

recognize and take note of them.

John 1:16

From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.

G. Celebrate and Commemorate the Victories

Several times in Scripture, men set up monuments, such as the pile of rocks set up after the Israelites crossed the Jordan river after God had dried it up. These are to commemorate great events that proved God's power and faithfulness. They remind us of His past faithfulness and assure us of His future faithfulness. So, if you make progress, or get a good report, or feel better, take time to celebrate and praise God!

1 Samuel 7:10-12

While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the Lord thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the Lord helped us."

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

C. Thankfulness and Contentment

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 6:6

But godliness with contentment is great gain.

Philippians 4:12-13

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

D. A Cheerful Heart

Proverbs 17:22

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

E. Willingness

Cancer may bring you face to face with things you never wanted to do. Radiation. Chemotherapy. Surgery. Months or years of continuous discomfort, doctor visits, and unpleasantness. But we must be willing to do whatever God asks of us.

Exodus 4:10-13

Moses said to the Lord, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." The Lord said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say." But Moses said, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."

1. Because of fear and possible suffering, Moses was unwilling to do what God had asked, despite God's reassurances. Moses' unwillingness incited God's anger against him. By contrast, examine Jesus' response in the face of immense and certain suffering:

Luke 22:42

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

V. Be A Victor, Not A Victim!

Your body may become a victim of cancer, but your spirit doesn't have to! You can choose to be a victor instead of a victim by holding on to the promises and practicing the principles of God's Word!

Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

IV. The Best Medicine

A. Faith

Don't make God small! He is fully able to heal you, whether by making use of man's treatments and medicines, which He allowed us to discover, or by supernaturally healing you. Or, He may ask you to hold on and wait. But if your body is not healed, it's not because God is not able, but because He has a purpose for your suffering (see Section I).

Matthew 8:2-3

A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.

Matthew 8:8

The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed."

1. But of course, God is not a genie. He answers our prayers, but He does so according to HIS will, to accomplish what He, in His sovereignty, knows is best (see Section I).

B. Prayer—For Yourself, and For Others

James 5:14-16

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

Dealing with

CANCER

presented by
Michael Martin

I. Why Did This Happen?

A. So That His Strength Can Show Through Our Weakness...

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

1. God doesn't always remove the thorn, but He provides the thorn so that we will be motivated to rely on His grace.

B. So That Good May Result...

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

1. This can be for our own good, and also for the good of others as they see how our suffering and our response to it. Indeed, other people often benefit from our suffering in ways we never even see.

C. So That We May Experience and Share God's Comfort...

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

1. One who suffers from a particular illness or circumstance is uniquely equipped to comfort others with similar difficulties.

D. So Others Can Pray For Us (which is a form of worship)

2 Corinthians 1:10-11

He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

E. Did God Give Me Cancer?

Yes. We don't like to think of it that way. We tend to blame Satan for things like this, or we say that God 'allowed' the cancer to happen, or whatever. It's kind of like we're trying to take God off the hook, because we think that it is somehow wrong for God to inflict suffering on us. But God DOES inflict suffering on His people, and He is RIGHT to do so.

Job 2:10

He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

Job 5:17-18

"Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.

Amos 3:6

When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it?

Isaiah 53:10

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

F. Why Did God Do This to Me?

We may not know the SPECIFIC reason why God does such things, but we DO know the GENERAL reason. He did it for His GLORY..

1 Peter 4:12-15

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed.

Romans 8:18

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

G. So, If It's For God's Glory, Then Our Job is to Work for His Glory!

II. How Should I Feel?

A. Suck it Up, Buttercup?

We might be tempted to put up a strong front in the face of cancer or other challenges, but that is actually unproductive. OUR strength is NOT enough for getting through challenges like cancer. We must instead rely on God.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.

Jeremiah 17:5

"Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord."

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

1. As previously mentioned, God's strength is made perfect in our weakness, when we rely upon Him.

B. It's Okay to Feel Sad About the Circumstances

Job certainly expressed his feelings when he was suffering, while still giving glory to God. He only crossed over into sin when he started calling God's righteousness into question. David often expresses complaints in the Psalms, sometimes asking God why certain painful circumstances exist, but in the end, David always expresses trust and love for God.

Psalms 142:1-2

I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble.

Psalms 55:22

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

1 Peter 5:7

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

C. But It's NEVER Okay to Speak Angrily or Disrespectfully to God!

Job 38:2-3

"Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.

Ecclesiastes 5:2

Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.

D. And Don't Complain in the Whiny, Ugly Sense

While it could be accurately stated that we can respectfully "complain" to God, we should not become angry, whiny complainers!

Philippians 2:14-15 NIV

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe

Philippians 2:14 KJV

Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

Philippians 2:14 ESV

Do all things without grumbling or disputing,

1. Remember, we're told to shine like stars in Philippians 2:15. That means we should be working for God's glory. We can't do that if we are grumbling, whining and complaining all the time!

III. How Should I Deal with This?

A. See This As An Opportunity

Cancer is not pleasant, but when viewed as an opportunity, it takes on a new light. Your ordeal will open up opportunities for you to be a witness to others, to show God's strength through your weakness, and to empathize with others who are similarly suffering. If

you respond Biblically, it is also an opportunity to grow in your perseverance, maturity, and faith in God. There are good works to be done, and doing them will be therapeutic to you!

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

James 1:2-3

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

B. Pray For Others... And Serve Others

Ephesians 6:18

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

C. Share God's comfort...

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

D. Let Others Help and Bless You

If you're not feeling well, you may have to step back and allow others to step up. It can be a humbling experience, and you may be tempted to question your value to your family and to the Kingdom as you find yourself physically unable to do all you used to do. But your value is NOT tied to what you do. Your value is Christ IN you!

E. Don't Worry or Be Anxious

Don't worry! To worry is to fret about things that have not happened. It is like standing outside with a snow shovel when it has not snowed. Maybe it will snow, but you can't shovel it unless or until it actually happens. Don't try to shovel the snow that hasn't fallen yet! Don't worry about tomorrow. It hasn't happened yet.

Matthew 6:33-34

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Philippians 4:4-8

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

F. Recognize the Blessings

Maybe you get a good report from the doctor one day. Maybe you feel better than you expected. Or maybe, you become aware that your situation has somehow touched or ministered to another person. There are always blessings, and it is therapeutic to