

May 2020 Report from Gary Henry

Dear brethren,

I pray that you and your families are well, and that you've been able to cope with the difficulties of the virus crisis as well as possible. With my health issues, I've not been able to get out much during the last year anyway, so my life has not been all that different in the past two months than it was before. Thankfully, I have been able to obtain food.

To update you on the writing of *Obeying the Gospel*, I am almost finished, at least as far as the writing of the pages is concerned. I have only eleven more pages to write. So as soon as I can get those written and sent off to my editors, I will be able to turn my attention to the many other things that have to be done before the end of the year when the book will be published. I have moved the publication date up a bit, and now hope to have it in print by Thanksgiving.

Once the writing is out of the way, I will have to decide on the sequence in which all of the pages will appear in the book. This will be a tedious task, especially with this particular book. Next, the front and back matter will have to be written, the layout of the cover finalized, and many other post-production chores done.

Mainly, however, the time between now and the end of the year will be occupied in writing (and designing) *AreYouaChristian.com*, an evangelistic website that hopefully can be used in tandem with *Obeying the Gospel*.

As for my health situation, that is holding steady. I have reached a plateau, I think, where things are not going to get much better, but perhaps they will not get any worse, at least for a while.

During the last year, I have had lots of time to ponder my work and the physical conditions in which it is going to have to be done for the foreseeable future. Thanks to the Lord's grace, I have been able to develop some coping strategies that have enabled me to keep working. Some days I only have a few hours in which I can work, so I have learned to be very focused within those hours and economical in their use. I have dispensed with a lot of trivia, and zeroed in on what I believe are the most critical tasks that I need to be concentrating on at this point in my life.

In the nighttime hours (the time when I struggle the most and there is no possibility of engaging in any normal activity), I have learned how to deal with that reality, once again thanks to the Lord's grace. I have many tools in my survival toolkit for the evening, and as long as I can be in the controlled environment of my home, I can almost always find a place of peace before the night is over. What I have learned is that there is no single strategy that works all of the time. I have to have a repertoire of strategies, from which I can draw when one thing or another is not working.

I have learned a great many things about pain management, some from my doctors and some from trial and error. Our brains have the power to minimize the sensation of pain in our bodies, but more importantly, we can deal effectively with pain, even if the pain itself does not go away. We are, as David said, "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14), and it has been exciting to learn firsthand how the mind and body can forge an alliance that at least puts some boundaries around pain and disability. I do grow weary of this fight, of course, and I'd be less than honest if I told you otherwise. But for now, I am coping, and I am still writing. If the Lord keeps me going until the end of this year, a major milestone will have been reached, and it'll be time to ask, "OK, Gary, what next?"

Brotherly,



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