

## Hope is Only a Prayer Away

*Overcoming the fear of Cancer*

"It's probably just a strained muscle," I told my husband. After all, I had been faithfully exercising after the birth of our fourth daughter four months earlier. The pain would awaken me in the night, subsiding with over the counter medication. But one day, I felt a strange mass in my lower abdomen. I reluctantly agreed with my husband that a doctor's visit was in order. During the next month a number of tests were run. The final diagnosis: an abscessed appendix. Surgery was scheduled for the next day. Two days later, my surgeon entered me private hospital room. His words were kind, but few. "That tumor we removed turned out to be malignant." Although, a numbing shock gradually took over my senses, I heard him recommend six months of chemotherapy, with the statistic that one-third of patients have a recurrence. He then turned and left, leaving me in my quiet room...alone, Colon cancer...I was 36!

Could this really be happening to me? After all, I had been happily married to a wonderful man for six years and we had four beautiful, young daughters – ages 5, 4, 2, and 6 months. They all needed me!!

I quickly and personally realized "cancer" is a devastating word. Heart-wrenching questions raced through my mind – Will I lose my hair? Will I enjoy one more Christmas with my family?! Will I be one of those "cancer survivors" I had heard about? My husband came into the room two hours later and I gently broke the news to him. He, in turn, broke down in tears and wrapped his arms around me in comfort. From that moment on, we clung to every little ray of hope that our doctors, family, and friends offered us. We desperately HOPED everything would turn out ok! Hope...

Perhaps you, dear reader, are facing less than hopeful circumstances in your life right now. Perhaps, you, too, are reaching...grasping for hope, as we were. Perhaps, you're thinking, "If only my doctor could prescribe a miracle drug that would completely destroy my cancer/disease and I could assume my normal, busy, happy life!"

Unfortunately, we can't always count on miracle healing prescriptions. In reality, none of us have the promise or hope of tomorrow. The Bible plainly tells us in Hebrews 9:27 that, "...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." We do not know how our life will end: sickness, a tragic accident, or a final weakened breath in our old age. What we do know for certain is that death WILL come and after death will come a judgment, a reckoning of the deeds and decisions we made during our lifetime.

Does this truth from God's Word trouble you and sink you further into despair? Wait! The Bible also tells us that "...the wages of sin is death, BUT (because God LOVES you) the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Roman 6:23. Yes, our despairing circumstances seem more than we can bear, but an eternity in Hell is far beyond any pain we could ever experience here on earth.

Are you grasping for hope in your dire distress? Turn to God, dear reader. Psalm 42:5 says, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."

God may choose to heal you, to bring you out of your distresses or you may be facing the end of your life right now! Whatever your situation, God loves you very much. He sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to shed His life-giving blood and die for you! It doesn't matter what kind of life you've lived. He simply and lovingly offers you the HOPE of an eternal life of peace. You can embrace this wonderful hope today by asking the Lord, in simple faith, to forgive your sins and to come into your heart to abide. He can AND WILL give comfort and hope! Won't you take Him at His Word today? Hope is only a prayer away!!

Post Script: At the first writing of this tract, I was about five years into remission. We've been

praising God for a total of 23 years now, for He has seen fit to allow me these years to help my husband raise our children...all FIVE of them! YES!! After surviving cancer & chemotherapy, God blessed us with our son!!

--Brenda Bickford