

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Interview with John and Patricia

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AL: Thank you, Carl, it's a delight to be here today with two good friends, John and Patricia MacArthur and as we have the opportunity of talking about something that took place one year ago. For any who may not be aware, review for us those life threatening events that transpired just twelve months, John. Maybe you could pick it up and then I'll ask Patricia some questions.

JOHN: Well, I was shocked to be receiving a phone call saying that my wife had been in a severe car accident and that she was being helicoptered along with my daughter from the sight of the accident to the Trauma Center. When I heard that, I knew it was serious because the Trauma Center is serious enough, but they helicopter somebody in it's life and death. I had to drive about an hour and a half to get to the hospital to find out that the car had flipped over into an eightfoot culvert and landed on its roof, crushed the roof down really as far down as the headrests, and some places below the headrests. And, of course, the blow to Patricia's head had broken her neck and broken the bones in her face all around her eye and cheek and then broken her jaw, broken her shoulder and her hand was broken. She had lacerations. Her head was split open.

My daughter Melinda was in the car and really escaped anything serious. There were no broken bones, just a lot of bruises and cuts.

We went into the hospital at that time, it was a life and death situation because the concussion was so severe that swelling of the brain is the real issue. To just make sure she's alive they poured steroids into her through intravenous for about the first 24 hours and kept the swelling down. And that was what really prevented death at that point. Then it was a matter of whether there was spinal cord damage and paralysis. And as it turned out, there was no spinal cord damage which was really an incredible thing. That puts her in the category of five percent of people who have that kind of break and live. And so, God was really in that. And then it was a process of months of wearing a steel halo and it hardly seems like a year ago.

AL: Well, Patricia, is it true that when something of that nature happens that your whole life passes in front of you? Or were you unconscious?

PAT: Yes, I was unconscious. I don't remember anything, to be honest. I just remember Melinda kind of putting her hands up and squealing quite loudly. And when I woke up I was in the hospital. And I don't remember any of it.

AL: Did you have a lot of support people behind you during those days that you were in the hospital beyond your family?

PAT: Yes, very definitely. In fact, we had to limit all the dear people that wanted to come alongside and assist and serve and we had just one or two particular friends that stayed with me almost 24 hours a day. With a hand paralyzed and one in a cast, I was unable to do much for myself. So they were there to feed me and to bathe me and to take care of me over and above the care at the hospital.

JOHN: One of the special moments, Al, that happened there that I always think back to...well, all the kids and grandkids came and camped outside the Intensive Care Unit. And people delivered food to us. I mean, they were bringing muffins...just endless all day long. So we had this little picnic going on right outside the room there. But it was just the second or third day that Joni Erikson Tada came she came with her husband, Ken. And she really obviously could identify. Patricia broke C2 and C3, Joni broke C4 and it damaged the spinal cord. Patricia broke C 2 and C3 above the respiration line, no spinal cord damage or she would have died because it would have cut off respiration.

Anyway, Joni came wheeling in in her chair into Patricia's room while she was lying in the bed, just having been screwed into the steel halo. And she sang, "His eye is on the sparrow" for Patricia and then she gave her a little sparrow, a little ceramic sparrow that Ken had given her and was precious to her and she wanted to give it to Patricia. And she reminded Patricia because the doctor said that the bone had come within the width of a hair of damaging the spinal cord and Joni reminded Patricia that the Lord not only knows how many hairs you have on your head but He knows how wide they are. And that was that close. But that moment of Joni with tears, by the way, singing "His eye is on the sparrow" to Patricia was really a precious moment.

She came back frequently. And I remember her weeping one time in joy and saying, "I'm so glad you're not paralyzed." And, of course, she knew all that was involved in that and just rejoiced for Patricia.

AL: Well, Patricia, I hope you don't take this in the wrong way but as I see you today a year after that near fatal accident, you look perfectly normal. Have you had any kind of residual problems connected with that?

PAT: Not really, Al. I...my last visit to my neurologist, Dr. Egan, wanted to do neck surgery on me because of the impairment of my arm and she was concerned about some numbness that I had in my

hands and feet. And I had been experiencing so much healing and recovery in such an unusual way that I asked her for more time and perhaps more therapy and rehabilitation because I told her I didn't want to limit the Lord in His healing process and as a result of the many prayers that have gone up on my behalf. But...and I have not been back to her since. They were going to put a plast...plate in my face for the fracture of my jaw because it was so severe. And I have not even been back to the plastic surgeon since I was discharged from the hospital. And once in a while my neck gets tired from the muscles being weakened from the suspension of my head so that the spine would heal correctly. But basically I have no pain or discomfort that even requires any prescription drug.

AL: That's absolutely incredible.

JOHN: I might add to that too that the problem was that she couldn't move her right arm and they didn't know whether that was spinal cord damage or one of the roots that comes out of the spinal cord to the nerves. And that's what Dr. Egan wanted to go in there to do, to clear out a channel because she thought the impingement was occurring at that point and could release those nerves to make that arm move. Well Patricia just felt she wanted to wait on the Lord and let people's prayers keep rising before the Lord. And as it turned out, that nerve has totally rejuvenated itself and her right arm at one point would not move. And now she can put it clear up in the air and they think now that the nerve is completely rejuvenated and any weakness in the arm that remains is just the muscles and they have to come back.

AL: And I imagine you had a tremendous amount of encouragement not only from the church family, which is a huge family in itself, but also the Grace To You radio family. Do you recall getting a lot of letters from different folks?

PAT: Yes. In fact, I was overwhelmed by the number of letters and cards and dear little gifts of kindness, you know, crocheted crosses and I even received some chocolates for a special coffee on dry ice that was mailed to me. I have received so many letters. And they weren't just a card with the name signed but they were just hearts of compassion and care on my behalf and with promises and commitments to pray for me faithfully. And they would send portions of Scripture to me to encourage me. And I really was overwhelmed to realize the impact that the ministry has around the world. I received letters from India, from the Philippines, all over Asia. And they wrote to me as if I were their daughter. I mean, it wasn't just, you know, get well soon, it was just dear, dear letters. And I tried to read every one of them, it took a long time.

AL: An outpouring of love, I'm sure.

PAT: Oh yes.

AL: John, it says in Philippians the first chapter that what has happened to us as believers is really for the furtherance of the gospel. Before this program is over we're going to tell our listeners about the fact that there is a special message you've delivered on the purpose of trials. And because of the significance of this program today we're going to make this cassette available free of charge to our listeners. We'll talk about that more later.

But can you look back on the experience that you and Patricia had twelve months ago and say, "Yes, that was for the furtherance of the gospel?"

JOHN: I think I can, Al. First of all, I just want to say, I think Patricia is as beautiful as she ever was right now. She doesn't have any disfigurement on her face and I don't want people to think all those broken bones and broken jaw made any difference.

AL: Well let me interrupt for a second and ask you, when you first saw her were you reduced to tears?

JOHN: Sure. I was devastated because her face was just a mass of cuts and scratches and huge bruises and her leg was solid bruise from top to bottom and her back and her neck and her hair was all matted with blood and all split open. And..oh, it was devastating. I mean, you know, I was shaking because of just the trauma of the whole moment.

I told her afterwards that I was shaking as I was driving and shaking when I got there but I had an overwhelming sense of peace because I knew she was with Christ if she was gone, or if she were to die. I knew she would be with the Lord and I never...that...that allowed that ambivalence of this frightening moment of loss and, I mean, this is a person that I love more than anybody in the world and she's been inflicted with unbelievable pain and trauma and this is only the start of it even in the recovery process. So there's all that agony and all that pain and all that sense of loss, but the confidence that she was with the Lord it was also a balancing peace along that line. And as you asked her a moment ago, did it fall out for the furtherance of the gospel...let me tell you initially what struck me. I tend to appear to people to sort of be strong and immovable and...

AL: Now, why did we hear Patricia just give a little...

JOHN: She's smiling.

AL: A little something in the background?

JOHN: And you know, I'm very resolute and I'm very focused.

AL: You know where you're going.

JOHN: Yeah, and you know, you hear somebody like me on the radio and I'm sort of a preaching machine, you turn him on and you turn him off, you know. There's a lack of humanity there, very easily, particularly with the radio audience more so than with a congregation of people who know you and they know your family and they see your life.

AL: That's one of the nice things about doing a program like this so that they can get to know you.

JOHN: Sure, sure. But you know what happened was this unbelievable sense that this is a man and this is a man who like all the rest of us is living his life with unexpected trauma, pain, agony, this is a man who loves deeply, this is a man who cares, this is a man who is feeling all of this. And the outpouring of love, the sense of weakness, the sense of vulnerability just came out and people just wanted to encourage me. And I'm on the encouraging end usually, I'm telling people what God says and I'm pumping it out. And they're sort of on the receiving end. Well the tables got turned and people just came around me.

The same thing actually happened at our church. People saw me also in a new kind of vulnerability and I think it brought a well spring of love. And I believe right now a year later our church is still experiencing the euphoria of that outpouring of love toward Patricia and me. You know, you can take your pastor for granted period. But after 23 years you can really take him for granted. And all of a sudden it was if the people stopped taking us for granted and just came around us. And we're still living in the joy of I think what God produced in terms of the love of our people surrounding us. And here we are a year later and it's been the best year in the history of the church.

AL: Well, those are all deeply encouraging signs of finding the purpose of trials. But let me just take a different tact if I may with you, Patricia, for a moment, and that is anything humorous come out of all of this? Because I know you're a fun lady. We've enjoyed the opportunities of being on some trips with you folks and I guess you've got an interesting one coming up. But anything humorous take place? Something about a watermelon seed in the bed that you can fill us in on.

PAT: Oh. Some dear people had brought some watermelon to me and it sounded good in the middle of the night so I got up and I guess dug in to the watermelon. And Johnny found a seed in the bed or something, I don't understand...

JOHN: Yeah, more than one.

PAT: But it wasn't easy to eat with my halo on.

AL: Now this is a heavy piece of machinery.

PAT: Yeah, it's metal with four pins that go into the skull...to suspend your head.

AL: In other words, they actually break the scalp in order to get those...

JOHN: Yeah.

PAT: Well they...yeah, it goes right into the skin into the scalp.

AL: What happens to the hair?

PAT: Well, it's neglected.

AL: In other words, it was shaved off in order to do this?

PAT: Yes...well, mainly because they had to put stitches in the top of my head, about 40, so they just shaved the top of my head, put the staples in...but...

AL: How does a woman who is well coiffed deal with that sort of a situation?

JOHN: Not very well.

PAT: You stay in the house most of the time.

JOHN: What was even worse was when the hair started to grow back, the arm wouldn't get up high enough to fix it. So hair started coming back...I think steroids that were pumped into her also had the effect of having her hair fall out. So that's been an interesting thing and now... I remember when she would go in the bathroom to do her hair and she would take one arm and stick her elbow against the wall, propping it up against the wall to hold it so she could flop her hand up there to try to fix it.

PAT: More than that, Al, it was difficult, I was not in pain, maybe a little discomfort and it was difficult to sleep with that halo on because your head is suspended at whatever position you're in.

AL: I can't imagine how you could do it...

PAT: But, I had nothing but time on my hands so when I could doze off I would. But as much as anything it was difficult, nothing would fit over this halo because the halo is supported by a huge vest that, you know, is full cast around you.

AL: And how long were you in that?

PAT: Almost three months. It actually came off earlier than they expected to take it off because of the numbness that had set in my extremities, they were concerned about a pinched nerve.

AL: Do you get to keep that as sort of a little trophy?

PAT: Yes I do. I have it hanging...actually it's framed. No.

JOHN: I'm going to make it into a chandelier.

PAT: No.

AL: I'm sure you could.

PAT: No, but it is a reminder of...and even that is a wonderful thing, Al. Just a small note on that. When I was in the hospital my neurosurgeon that administered the application of the halo was okay but I had some questions that weren't being answered so the Lord was good...we received a letter in the mail from a gentleman that is a listener of the radio and he was the man that invented the halo. The government had commissioned him to put together some sort of thing rather than the striker frame which Joni Erikson was in, and it was...there's a lot of disadvantages to that. So about 26 years ago he came up with this new apparatus that would suspend the head so that the spine would heal correctly. And he wrote me a letter and said that he had heard about my accident on the radio and was concerned about who my doctor was and what hospital I had been taken care of in. So I called him and he recommended a wonderful neurosurgeon to me. And so I called her and she was just wonderful, I was so thrilled.

AL: So you have a lot of praise for those medical support teams that were around you.

PAT: Yes, very much so.

AL: Well how many days were you in the hospital actually?

PAT: About three weeks.

AL: What did you learn about being in the hospital as far as whether people should visit or whether they should stay away? What did you learn as Patricia MacArthur, the patient?

PAT: Al, I was never inconvenienced or put out by my visitors. I think the hospital staff was more so because there were so many, it was difficult in the halls and all the traffic coming and going.

JOHN: Especially with the kids racing up and down the halls, in the vacant wheel chair.

PAT: Sitting in the wheel chairs. And I think it's nice...

AL: Those are the grandchildren.

JOHN: Those are the grandchildren.

AL: Okay, I just wanted to make sure it wasn't your own kids.

PAT: Yes...yes.

JOHN: They were being pushed by the older children.

PAT: I think a visit is nice. And I...after about a few days we got a little journal and just had the people who came sign a little note to let me know that they had been there. And they, the hospital administration didn't want so many visitors coming in. So...but I think a card is always nice, or like the banner you sent me that I posted in my room was very much encouraging. But when you're going through a situation like that, it is nice to be reminded that people are praying for you and they care for you and you have nothing to do but read those things. So it meant a lot to me. And I think someone who is seriously ill or had a serious accident, a card is always nice, just to remind them that you love them...

JOHN: We had so much stuff in there, Al. I mean, it looked like a florist shop and then she couldn't...she was lying on her back and so we were hanging all the cards from the ceiling so that she could sit there and kind of read them. Posters the kids would make, and it was a great outpouring of expressions of love on cards and posters and things.

AL: This cassette, "The Purpose of Trials," which we're offering to our listeners today because we'd love to hear from our friends who have appreciated the ministry of John MacArthur and who love both John and Patricia. The purpose of trials, John, why is that? As I think about Patricia, maybe if she had stopped a little longer at a red light, maybe if she had turned a little differently, maybe that wouldn't have all happened. Why did God allow that to happen?

JOHN: Well I think first of all, Al, it's the inevitability of a fallen world. It's just...it's there, it's just going to happen. Just in general we live in a fallen world and the world is cursed and death is reality and disease and illness and injury and error and all of that sin and so forth. So it's the nature of the world. And, you know, I don't see God up in heaven sort of indiscriminately or discriminately at His own judgment just sort of zapping people into accidents. I think it's just the way the course of the world runs. I don't think God blows out your tire and then rolls your car for you. I think you probably had a nail in your tire, is what I'm saying, or something. So I think it's the nature of the world. But I do

believe providentially God controls all of that in the mystery of His will. And I believe that the purpose, you could sum it up in a number of ways, one of the purposes that God has in trials is basically to humble us, to break our sense of control, our sense of sovereignty, if you will, over our life and times.

AL: Are you saying that God had a lesson that He had to teach Patricia and He could only do it in that way?

JOHN: We've examined that so many times and I don't know that there was...and she's examined her heart, and you know, is there some area of her life that's sinful specifically that she needed to deal with...and I think honestly, honey, you went through that, I mean, no one is perfect, but there was no glaring revelation of life. But I think God uses that to humble us, to make us dependent. He uses it to drive us to Him. He uses it to drive us to each other. He uses it to help us be able to help others who have that experience. He uses that to put us in a position where we are at the mercy of His grace. And then He puts His grace on display. I mean, if there's anything Patricia learned out of this that I can say is absolute giltedged solid gold lesson it is that God answers prayer.

AL: Yes.

JOHN: And she can...she says that over and over again. Well we've always believed that. I've always preached that. But when you're there and your neck is broken and you don't know what the future holds as if there is a future, and here she is whole and well and she just says, "God answered prayer."

PAT: And you know,....

JOHN: So there are many things that God teaches us.

PAT: It isn't necessarily the condition of our spiritual state. You know, some people think, "Well we've prayed long and hard and faithfully and yet the outcome of our situation was not necessarily positive." But I think...I know God has considered all aspects of my situation...well, I mean, one being my husband's ministry, how it would have been a detriment in my mind to have a quadriplegic at home. I think it would have made his ministry less effective. Not only that, but I think it was one opportunity for God to put His healing power on display around the world because my husband's ministry many many people knew about the accident. And they have seen God's gracious mercy in my life...which I'm not deserving of necessarily but I'm so thankful that He chose me to put Himself on display.

JOHN: You know, as a footnote to that, too. I told Patricia that I don't want to say that God spared her life for her sake because heaven is a better place. But I know He spared her life for my sake. People wouldn't know what contribution she makes to me, they would never know that if they didn't know us. Our church people understand that. People who know her understand that. You would understand

that, Al, because you know her strength and...

AL: This is a hard program for her to do today because she's usually behind the scenes.

JOHN: Yeah, that's right. But I wouldn't be the man that I am at all, and I need her beside me. I need her...I need her...you know, she expects me to be the first available person for a vacancy in the trinity, you know. I mean, her expectations of me are so high, she says..."Well you preach it why shouldn't you live it?" Every man should be so blessed to have a woman in his life with those kinds of expectations.

AL: Indeed we are.

JOHN: Yeah, and so a godly woman who holds me accountable, who is strength to my weakness, I tend to go blitzing through to the theological end and she tends to see the people along the path and stop me long enough to say, "You need to look at this person and you need to minister here and there," and God knew that.

AL: Let's talk about this tape, "The purpose of trials." In this message, John, you give us some Old Testament illustrations. Obviously Job was one who had plenty of trials. But you also give us people like Hezekiah and Habakkuk. Could you spell Habakkuk for me, Patricia?

PAT: It's toward the end of the Old Testament and it starts with an "H".

JOHN: Just remember there's three "Ks".

AL: In all sincerity though, how did these people have trials? I understand about Job. And I understand about Abraham. But what about Hezekiah and Habakkuk? What do we need to know about the purpose of trials in their lives?

JOHN: Well I think what you learn from the trials in those lives is that God knows what is best. I think Hezekiah would have been better off if he had accepted God's will and not ask for something that God didn't want him to have because when he got it it turned out to be bad. And in the case of Habakkuk, he couldn't understand why what God was doing was bad, he just couldn't fit it into history. And I think in both cases there's a great lesson. And I think Job is the model of it. He was content with what was and just left it to God. Hezekiah wanted to argue with what was and so did Habakkuk. You're much better off to just back up and say, "If this is God's plan, I want to learn from it."

I tell people that all the time. In fact, just on Sunday a man came to me with all kinds of things in his mind and he was a pastor broken hearted, said I took three days from my church, I came to California, just want to sit here and I wanted to catch you and talk to you. And he told me his problems. And he said, "What do I do?" I said, embrace the struggle, embrace the trial. take it to your

heart.

AL: What do you mean by that?

JOHN: Accept it as a gift from God for purposes in your life. Don't fight it. Don't argue against it. Don't debate God about it. Don't question why. Just take it to your heart. Paul said, "I've learned that. I asked the Lord three times, he says in 2 Corinthians 12, to remove the thing. The Lord said no, I'll just give you sufficient grace because My power is perfected in your weakness. You're never stronger than when you're weak." And that's what made Paul then say, "I'll gladly rejoice in my persecutions, distresses, insults and all these things that come my way." So I said embrace the trial and learn what God is saying in it...learn what He wants to teach you through it.

AL: I want to talk about some of the ministry of Grace To You not only here in the United States and Canada but also around the world. But first I want to ask you a very...a very serious question because in this last year we have seen several moral defections. How are you and Patricia doing?

JOHN: I told her driving over here today that I have never been in love with her more than I am now. She has never been more precious to me than she is now. I almost lost her. I...I...I have, and this is true, I have not nor have I had eyes for any other person through our married life.

PAT: (Whispering) Thirty years.

JOHN: And I...I mean, she's an adventurer, Al. She's an absolute adventure. After 30 years she's an adventure. (laughter)

PAT: The Lord knew you needed it.

JOHN: But, I mean, it's wonderful. And I'll tell you, we're at the time in life, the kids are grown, we have four kids, they love Christ. Three of them are married and they're just making grandchildren for us all the time. And I'm so glad that we have each other now because the kids are gone and now we have each and other and we can't think of anything more wonderful than to be together and enjoy the thrill of these little grandchildren and get them on our knee and teach them about Christ. These are wonderful years for us.

AL: Thirty years, Patricia, is there some secret to that?

PAT: No, I just had a wonderful example in my parents and being committed to one another and serving one another. Other than the ministry, nothing came before that. And the Lord has just been so good to us. I mean, I couldn't begin to share with you the blessings that He has allowed us to enjoy in these 30 years.

JOHN: It's a vertical thing, Al. If...if a man defects in ministry, that is not first and foremost a moral problem, that is a spiritual problem. When the vertical starts to collapse, the horizontal is going to collapse, too. When the relationship between a man and Christ begins to falter, then you can look for it to show up in his earthly relationships on the horizontal level.

AL: But sometimes that's very hard to see because individuals who have had so-called moral failures, I'm not quite sure what that is, but they rationalize it so easily, so quickly they've justified it and seem to move right on with their lives.

JOHN: And that's...that's the tragedy of tragedies because that...what that demonstrates is a lack of repentance. Repentance is a true broken and a contrite heart, where a man is literally shattered and devastated by his iniquity. And certainly a mature Christian in the ministry would...you would expect to demonstrate true repentance. And it's so sad when someone like that is caught in sin and rather than seeing a true repentance, a brokenness, you see a rush to justify which is...which is really not dealing with the sin at all or the consequences of it.

AL: Let's talk about your books. You have had some interesting publications that have come out recently. The...it's almost an oxymoron, Faith Works. How is that doing? It's doing very well. Patricia said to me not long ago, she said, "Why don't you just write a book that everybody likes?" And I said, "I don't know...I don't know." I guess I think when I write them everybody will. You know, but I think, Al, there's a little little piece of the Kingdom that the Lord has sort of given to me as a kind of a prophetic voice, a watchman on the wall. And I write to confront an issue. I don't want to do it in a less than loving and gracious way but I want to do it in a bold and biblical way. Faith Works has done very well, from what the fellows around here tell me. It's outselling any book we've ever distributed through Grace To You.

And you know what thrills me about it? Well it does deal with that whole issue of "is it necessary to confess Jesus as Lord to be saved," it isn't just a polemic theological discussion, in fact what thrills me about it is that people are being converted reading it. And that's always been my prayer. It really is a treatise on the biblical teaching of salvation that is very readable and a person can read and say, "This is what salvation is, this is what saving faith is, this is what a transformed life looks like." And I think...so it directs itself to a debate on the theological front, but in such a way, I think, that it has a ministry to people who want to understand the truth.

AL: Well, John, for those of us who believe what you have written because it's scripturally accurate, we just say keep writing. We appreciate it.

And, Patricia...and, Patricia, from your standpoint, the quotation that John just gave about your saying, "Why don't you write a book that everybody likes?" Does it hurt when letters come from

people who don't like your husband? Is that hard when people criticize John?

PAT: Yes it is hard, Al. But...and I have finally I think through the years learned to deal with it. It came to me, I guess, a few years ago, the fact that if Christ was an absolutely sinless man, had nothing but love and service and eternal life for other people would be rejected, He would be spat on, and treated so cruelly. Who am I to think that my husband who is in the flesh is going to have any less than that? And the truth of the matter, he has not been treated as bad as Christ was treated. And I'm just sorry they don't know his heart and his motive and the fact that he's writing for their benefit, not to create controversy or bitter feelings or arguments, but...I have finally learned to just leave that to the Lord and I trust my husband and I totally agree with everything he writes. I can embrace it personally and it has been a comfort to me to realize that when you have something to say it's going to be effective, there's going to be some flack, you know. Nobody....

AL: If you don't get any flack you better worry about what you've written.

PAT: Right. If it's that easily to go along with and agree with, then maybe it needs to be edited. So I can accept it now much easier than I used to.

AL: In addition to all of the books that John has written, I think something else that means a lot to listeners to Grace To You are your monthly letters, John. The listeners appreciate hearing from your heart each month.

JOHN: And that is my heart, Al. I know there are some ministries where those letters aren't necessarily written by the guy because he's busy and all, but I give the input for those letters. Jay Flowers who actually takes care of our correspondence to our regular listeners, meets with me and we discuss the things that are in those letters and I share my heart. So that is my heart coming through those letters. And I want to give them a little window on what I feel. I don't want to always be in the mode of teaching. I want to be sometimes as personal as I can be and share my heart. And I think those letters do that.

AL: They do indeed, and we appreciate it. Now let's talk about the future. What's going to be happening first of all in Patricia's life? Are there some things that you want to see accomplished as far as John's ministry is concerned?

PAT: Well I think the Lord leads and directs through his heart and mind. And I want to be supportive of that. I still have one daughter at home at this year in particular since the accident, and so I don't feel my homework is completely complete. And so I do feel the need to still be a keeper at home somewhat while she's still in school and not married. But I'm looking forward to the time when Johnny and I will be freed up to do things together, you know. And I want to be available to the Lord for whatever He has in mind for me. I've always been involved at the church as much as possible. I...you

know, always taught a Sunday School class and I'm in women's Bible study called Every Woman's Grace that meets once a week. I'm a deaconess and I try to do my fair share of carrying the load. But I think my number one ministry is just being a wife to a man of God that is very very busy. So...

AL: That's wonderful. And, John, I know you appreciate that.

JOHN: Yeah, it's wonderful. I mean, she's going to go as soon as we're through talking today and she's going to pick up her little threeyearold grandson, take him for the day because she feels even though our kids are Christians and they love the Lord, that her input in his little life is very important. And so she's ready to go after that second generation and read them Bible stories and just love them. So he'll be crawling in our bed tonight and get his little Bible story before he stays over night with us.

AL: That's great. That's great. What about ministry here in the United States, John? Shepherds conferences, you were recently at a large conference down in Memphis and a radio conference in I guess Nashville. What's on your docket?

JOHN: Well I have to keep trying to prioritize things, Al. And priority, number one, for me is to preach the Word of God at Grace Church because out of those sermons come tapes and out of those tapes come radio programs. And that's my life, Al. I'll probably die with my preaching boots on. And I love that. And Sunday morning, Sunday night, I just want to keep preaching the Word of God...that's priority number one in my own church. Priority number two is to write. I want to finish the commentary series on the New Testament and we're really getting back on track now, that had a little glitz there for a while which some editorial problems but I want to finish...

AL: I'm glad he didn't say Patricia.

PAT: Really.

JOHN: No...but we're going to finish that commentary series and I want to really focus on that because I think that's a set of tools that God can use in the lives of Bible teachers.

AL: That's your legacy.

JOHN: Yeah, and then I want to continue to write what I call books for every Christ, which is a series called The MacArthur Study Series, paperback books, and then every once in a while these issue books for the sake of church leadership. And that's priority number two, is writing.

Priority number three is foreign because I feel the cry of the world wherewith they don't have anywhere near the resources we have here. Just in a matter of the last few weeks I've been in Minsk, in Bellarros(?) in the former Soviet Union with a pastors conference. I've been in Ireland with a pastors conference. I've been in England with a pastors conference and leaders conference. And also

preaching at night in churches there. Those countries have needs.

And then really the fourth priority would be whatever I can do in America to minister to church leaders and pastors and if there are significant opportunities to do that, I want to do that. But the priorities have to flow out of that first priority, I really need to stay focused in my preaching and teaching at Grace Church.

AL: How can we pray for the MacArthur family, Patricia, more effectively? What areas of needs? Certainly John's protection as he's traveling all over the country and all over the world.

PAT: Well I guess it seems simple but wisdom and strength to know His direction and make certain that all of our efforts are prompted by the Holy Spirit and not in the flesh. And that Johnny will keep his priorities in the order that he stated, you know, as long as we're at the church, that is his first priority and we want the blessing of the elders and the people and that they will feel it in their heart to free him up to minister outside the church.

AL: Well we'll encourage our listeners to do that. I'm sure that they will. And we also want to encourage our listeners to send for this free tape cassette, The Purpose of Trials, a message by John MacArthur. And if you're going through a difficult time right now, if you can't quite put it all together from your perspective as well as from God's perspective, this could be a real help to you. Or it could be that you want this tape to share with a loved one who is going through some deep times of testing. The title is "The Purpose of Trials," and in just a moment Carl Miller is going to be giving us the address and all of the other necessary information.

Just before we go though, Patricia, what would you say to John MacArthur after this full year that you've been going through some very difficult times? How would you express your love and appreciation to this man of God? I'd be interested in hearing.

JOHN: Me, too.

AL: Just leave me out of...no, don't talk about Johnny, talk to Johnny.

PAT: Johnny, okay. Well he's a very consistent man and I can honestly say through all these years of being married to the man he is what he preaches and he doesn't have a high/low personality in terms of temperament or panic or anything, he just trusts the Lord in every given situation. Even through this he was a great strength to me because he knew in his heart and I did as well that God was in control even through all of this and that He had a purpose that was for my good and His glory...

AL: That is God's glory.

PAT: Right, right, God's glory, and Johnny fit into that picture very well. I mean, he was there when I needed him and he ministered to me when I needed him, I mean to the point of putting antiseptic on my pin sites and caring for me when I had particular needs, he really came through. And passed the test with flying colors. So I'm very grateful for his faithfulness and his love and more than anything else for his faithfulness to the calling that God has brought into his life.

AL: Would you mind leaving me out of the picture and just looking across and John and saying what you have in your heart for John?

PAT: I love you, dear. And I'm thankful for the 30 years that He has given to us and the many blessings that He has given to us in our marriage and I hope there's many more.

JOHN: Amen.

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