

of the front door with the ten-day old infant! "We were praying for you—and for him" said a woman, before little Joel was rushed to the hospital.

The baby spent weeks in Intensive Care, but recovered completely. A neighbor had been watching him, but left in panic when the fire started. I tried to tell Joel's family in the hospital that I think God has big plans for him, because if things did not happen exactly as they did, he would not be here today. I am not sure that they understood.

Do you understand that your survival from a "close call" was an indication that God has work and a plan *for you*? God has a mission and a purpose for creating every person. Sometimes, the mission is accomplished quickly, and other times, it starts later or takes much longer to be revealed or fulfilled.

We are all people "after God's own heart." He spoke of David, "I found David, son of Jesse, a man after My own heart... he carries out My every wish." May we be souls after God's own heart, by carrying out "His every wish."

Romans 8:28 says that, "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, according to His purposes." Who loves God? Only those who obey Him. But remember that He has a plan for us, and His plan is always perfect and better than our own. Surviving the "close call," gives us the opportunity to carry out His every wish, and whatever we are handed in life, it is part of His perfect plan.

If you love and obey Him, you can believe that He has entrusted some special work for you to do. Be happy and at peace with His plan, because it is *for you good*.
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Firefighter rescuing a newborn baby.

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God's Plan for Your Future



FIREMAN'S PRAYER

When I am called to duty, God, whenever flames may rage,
Give me the strength to save some life whatever be it's age.

Help me to embrace a little child before it's too late,
Or some older person from the horror of that fate.

Enable me to be alert and hear the weakest shout,
And quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.

I want to fill my calling and give the best in me,
To guard my neighbor and protect his property.

And if according to Your will I have to lose my life,
Please bless with Your protecting hand my children and my wife.

God's Plan for Your Future

from *When Angels Walk* by Daniel Sheridan

I have always believed that God has a plan for every person. We can probably all remember an incident where we, or someone dear to us, *could have been killed*, but somehow, perhaps miraculously, had lived through the experience. It seems to me that God still had work for that person to do. Our time of life is set in stone, and nothing or no one can change that if God has other plans and work for us to do. *He has something that He wants us to accomplish for Him.*

In November, 1990, I was insulating the crawl space in my new home. Tomorrow I could finish the job, if John could work for me instead, as a NY City firefighter. However, because of an emergency, another buddy needed John to substitute for *him* that day. I unhappily agreed.

I was still in a bad mood when I reported for work the next day, which started out uneventfully. However, about noon, an alarm sounded on a blaze in an old wooden tenement three blocks from the firehouse. We felt that it was probably one of the many false alarms that we receive every week.

When a false alarm is suspected, firefighters usually do not put on their heavier coats and helmets, but as I was getting dressed, I was conscious of an inner voice, a distinct prod. "Gear up!" the voice told me, and for some reason, I obeyed.

My truck company was assigned backup position, called Second Due, so the men took their time about pulling out. Yet on the way, I again felt oddly focused on the call.

As the siren sounded, my heart raced, as if I was being sent on a specific appointment. Was it God? I often prayed, and God had always taken care of me. But, this intense concentration was unusual. I was the first one off the truck.

The tenement *was* burning, with flames shooting through windows on the third floor. The First Due company was on the scene, but was having trouble opening the hydrant. Rather than wait, I decided to race up the stairs, clogged with fleeing tenants, to my assigned position as Forcible Entry Man.

I figured that the others would catch up with me in a minute. But,

because of the initial confusion, my buddies had inadvertently gone into the building next door, and although firefighters should always operate in pairs, I was completely alone on the fourth floor.

Rather than put out the fire, a Forcible Entry Man opens a building, starting on the floor above the blaze, and searches for victims. It is a very precarious position, for smoke, heat, and flames go up. And...where were my buddies?

When I got to the apartment and opened the steel fire door, I found something unusual. I was surprised at the lack of smoke, considering that the apartment below was so fully involved. Carrying my tools, I crawled into the living room, keeping contact with the wall as guide. No one was there. Then I worked my way toward the rear bedrooms.

At this point, the fire door on the third floor was opened, and heat and smoke came up the interior stairs and poured into the apartment. I inched my way down the hall to the first bedroom. Victims often become trapped in these buildings, but *no one* seemed to be here.

TIME TO GET OUT!!

By now, the apartment felt like the inside of a chimney. Perspiration ran down my face and neck, stinging my eyes. The intense heat reminded me that flames were getting closer racing up the inside walls. And...*where* were my buddies!

I realized that it was time to get out, before the floor collapsed. Strange, though, I still had that sense of heightened awareness, of a breath held, of something waiting to happen. Was God trying to reach me?

Just as I decided to leave, I heard it... a tiny sound, coming from the second bedroom. A cough. A baby's cough. No... could anyone so small have survived in this temperature?

I moved toward the sound, feeling my way into the other bedroom, and saw the hazy outline of a crib in the corner. Inside... a newborn child.

The building residents let out a cheer when I staggered out