

I first met Dr. Patty Williams, affectionately known to many as “Doc”, about two years ago. It was a “God thing.” We didn’t meet in person right away. Instead, I got to know Patty through the beautiful stories she wrote for my online Christian magazine, in which she shared so much of herself. And I got to know more about her through her lifelong friend Janie King, a fellow Christian writer I became friends with by phone.

By the time I met Patty in person a year ago, I felt like I had known her all my life. The heart connection between us was instant. We were so much alike that we understood each other well. She opened her heart to me and welcomed me into her family (she is this way with everyone). I felt like I had found a long-lost sister.

From that moment on, Patty became my big sister, my “mom,” my teacher, my coach, my doctor, and my cooking instructor! And a dear, dear friend and sister in Christ. Somewhere in the middle of it all, God blessed me with a call to be a missionary for youth; and the mission field He’s sending me to is the northwest Arkansas town where Patty lives and runs her busy medical clinic. It’s going to be my privilege to be her neighbor and serve beside her in the church.

Patty’s stories are incredible. Somehow, in the midst of being a full time doctor, Sunday school teacher and cooking for “a village,” she writes at least one inspirational story a week. As her publisher, I wanted her to share some of her stories in an e-book. I asked Janie, who has lived these stories along with Patty for so many years, to choose a selection of stories to be published as *Fumes of Faith*.

That’s the title Patty chose to describe her life with God. Though she’s been through so much hardship, the Lord has always provided the grace to keep her going, and to keep her ministering to everyone around her. And Patty has been willing to walk in His grace, trusting in Him for everything, serving Him with her whole heart, letting His love consume her and pour out for others.

I believe that Patty's "fumes of faith" in her life shows us that God's grace truly is sufficient for all our needs – just as our Lord assured the Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 12:9. All we need to do is walk in His assurance and love. *Truly*. Patty has shown, with her very life, how this is possible for each of us – and how *much* God loves us.

As we assembled the stories for Patty's e-book, she prayed about it; we all did. Then she came to me and said the e-book would only be complete if I would add devotional reflections after each of her stories. I went to the Lord about this, and He showed me that this was His way to respond to each "fumes of faith" moment in Patty's life. He told me that if I would listen and look closely, I would see Him in each moment; I would learn more about Who He is; and through the collection of Patty's stories, woven together, an image of God's heart would appear.

I will remember *forever* the week I spent with the Lord, deep in prayer, listening to His heart, as He and I read Patty's stories together and responded. The beauty of that time together is not something I can describe, except through my tears and the joy spilling out of my heart. I have never felt the overwhelming love of God so deeply as I have through these stories. What a privilege this was.

I am humbled to have sat close beside Him, as He and Patty wrote this love song together, and sang it to each other through the words on these pages. Again, I don't have words to describe how this feels. But you will feel it too, as you read this book. You will feel the Loving Presence of the Lord, and know *in your heart*, without a doubt, that His grace, His love, His ALL is more than enough to carry us through to a beautiful and glorious eternity with Him.

From a heart overflowing with love,

Janet Eriksson

The most unforgettable valley

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

ACTS 1:8 (KJV)

It was so early. The children were sleeping. The 1949 two-ton truck was packed to bulging with everything we owned, plus our six children and our German Shepherd. The mattress atop the truck announced we were ready for our journey. With a very prayerful plea for safety we drove out of the long driveway of Graham Creek Ranch. Our last San Joaquin Valley sunrise slowly peeked over the horizon as we were leaving. The Okies were returning home.

The days were hot. To give everyone a break we would pull over at the state parks to rest, play and eat. The children were having the fun of their lives. After loading everyone back up, Doug would pat the hood of the old truck and pray for the road ahead of us that led to Oklahoma. The long trip gave me a lot of time to reflect. Everything had happened so quickly.

It was so hard to leave the ranch, a “garden of Eden.” Dr. Barton was a unique person. He had an organic ranch that we had run for three years. He built the beautiful SICON School of Nature, where sixth-graders could visit and enjoy the vast information and beauty of creation. He had passed away at 94 years old and the ranch was sold. It was so hard to believe he was gone to his final resting place. We were saddened by his loss, but death had not completed its sweep.

Laura, our 3 ½ year old had come down with pneumonia, and ultimately death scooped her out of my arms. I was going through a range of emotions that shocked me. At the funeral I looked at her for the last time and thought I could see her breathing. I knew she was gone but everything in me didn’t want to admit it. I wanted her back. I had to accept that God had a purpose and like it or not, I had to accept that Laura was now in God’s hands and life here must go on.

Following the funeral Doug decided we needed to just take a drive. We ended up about 100 miles from home. We had taken our newborn daughter with us. Out in the middle of nowhere we came upon a little country holiness church. The church windows were open and we could hear the angelic singing. We weren't of their faith but we decided to slip in and sit way in the back and enjoy the peace that their music was bringing to our hurting hearts.

We didn't know anyone; we didn't even know exactly where we were. But it didn't matter. The singing stopped and the Pastor stood up. He appeared to be bothered by something. He paced back and forth on the platform; then he began to walk down the aisle toward where we were sitting. He stopped in front of me. My heart was racing. He placed his hand on my head and began speaking in a language that was totally foreign to me. Then he gave the "interpretation" in English.

It was undeniable that God was involved in the words that were spoken. I had never had such an experience. The message assured me I was special and He (God) saw my suffering. He would place in my hands the gift of healing, and I would lead others to the transforming experience of becoming a Christian. Through pain and suffering they would become whole. I had heard about this kind of experience, and read about it; but never had I experienced such a powerful moment that led me into a secret communication with my heavenly Father.

There was a moment of revered silence and then the congregation began to worship and praise God. I slipped out with the baby, tears running down my cheeks. I knew this experience would change the course of my life forever. It had the power to lift me out of my valley of despair and place me in a valley of hope.

Almost before we knew it, we were pulling into Grandpa and Grandma's Oklahoma farm. The old truck had chugged its last miles on fumes of faith. Being a ninth-grade dropout, mother of seven, I had no idea God would launch me on an eight-year journey that would take me through medical school. Only God in all His wisdom could have ever known the journey He had charted for my future.

*Lord, help us to always keep our trust in You, for You will truly meet our needs, even if in mysterious ways. Help us to remember nothing happens to us that You are not aware of or that is too big for You to handle. Help us to place our hand in Yours and let You lead the way. In Jesus' name I pray.
Amen.*

We need to have a tender heart toward our Savior and allow Him to share His truths and ways in whatever manner He chooses. His Word tells us that we perish because of the lack of knowledge¹ with regard to His promises.

Patty "Doc" Williams

¹ Hosea 4:6

Reflection

***He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."***

PSALM 91:1-2

I want you to slip into the back of that little church.

It's okay. You can come in.

There's a quiet spot for you. You're part of the worship, part of the family. But you don't have to say or do anything.

No one knows you. They don't know the valleys you've struggled through. They don't know the hurts, the fears, the agony of tearful nights and days that feel like a desert stretching out of your heart. They don't know that your world is standing on its head, spinning out of your control.

They don't know your faith, or how much you love God.

No one needs to know right now. Just slip in quietly, and sit here.

You don't need to get up and go to the altar. You don't need to shout your pleas to God. You don't need to hand up a tearful mess and whisper, "Lord, take this from me."

You don't need to do anything. Just sit. Quietly.

Let God do everything.

God moves in places like this, don't you know? He treasures moments like this, when He alone is there to touch every hurting place in your heart. He treasures this time with you... not because He wants to see you hurting; but because He wants you to know that HE IS GOD.

Let yourself be quiet amid the sounds of worship, amid the tears of your soul. Let go of all that you had, all that you knew about yourself; let go of all that is no more. It's just you and God. And He's right here.

Give Him your whole heart. Let Him heal it.

Abba, I weep at the beauty of Your love. My heart weeps, overcome with Your tender mercy, as you reach out to every hurting heart; as you draw them to You, in whatever quiet place they will hear Your loving voice. Abba, we don't deserve Your love. But You are love. Touch our hearts deeply, Lord. Let us be changed forever by You. In Jesus' precious and holy name. Amen.

When I look at the way Patty lives her life, and always has, I understand "fumes of faith" in a new way. I see God lighting one candle at a time, on a path that leads straight into the depths of His heart. And I see Patty following. She doesn't need the whole path lit; just one candle for the next step. It's God's love that lights each one, in turn, as He draws us deeper inside His heart. He has lit the next candle for you. Will you follow?

Janet Eriksson

Grandpa's surprise birthday pie

Taking care of two children under one and a half years old, caring for a husband, and working full time caused time to get away from me quickly. It was easy to let special events sneak up on me.

My Grandmother reminded me, as I was picking up my children after work, that Grandpa's birthday celebration was three hours away. She had everything under control. The only thing missing was the pumpkin pie I was supposed to bring. It was Grandpa's favorite desert.

After getting the children bundled up, we headed home. I quickly got them settled and made the pie crust in record time. I turned on the oven and reached, one at a time, for the ingredients needed for the pie. I cracked my eggs into the big mixing bowl, dumped in the honey and cream with the spices, stirred the mixture and made a dash for the pantry to get the pumpkin. Haste turned into panic. There was no pumpkin! And there was no time to go to the grocery store.

The crying of a hungry 11 month old added an extra tinge of anxiety. I grabbed a jar of his favorite baby food and prepared to feed him in spite of the rush. He graciously ate every bite of his carrots. That's when it hit me: *Carrots!* Just maybe...?

I wiped off his hands and happy little face. He didn't seem to mind being placed in his playpen. I rushed to the pantry. Yes, there were 12 jars of baby food carrots. I scooped them up in my arms and made a dash for the kitchen counter. I popped the lids and dumped the carrots into my awaiting ingredients. I poured the mixture into my pie crust and placed it in the oven. Anxiously I waited, hoping it would look and taste like a pumpkin pie.

I rushed to put the kids and my baked pie in the car. We were barely going to get there on time. My husband Doug was to meet us there.

The dinner was lovely. As we sang "Happy Birthday" to Grandpa, Grandma went to get the pumpkin pie. Silently I prayed the Lord would hide the carrot taste. I held my breath as she put a dollop of whipping cream on each slice and passed them around.

Grandpa held up his piece, smiled at me and said, "Honey, how did you get it such a pretty color?"

Raising an eyebrow slightly and smiling, I said, “I wanted to make you a special pie so maybe God blessed it.”

He set his plate down, put a bite on his fork and slowly put it in his mouth. My heart was pounding so hard I could hear it beat. It seemed to take him forever to savor the flavor and swallow it.

“Patty, this is delicious, you must have used a fresh pumpkin. Where did you find one?” he asked as he took another bite. By this time everyone was oohing and aaahing over my contribution to the meal.

Being the seasoned cook my Grandmother was, she asked, “What did you do to get such a pretty color and silky taste?”

“Well, Grandma, I prayed over the pie so I guess God just put His special blessing on it.” I avoided her gaze and put a bite of pie in my mouth.

Grandpa and Doug took the two children to the front room to entertain them while Grandma and I cleaned up the kitchen.

“Okay, young lady, fess up. What did you do to your pie?” Grandma said as I placed the dishes in the sink.

Turning toward her, I asked, “Will you keep a secret?” Grandma loved nothing better than knowing a secret.

“You know I will,” she said, as she came closer so I could share my secret with her.

“I used baby food carrots,” I confessed.

Grandma’s delight and belly laugh were worth the whole ordeal... for we both knew Grandpa hated carrots.

Patty “Doc” Williams

CARROT PIE

Ingredients

2 eggs
½ cup honey
1 can (12 oz or 1 ¼ cups) evaporated milk
2 cups baby food carrots or 2 cups cooked carrots (smashed)
2 ½ tsp pumpkin pie spice
½ tsp salt
1 pie crust (prepared or homemade)

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Gather all ingredients for pie filling while oven is pre-heating.

Directions: Prepare one crust. Place in pie pan. Put in pre-heated oven and bake for 10 minutes.

Mix all ingredients for pie filling in medium mixing bowl. Beat on medium speed with mixer until mixture is blended together (approximately 2 minutes).

Pour filling into pre-baked pie shell on oven rack while still in oven. Turn oven down to 350 degrees. Bake 45-50 minutes. (To test if pie is done, insert knife in center; should come out clean.)

Remove from oven and let cool.

Serves 6-8 people.

Reflection

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made...

ROMANS 1:20

When Patty first told me this story, I thought, “She can’t be serious. A baby food carrot pie? Ick!”

She smiled, and got this little glimmer in her eyes. I’ve come to recognize that wonderful look. It means she’s about to reveal an awesome “secret” that God has tucked away in our gardens. A “secret” awaiting our discovery. And I find myself eagerly following her into the kitchen, where I will get to know our Creator better.

“The carrot is a perfect food,” Patty explains.

So is everything else from the garden, in its own way – as you discover when you spend time with Patty. You really get the point that God didn’t create by accident. Every vegetable, every fruit has its unique purpose. And just as with people, God intends the foods He created to work together. That’s where the kitchen comes in. Every new “creation” is a surprising revelation of God!

When you add pumpkin pie spice to mashed carrots, whether the baby food variety or fresh from the garden... wow! It’s incredible. Your taste buds know it, and every cell in your body knows it too. It’s heavenly nourishment. You can imagine God Himself is spoon feeding you!

Our heavenly Father created food for our nourishment and enjoyment. When you experience “pumpkin” carrot pie, you’ll know this for sure. And you’ll fall in love with God in a whole new way.

Abba, thank You for nourishing Your children in ways that delight us – through food from the garden, creativity in the kitchen, and through prayer and worship and Your Word. We love You, Lord, and we welcome You to our table. We await, with excitement and awe, the day when we will sit at Your table with You, precious Lord, with our eternal family in the Kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Something fun to do is to make three pies – one pumpkin, one carrot, one yam – following the recipe above. Patty and I did this together not too long ago. What an awesome experience. Each pie is unique in taste, texture and nutrition. All are delicious. Tasting a sliver of each pie, one after the other, I learned a whole lot about God.

Janet Eriksson

Dan River Dollies

Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.

PROVERBS 31:28

“Hey, look at all of these clean plates. Ready for dessert?” Ear to ear smiles could be seen before I even finished my sentence.

“Mommy, I ate all my carrots. I didn’t feed them to Spunky under the table either,” Randy said proudly.

What an awesome sight. My seven little dolls were gathered around the table enjoying their dessert. Two were in high chairs: one year old Linda sucking on her chocolate-flavored little fingers, and two year old Laura with her chubby, chocolate-covered happy face. Three year old Betty sat real petite-like, with her napkin tucked in her collar, eating every bite very slowly, as if to savor the flavor. Five year old Jo Jo was chattering to Betty. Randy took the opportunity to sneak a bite of Jo Jo’s cake and smiled his mastered angelic smile. Eight year old Leeanna was honing her mothering skills, while seven year old Ross was preoccupied with eating his cake.

Jo Jo became aware a portion of her cake had disappeared. In disgust, with hands on her hips, she informed me, “Mama, Randy took some of my cake!”

“I haven’t swallowed it yet. Does she want it back?” Randy said in a muffled tone.

“You need to swallow that,” Ross, his older brother instructed. “Drink some of my milk.”

Sounded like a good idea until Randy started choking on the milk and cake. Racing over, I grabbed him and pounded on his back as I nearly turned him upside down, causing the evidence to promptly fall out on the floor.

Doug, by this time, was looking sternly at Randy.

“She wasn’t eating it, so I thought she didn’t want it,” he said, as if totally innocent.

“Okay, okay. Dinner is over and time for your baths,” I said. “Leeanna, if you will grab the babies’ pajamas, we’ll get them cleaned up and put them to bed.”

Finally, silence. The big table was cleaned and the dishes done. At last I could get started sewing on my newest project. Doug had surprised me by buying a whole bolt of Dan River material. It was the first wash and wear material out, at 25 cents a yard. It was true our finances were tight, but he knew how I enjoyed making our little dolls matching outfits.

I retrieved the box that held my homemade newspaper patterns from the pantry. Almost reverently I took the black marker and crossed through Laura's name and put baby Linda's on it. What a story these pattern pieces could tell; they had been used for each little girl that God had gifted us with. Leeanna and Ross were in line for new patterns tonight; they were growing up way too fast.

Removing the tablecloth, I unrolled the bolt of Dan River plaid material and began cutting out five little dresses and two little shirts. Doug came up behind me, put his arms around my waist, quoting Proverbs 31, followed by a big kiss.

Doug sat at the end of the table with his Bible, working on his sermon. By the time he was ready for bed, I had seven outfits ready to sew. Each child's name was written on a piece of paper and safety-pinned to their garment pieces.

Every spare moment after that was spent sewing my projects of love. Buttons and lace would make each little dress a personal possession. Ross and Randy had picked their button preferences from the two-gallon button jar I kept in the linen closet.

I finished sewing on the last button and hurriedly placed the outfits on each of their beds. I couldn't wait for the girls to find their surprise Barbie Doll outfits. Each garment had a note attached which read, "I love you sewwww much! Mom."

The school bus dropped the children off at the end of the driveway. The race for the house was on. When they didn't find me at the sewing machine, they knew their outfits were finished. A mad dash was made for their rooms. I could hear their girly squeals and the boys challenging each other as to who would get theirs on first. I knew Leeanna was dressing Linda, and Jo Jo was helping Laura put on her new dress.

I excitedly awaited their entering the dining room as I set out their snack. They loved modeling their outfits. Within minutes, my seven Dan River Dollies would put on a fashion show just for me.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your blessing us with our families. All too often, we get so busy with other tasks; we forget to let You use us to touch our families' hearts with memories that will never be forgotten. May we never forget to be Your hand extended to each family member. Help us to be in tune with You, so that we'll never miss an opportunity to minister to our families' needs. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

When was the last time you allowed the Holy Spirit to use you as His hand extended to the most important people in your life, your family?

Patty "Doc" Williams

Reflection

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

MATTHEW 6:19-21

Most people on earth will never read this story. They'll never know about the Dan River Dollies and their beautiful fashion show. They'll hear about shows on Broadway, shows in London and Hollywood. But not this one. That doesn't make this show any less spectacular or special to the children's audience of one.

Our most precious moments of childhood, of family relationships and gatherings will be shared by very few. But what unforgettable blessings! Blessings that nurture us, that bring joy, and perseverance and hope. Blessings that truly make us who we are. Blessings that will stay with us throughout eternity and, indeed, *shape* our eternity. Treasures we lay up in heaven.

The clothes Patty made for her children, the children's laughter and smiles, the warmth and nourishment shared around the dinner table, the love this family gave each other... all of these are treasures given to the Lord. Treasures He holds close to His heart. Treasures He will share with us, His people, for eternity.

Father, we praise You. We are so humbled at the simple treasures that move Your heart. They are the same treasures that move us deeply, if we're honest with ourselves. Thank You, Lord, that You encourage us daily to immerse our hearts in these simple treasures. Thank You for Your promise that these treasured moments will be with us for eternity, because they are laid up in heaven. We rejoice with You, our Lord, our Provider, our Heavenly Father, our Greatest Love, our Audience of One. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Remember to value the simple treasures of family laughter and love. Each of these moments is a moment of rejoicing for our Audience of One.

Janet Eriksson

Patricia Ann Williams, D.O. was born in St. Joe, Missouri in 1942. She is the mother of seven children plus a heart full of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She has her medical practice in Lakeview, AR. She treats her patients' medical problems as well as their nutritional and structural needs. She spent 30 years in the ministry. The death of her three year old daughter prompted her to go to medical school so she could reach out to others in a broader manner. She loves cooking, sewing, quilt making, and organic gardening. Hobbies are writing, art, and music. She is in the process of writing a nutritional health cookbook and a series of e-books on a variety of vegetables that will benefit your health. She has two Fox Trotters, Star and Major. She is active in [True Connection Ministry Church](#) in Gassville, AR. She loves working with the youth, music department and is preparing to teach nutritional classes to the church family. You may reach her at granny_doc@hotmail.com.

But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. – ISAIAH 40:31 (NKJV)

Janet Eriksson is a Christian inspirational writer, publisher and intercessor. She is active in [Dahlonga United Methodist Church](#), a Spirit-filled place of worship, fellowship, missions and outreach in north Georgia, where she is involved in intercessory prayer and worship dance. She is also active in the [Georgia Foothills Walk to Emmaus](#) community. Janet recently completed Lay Missionary Training with the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church, and [Elijah House School for Prayer Ministry](#) training at Dahlonga UMC; read her [Elijah House testimony](#), about the life-changing work our Lord Jesus did through this program! Janet leads workshops for Christian writers and is preparing to work in youth ministry through the United Methodist Church. You may contact her at jlynn.erik@gmail.com.

Jesus said,

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” – JOHN 15:16 (NKJV)