



My Bout with Cancer

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The tests were over. The results were in. It was the year 2004. Waiting in the sterile room, I hoped for the best. Instead I heard those fateful words, "You have cancer."

My diagnosis was colon cancer. It had already migrated through the intestinal walls and entered numerous lymph nodes. It was stage three. I listened to the percentage statistics that told my chances of living or dying. Then I was told whether to expect it back, if I did get through it this time. This bombardment of negative opinions continued ringing in my ears for days. I needed those words broken off my life. Receiving prayer from my assistant pastor, they finally stopped their endless swirling in my mind.

I knew the name of Jesus was greater than the name of any disease. I knew my God created my body and could heal whatever came against it. I spent a month in the hospital going through two major operations. Nine months of chemo followed. Yet, I knew God was with me through it all.

I believe God gave doctors and nurses special talents and abilities for their noble professions. Even Luke, a writer from the Bible who went with the Apostle Paul on many of his mission trips, was a physician by profession. My wonderful doctors were a tool in God's hands to help bring restoration to my body. The dedicated nurses were an enormous encouragement to me. The hospital Chaplin stopped by to visit and pray with me, a young man on his way to finding his destiny.

What a surprise when young students stopped by my hospital room to add a bit of cheer. One young lady came in with her paint set and canvas paper, making a picture from colors of my choosing. A young man brought in his instrument to serenade me with a beautiful song. All the love, cards and prayers of family and friends meant the world to me. I'm sure God gave special blessings to each one.

My hope was entrenched in knowing God needed me here a little while longer. When I felt too weak to go on, I looked to him for strength to see me through. I pictured myself reaching my hand up to hold his, and when I felt too weak to even envision lifting my hand I knew he was reaching down to hold mine. He was and is my rock and my strength.

"For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you." (Isaiah 41:13)

Often, I'd envision friends from around the world praying for me when I felt too weak to pray. I'd see myself resting behind their shields of faith. This was a vision my pastor told me to hold on to, and I took advantage of that vision on many occasions. How comforting it

was. James 5:16 says, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” Most importantly, my trust was in God as my healer and in his purpose for my life.

If anyone you know hears those words, know that cancer doesn’t mean they have to die, or from any other disease for that matter. Believe with them for complete healing. Let your words encourage and promote life. Let your prayers flow on their behalf to the throne of God. That’s when miracles happen. And we all want to see miracles. In order to receive a miracle, there has to be a problem. That’s something to think about.

To be realistic, we also have to realize when someone is ready to go home to the Lord or feels the Lord is calling him home, then we have to be willing to let them go. Your continued love, comfort and support on their behalf will still be appreciated and needed.

My bout with cancer was not a fun experience, but it most definitely was a wake-up call. I researched foods, as well as stress and how our bodies are affected. People in my life became more important than the busyness of everyday life. Today I am still praising and thanking the Lord for his loving kindness. But whether I stayed here or had gone to be with the Lord, I knew he would always have his arms of love wrapped tightly around me, and for that, I’ll always be eternally grateful.