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My Brothers' Keeper

by Daniel Gwynn

"God doesn't carry us away from the storms, He takes us through it."

For 41 years I've lived in this great country suffering all of its flaws, squandering the benefits, and enjoying the freedoms most other countries only dream of. I wasn't doing much with my life before this, as I fell victim to the madness of the streets-abusing drugs and committing crimes to pay for it. I had developed such a bad reputation for myself, that I was getting blamed for just about everything that happened in the hood.

I was attacked one morning by my old head "Tommy Gun." He thought I had vandalized his car the night before. While I slept, he gained access to my home and cracked me over the head with a 2-by-4. I jumped up out of a sound sleep with blood running down my face ready to fight, but he was gone. He only wanted to send a message about my stealing.

Another incident, I found myself sitting upon a 2nd story rooftop watching as half the neighborhood searched the streets for me. I had burgled the wrong house in search of something to sell for drug money. I was hounded for years, constantly looking over my shoulders after that. It wasn't safe for me to walk the streets, because every time I was spotted I was attacked. But despite the danger, I continued to roam the streets looking for ways to get high.

I'm sitting on Pennsylvania's death row now for a crime I did not commit. I'm trapped in the system now, and it refuses to let me go or acknowledge they made a mistake. This has been a hard lesson I wish I would've recognized earlier.

My 16 years here has not been wasted though. When I cleaned up my act, I began focusing on my education, spiritual growth, and I discovered I had a talent for creating beautiful artwork. With this new disposition, I found myself in service to mankind, albeit in a very limited capacity. I do what I can, but I feel it's not enough. There's so much suffering and ignorance out there in the world today.



I've often asked myself, "How can I help someone else when I can barely help myself?" I found the answer to be "selflessness." Doing what I can for others has enriched my life. It has opened my eyes to a whole new way of looking at life, and has shaped my character for the better. I donate my artworks to various charities, and share my life experiences as a cautionary tale in hopes to inspire others.

I find that I am my "Brothers' Keeper," because to help one person could end up helping a thousand. I don't think I could ever make up for all of the damage I've caused, but doing whatever I can to help make this world a better place is a good start. We need more people to step up and become their "Brothers' Keeper." It doesn't matter what the next man is doing. It's all about what you're doing, and not giving up hope, because everybody is not going to do what's right for humanity. So it's up to us to inspire others to be their "Brothers' Keeper."

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel Gwynn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping initial 'D'.