The Chair

By Bill Williamson

I pulled on the lever and ‘The Chair’ slipped back into a comfortable laid back position. The foot rest moved to my calves and lifted them upward. With a gentle push on the footrest my head and shoulders lowered even more to near horizontal.

From ‘The Chair’ I could roll my head slightly to the left and see the distant Sierra Ancha Mountains off to the East with the sun pressing hard against the back side of the mountains straining to burst over the top and into view.

I rolled my head again slightly, this time to the right. I looked out of the triple patio slider glass and gazed at the Mazatzal Mountains to the West. The tops of the peaks were turning red from the earliest reaches of the sun’s rays that streamed across Tonto Basin through the denser air of the atmosphere closest to the earth.

Bringing my head to the center position once again, I peered through the large glass high on the living room wall into the still darkened air of the early morning. Tiny bits of cloud were catching some of the early sunlight and were highlighted nicely against the darker sky.

I loved this spot in Deer Creek where we had built this house of our own design with the windows placed to capture all of God’s beauty seen from this perch at the top of Lucky Lane.

But, this story is not about this property, nor the house, nor the windows, nor the view. This story is about ‘The Chair’ that I sat in.

Our 1995 Dodge Caravan ran good, and it had been such a blessing. It had a large capacity, and the access for hauling was very good. We pulled into the Savon Furniture store in Port Charlotte, Florida. Today we would buy several furniture pieces to place in our newly remodeled home in Arcadia, Florida.

The store was full of choices and the selection was almost mind boggling. Every pattern, color, and combination thereof was displayed. Maureen’s taste ran toward the elegant and flashy. Mine was more contemporary and simple.

Shortly we had made our choice, two very elegant white double sofas. I thought they would be hard to keep clean, but it was settled, we would have these in our home.

Now the task was to buy recliners for each of us.

I preferred a light rocker that could be reclined and swivelled. Two of these could fit nicely with our sofas.

Maureen saw it differently. She wanted one of the double recliners that were prevalent in the store. I had seen these, but didn’t care for the lack of independence of such a chair. I liked having my end table close by on my right side, and the freedom to kick back or sit up at random choice, or
rock softly while swivelling a bit to the right or left. Choosing a double recliner seemed to encompass to much coordination of the other’s need. So, a little selfishness was shining brightly through my preference.

Maureen, on the other hand, was thinking only how we could be side by side whether sitting up, or reclined. She saw us napping together, watching movies together, and able to remain connected at the hip through it all.

‘Connected at the hip’ was a term we came up with as we got to know each other in Jerusalem, Israel before we were married. We did everything together, as we still do, and would often stroll the streets tightly embraced side by side, ‘connected at the hip.’

But this was different. We were committing to sharing a chair as long as we owned this double recliner. The choice wasn’t so easy for me as it was for Maureen.

She, however, won that debate as the discussion wore on, and the decision was made. We began searching for just the right one.

We paused at every elegant one we encountered and discussed how nice it was. I held firm though. I wanted something simple and straight forward.

And finally there it was. It was Herculon fiber for easy care and good wear capability because it is strong and is naturally stain resistant. The recliner was extremely comfortable with no strain on any part of the body. It was aqua green with microscopic lines of red, yellowish brown, and blue tightly woven together to give it very subtle color variations.

I liked it.
Maureen did not.
Were we at an impasse?
No, we were very compatible and in our three years of marriage prior to this purchase we never seemed to stumble over any decision point. We generally could come to an agreement very rapidly, over most any issue.

I laid out a long list of advantages to this aqua wonder, while she continued pointing at this elegant one, or another.

Finally I said, ‘You’ve just selected the two elegant sofas, why not let me choose the recliner?’
She smiled her wonderful smile and simply nodded her approval.

It has been eleven years and ‘The Chair’ is still with us, and made the move to Arizona with us more than eight years ago.

Why write a story about a chair, you could probably ask?
‘The Chair’ is more than a place to sit. Let me explain.

We rise very early in the day, and always have. I usually rise first and put on a pot of coffee and get to a quiet place with my bible, and my Lord. This is a daily routine. Maureen rises a short time later and spends a time with the Lord at the bedside.

We meet at ‘The Chair’ to start our day together. It is here where we have our first cup of coffee, which leads to the second one. Our time in ‘The Chair’ is spent thanking God for our day, for his provision, for our content lifestyle, and for the peace that we appreciate every day of our lives. All of this appreciation for our God is intermingled with talk about our life events, and dreams about future ones.

We join again at ‘The Chair’ in the evening to do a variety of things. Sometimes we watch some television. Other times we recline with some easy listening music playing softly in the background. Whatever we are doing, our hands are generally joined together between us.

Sometimes we are blessed with a magnificent sky filled with red and orange tones as the
Arizona sun sets over the Mazatzal Mountains. The color soon yields to darkness as the sun slips farther behind the rugged mountains, leaving only a sky scape silhouetted with crisp clean mountain lines, a favorite scene of mine.

Since my retirement from the part time work I was doing, we now often join in ‘The Chair’ for a nap after lunch. The window high on the wall, which I mentioned earlier, is positioned about eight feet high on the thirteen-foot wall. During the winter months the sun passes across the southern sky and its rays track across our laps in the recliner during the nap. The warmth of the winter sun adds a very nice aspect to the relaxing time.

Often in the evening as we focus on each other with nice music, or sometimes muting out television commercials, I’ll pull my feet up into ‘The Chair’ and snuggle toward Maureen, placing my head on her shoulder. Once there I speak out, ‘let’s just sleep here tonight,’ and I pull our favorite blanket close in around us. We know that sleeping in ‘The Chair’ would get quite uncomfortable by morning and it is not an option, but it is worth a giggle.

Sleeping there always seems a good idea, not because it would be comfortable, but because there is such a sense of peace and contentment when we snuggle together. This is an indication of how much we care for each other. We often tell each other how much we love one another during these times.

I sometimes think about the choice we faced together in that furniture store so many years ago. We could have opted for the independence of separate recliners and had total control of our independent environment. But, I would not trade what we have in ‘The Chair’ for all the independence in the world.

‘The Chair’ has resided in several different rooms and places in our home, but one thing is sure, wherever it is located seems to be the object of our migration.

On one occasion ‘The Chair’ broke and we were unable to move it into the reclined position. It was crisis in our home until I was able to make a temporary fix and order the parts to get it operating properly again. This episode was another opportunity to learn how important to us ‘The Chair’ was.

The double recliner more closely represents togetherness and selflessness, while the single one could be said to represent independence, separateness and selfishness. Scripture tells us in Mark 10:7-8, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.” It is much easier to act ‘as one’ while in ‘The Chair.’

And it is clear that the institution of marriage needs all the help it can get. Many things in our society try to pull loving, caring relationships apart. Maybe something as simple as a ‘chair’ can help pull it back together.

Maureen was so right in wanting the double recliner. We have not only kept the closeness of our early days of marriage, but we have grown to love each other more and more each day. ‘The Chair’ is not responsible for all of that love growth, but it surely has contributed largely.

I’m grateful for, ‘The Chair.’

Maybe it’s time to evaluate ‘your chair.’