

Williamson Update – 2-4-2010

Just wanted to let you know how God is answering prayer. Mom finally got a custom-made neck brace. It is much less uncomfortable than the previous one. She has begun to feed herself (though her hands still don't work enough to cut up her food.) She has had no appetite but today she was able to eat her whole meal. ☺ She is in a room with another patient, but she is very thankful that she has the bed next to the window so that she can look out.

We must return to Indonesia soon but want to know that Mom and Dad will be able to handle things at home when she has to leave the rehab/care center around Feb. 18th. We are asking the Lord to guide them and the rest of the family as we work together to come to a good solution for them.

I just want to share a verse that the Lord used to encourage me last week: "The Lord nurses them when they are sick and eases their pain and discomfort." God is doing that! Thank you for your prayers.

Love,
Cherri

Praise and Prayer Update - Williamson's

January 26, 2010

It amazes us to see the change in Mom from two days ago! We know it is God's doing. The doctor said we almost lost her. They removed the feeding tube today and she was able to eat real food this afternoon. They tried turning off her oxygen but then her oxygen level dropped too low so they had to turn it back on. She has her new brace, which is much less uncomfortable than the other one (though still very Uncomfortable!). Her right hand is still swollen and she doesn't have full feeling in it, which concerns her. But the doctor reminded her that it is going to take a long time and a lot of work before we'll really know how successful the surgery was. This evening they moved her from ICU to a regular room.

This will be the last update I send out about Mom unless you write and tell me that you'd like to keep receiving them. Our whole family thanks each of you for all your many prayers and for all your notes of encouragement. Words can't express our gratefulness to you.

My sister and her daughter (a nurse) flew out here from N. Carolina and Alabama today. I haven't seen them for a few years so it's wonderful to have them here. Mom and Dad are especially thrilled to see them after so many years. Laurie and Heather will be here until Friday.

We thank God for the strength He's given to us through this crazy time of medical crisis and missions conference! The conference is not over yet, but thank God the crisis is! In spite of the tears of concern that have been shed over the last week, we've had times of joy as we were able to challenge young people and young adults to be involved in what is on God's heart: the least-reached peoples of the world.

--- Barrie and Cherri

Praise and Prayer Update - Williamson's

January 25, 2010

When we visited Mom this afternoon, we were amazed at the change! Her eyes opened when I began to talk to her and she actually spoke back to me! She asked (very softly and weakly, through the breathing mask) how long she's been in the hospital. She seemed amazed that she's been there five days. She then asked me how much longer she has to stay there. And she mentioned that the brace was hurting here. Some friends of ours came over to the hospital, too. Alan is a trained medical worker with lots of experience. He looked at Mom's brace and saw that it wasn't on correctly and was pinching chin. He pointed it out to the nurse and they then adjusted it. Thank you, Alan!! The surgeon came in while we were there (I'm SO thankful he came to see her, even on a Sunday), and he said they he has ordered a custom made brace for Mom and hopefully it will be ready tomorrow. J He surprised us by saying Mom will start physical therapy tomorrow. She must start or the surgery will have been for nothing. Her hands are very swollen because of lying still so long so they need to get her arms moving.

Mom's vitals are all fine.. she still has the oxygen mask on because sometimes she needs a bit of help breathing, and also she needs the humid air. She doesn't yet have a productive cough, and she needs to be able to clear out the phlegm. There is the danger of pneumonia.

It was wonderful to see her with her eyes open, looking right at us and hear her talking to us. Words can't describe our thankfulness to the Lord and to you all for praying. Her surgeon said that she almost didn't make it, but he's very happy to see the complete change today.

Prayer requests: that she'll be able to cough up what needs to be cleared out. That the new brace will be ready tomorrow and will be more comfortable. That God will strengthen her extremely weak body, and enable to her do the physical therapy. And that the pain will not be unbearable.

With hearts full of thanksgiving to our Mighty God,
Cherri and Barrie

We just got back from the hospital. We are disappointed that her air passage is still swollen so they can't remove the ventilator. They did start "weaning" her off of the ventilator this morning. If I understand it correctly, I think they mean that the ventilator isn't doing the work of breathing for her now; she is doing it, but is doing it through the ventilator tube. I spoke to her but there was no response. She must have been in a pretty sound sleep because the nurse told me that she should be able to hear me. They will check again tomorrow to see if the swelling in her throat has gone down. Oh how I hope and pray that it will be down by then! If not, they may have to put a tube in to give her some nourishment (she's had nothing since Monday evening!) Please keep praying for the swelling to go down.

My Dad is hanging in there but you can sure tell this is extremely tough on him. He just told me again how glad he is that he doesn't have to go through this alone. I don't handle this kind of thing very well either. Hospitals always give me the creeps (though I'm very thankful for nurses and doctors!) How thankful I am for God's grace, strength and comfort. And for all of you who are praying and sending encouraging emails.

■ Cherri

Praise and Prayer Update - The Williamson's - 1/13/2010



Yesterday we were quite disappointed to hear from Mom's surgeon that he can't get her in for surgery until the 27th, due to scheduling problems with the hospital. We immediately began to pray for God to intervene, and several of you have been praying with us. A short while ago my Dad phoned to tell me that God has answered our prayers: the surgeon is going to do the surgery on Tuesday the 19th. He normally only does surgeries on Wednesdays but he has rearranged his schedule in order to help Mom.

We know this is God's doing and we are so thankful. Mom's arms and hands are getting weaker each day along with more pain in her neck, jaw and hands. Please pray that Mom doesn't get my cold.

While you are praying, you can pray for Barrie who just came down with shingles! Pray that this will be a mild case. He is quite busy preparing for speaking engagements at our church's Global Outreach Festival (a.k.a. missions conference) which starts on the 22nd. At the same time he is trying to stay caught up with his leadership responsibilities on "the field" (Indonesia). Pray that the pain from the shingles won't be too bad and will not interfere with his ministries.

We are thrilled beyond words at what the Lord has done for the Lauje New Testament printing project. ALL the money has come in for the printing!! We are just totally amazed at how God has provided. Jason Bechtel is still working on the layout. We'll keep you informed as things continue to progress. We are getting so close to the day when the Lauje believers will hold in their hands the whole New Testament in their own language!

We appreciate each one of you, our faithful friends, supporters and prayer warriors.

— *Barrie and Cherri*

"The basis of effective prayer is helplessness. When we are in the heat of battle, we must quickly come to "wit's end corner" and cry out to God. It is in prayer that we can talk to God and "complain" about the devil doing his worse to us --- and it is in prayer that we will be reminded that Jesus will do His best *for us*." --- Jill Briscoe

We are thanking God that Mom came through the four hour surgery yesterday. It was a long day – the surgery didn't get started until 2 ½ hrs after the scheduled time. Part of the delay was because it took them ½ hr to get the IV in, and 45 min to get the intubator (breathing tube) in. The doctor was able to shave off some of the bone that was digging into her spinal cord. He then had to put rods and screws in from the base of her skull down to L5. He is hopeful that she will regain feeling in and the use of her hands, but he can't promise (of course). She is still in ICU and still on a ventilator because of a strong possibility of swelling in her breathing passage. And because she is on the ventilator, they are keeping her sedated. Her blood pressure dropped too low, probably due to the sedation, so she's on medication now to bring it up. Later this morning they plan to try to see if she can breathe a bit on her own. We appreciate your continued prayers for her. Please pray for my dad, too. It's pretty traumatic for him to see Mom like this. Though this is her 13th surgery, Dad said he's never seen her look "this bad".

It's such a blessing to have such wonderful prayer supporters. Thank you all so much. ***Added 1/20/2010

Prayer and Praise Report - Williamsons

Jan 6, 2010

Monday we went with my parents to talk with her surgeon. He showed us on the scans how at the very top of the spine she has bone (vertebrae, I think) pushing into her spinal cord – both from the front and from the back. So her problem isn't just simply one particular nerve being pinched – it's the whole spinal cord! He can't do anything about the bone in the front, but his plan is to shave off some of the bone at the back in order to relieve some of the pressure off her spinal cord. He also said he will have to put some pins in and a small rod to stabilize Mom's neck. This will mean she will have less movement of her head/neck. He is hoping that he doesn't have to totally fuse the whole neck but he won't know until he gets in there. He said he'd try to do only as much as is really needed. If he has to do it all, then she won't be able to turn her head at all. So pray that he won't have to fuse the whole neck.

He said what an "unusual" woman Mom is; he said that most people with all her problems (the "mess" her spine is in, etc.) would be dead by now. He is not the first doctor to make that remark. He is hoping that by relieving some of the pressure, that she will regain some use of her arms and hands. We asked him to set the surgery date ASAP – he said it'll have to be in about ten days time. Pray he can get it set up as quickly as possible. She is getting worse daily (weakness in her arms and hands, tremors and spasms in her leg, pain in her neck and jaw area, etc.)

Dad has a bad cough now; pray that Mom doesn't get it. If she gets it, they won't be able to do the surgery until she is better. Plus the coughing would be very hard on her.

Our tickets to return to Indonesia are for tomorrow (7th), but we are changing them to a later date. We'd like to be here for at least two weeks after her surgery.

Tomorrow we have to move out of the apartment we've been staying in. Our dear friends the Tellinghuisens have offered to let us live with them again (we stayed with them last summer), so we'll be moving to their place tomorrow.

Thanks so much for all your prayers.

Love,

Cherri and Barrie