



WOW: Word Of the Week

Dialysis

August 6, 2025

Bob, a dear friend in Michigan, has chronic kidney disease and is on dialysis. Three days a week a little blue bus shows up at his house about 6:00 AM to take him to his appointment at 7:00. He is usually back home by noon (depending on the route the bus takes to pick up and drop off people). After a bite of lunch, an afternoon nap is imperative. Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday, without fail, no exceptions. No other option – dialysis is a must. His life depends on it.

In his 2014 book, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, Tim Keller shares an illustration his wife Kathy used when they committed themselves to shared daily prayer.

"Imagine you were diagnosed with such a lethal condition that the doctor told you that you would die within hours unless you took a particular medicine – a pill every night before going to sleep. Imagine that you were told that you could never miss it or you would die. Would you forget? Would you not get around to it some nights? No – it would be so crucial that you wouldn't forget, you would never miss."

Physically, dialysis cleanses waste and extra fluid from the blood, something the kidneys normally do. Dialysis is necessary when the kidneys cannot do their job. Those whose lives depend on dialysis do not forget their dialysis appointments!

Spiritual application. A spiritual appointment. Our quiet time with God – time spent reading Scripture, meditating, praying – cleanses waste and excess from the soul. The parallel is startling! Keller said it this way: "...if we don't pray together to God, we're not going to make it because of all we are facing.... We have to pray; we can't let it just slip our minds." Indeed, our spiritual life and health depends on the cleansing of "spiritual dialysis."

I have written about what I would do differently in ministry if I could start all over. The most important thing? I would pray more. My writings about prayer, and my forthcoming book, *Dwelling in the Psalms*, reflect a felt need in my own life. Why do I not pray more?

I share this week some germ thoughts from my church bulletin article this past Sunday. In ministry, I observed that the church/spiritual year parallels the school year much more than the calendar year. August is a new year -- a time of fresh beginnings, new commitments, new schedules. Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, occurs in our fall. The beginning of a new academic year and a new spiritual year is a time for new habits.

You see where I am going, don't you? When someone is on dialysis, it is a non-negotiable, a necessity., never forgotten. Should our spiritual health be any less important? [Side note: I am amazed how many requests for prayer deal with physical health problems and how few requests deal with spiritual health problems.] "Spiritual dialysis" is a need, not a luxury. Not just for the spiritually strong. Most needed by the spiritually feeble. Get it on your calendar – quiet time, Scripture, prayer. Our spiritual vitality depends on it. Get started, and don't forget!