

Published based on [Got Any Root Issues?](#)

Got Any Root Issues?

"You need a root canal."

Those words led me to the endodontist. And the news got better from there. "You need two root canals, if we are able to save one of these teeth; if not, we will only do one root canal and you'll have to have the other tooth pulled."

Have you ever started a day better? I mean it just doesn't get any better. You get to practice your "In everything give thanks" skills and "Pray without ceasing", and "My God shall provide all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" all at the same time. Spiritual aerobics and weight training at the same time.

Well, I jest of course, but nonetheless it wasn't the grandest of news. But Romans 8:28 quickly kicked in as I sat in the endodontist's chair. Now I clarify for any of you who would feel religious at this moment: IT WAS NOT GOOD! (Although Dr. Smith was himself delightful but seriously needs a new joke book.) But it was working for my good, not the least of which is the free material I gained for this blog. (Did I say free?)

First, they gave me two injections and allowed me to "marinate". Then they turned me upside down, literally, and then prized my mouth open for an hour or more. So aside from that and the wonderful numbness that persists even now, it was all and all a good experience.

My lesson in endodontics was so clearly spiritual that I had a lot to think about while I couldn't talk.

First of all, teeth have roots that can die, become infected, or be completely dead. The nerve of the roots then have to be removed, usually by a specialist, and replaced with something (sorry Dr. Smith; I didn't pay that much attention). Then hopefully the tooth will recover and survive.

I thought of how we as humans have root issues that over time infect our very essence, bring about the work of dying in our soul. (now I am not speaking of the kind of dying we need to do.) When that happens, we have to have some intervention, often by a specialist. The Holy Spirit is, of course, our specialist and He often chooses to work through humans. That is one of the ways of God so richly illustrated by Jesus.

Usually we don't want to pay the price for this intensive work unless we have to. I went around for days ignorantly thinking my teeth were just being sensitive. And in a way they were; they were screaming, "We're sick! Help us!"

I was distracted by the busyness of life; my daughter's wedding, out of town guests, the new school year for my boys, etc. But isn't that how it usually is? We are distracted. We don't pay enough attention to what the pain in our soul is saying and we end up paying a higher price than we would have had to if we responded earlier. As far as my teeth go, I realized that if I had paid the price to replace those ancient fillings earlier with some pretty white crowns, I would probably not have to be paying the price for root canals, extractions, and crowns now and would have saved myself a lot of pain in the meantime. I might have avoided the expense of a specialist if I had taken preventative measures with my own dentist.

Spiritual issues are much the same. They cannot be ignored. They must be dealt with. However, in all fairness and kindness to myself, I had no way of knowing what was happening under the gums of my teeth. Some issues of the soul are underneath the line of normal vision. They, like my ancient fillings, have been there so long that we have learned to compensate for them in some way. Trouble is, there is no such thing as spiritual compensation. Spiritual deadness and infection spread and bring tremendous damage.

As Dr. Smith mercifully ended the procedure, he told me that he had stirred things up in those roots today and even though he had removed the infection, this "stirring up" might cause me to need to be treated with antibiotics again. Therefore, he prescribed another, stronger round of antibiotics than the one I just finished taking. All the while I was mentally writing this blog.

Wow, isn't it true? Sometimes when we stir up things in our root issues, even when we are taking steps to get rid of the infection, even when we are replacing bad stuff with good stuff, sometimes things get worse before they

get better. Some spiritual antibiotics might need to be prescribed and taken. We can not afford to ignore the possible impact of the deep work in our soul.

As I prepared to leave the office, I asked how long I might allow before I bit the bullet and had the necessary extraction and new dental work and crown. The nurse, sympathizing with me, said "You might wait a month, but you should know that the teeth we worked on are now hollow, vulnerable, and could become re-contaminated." Ouch.

Hence the old adage, "You can pay me now or pay me later, but you will pay me." Okay, I'm not stupid. 1-800-call-the-dentist and make the appointment.

If we refuse to cooperate with the work of God in our souls, we might put it off a while. But it won't go away. However painful and expensive it might be, it is non-optional. When we think of how the grace of God is sufficient, we have to believe that it is sufficient for whatever work His Holy Spirit is doing within us.

I wrote the check and thanked God for specialists. Painful. Expensive. Time-consuming, but worth it. So also is the deep work that God does within us.

And today I got a little new insight on how we groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Think that includes teeth?

You can also find this article published on [Got Any Root Issues?](#), and on the tag pages [healing](#), [Pain](#), [Romans 8:28](#), [soul](#).