. Well, she tore it off and threw it at me and just went into hysterics right there. She kept yelling "Praise the Lord!" But it was like she didn't mean it.

Yeah, this is the first time I've seen her since she was admitted. They called me yesterday—well, I was at a church meeting, but Dave, he took the message, that she was better and I could come visit. Well, I tell you, I praised the Lord and came over here this morning, and when I walked in, I was glad to see her, I'll tell you. Well, she just says to me real soft, kind of like she used to, "Hello, John." I didn't understand what had happened to her, but I just figured it was God's will, so the first thing I said to her was, "Let's pray."

Well, you know, she looked at me kind of wild-like. Just all of a sudden. It was kind of like five months ago when they had to bring her here. She went into a fit. Just like that. No reason. She was crying and screaming at the same time. And almost laughing, too. It was awful. Well, I started to pray out loud, but it was like she was having a conversation with herself. Kind of mimicking. She wasn't really talking to anyone. "How are you, Elaine?" she says. Then she says right back to herself, "Oh, I feel fine, now. I'm so glad to see you." And then she goes on, "It's been a long five months. We miss you so much at home. You should have seen the boys when I told them I was coming to see you." She went on and on like that till the doctors came. They told me I had to leave, so I said to her, "I'll pray for you," but I guess she didn't hear. She didn't look at me.

I don't understand. I just don't know. They said they don't know how long she'll have to stay here now. It could be a long time, I guess. But if it's the Lord's will . . .