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THOUGHTS

FROM A TERMINAL CANCER SURVIVOR



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Distributed FREE

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A GLASS OF MILK

One day, a poor boy who was selling goods from door to door to pay his way through medical school, found he had only one thin dime left, and he was hungry. He decided he would ask for a meal at the next house. However, he lost his nerve when a lovely young woman opened the door.

Instead of a meal, he asked for a drink of water. She thought he looked hungry and so she brought him a large glass of milk. He drank it slowly, and then asked, "How much do I owe you?"

"You don't owe me anything," she replied. "Mother has taught us never to accept payment for a kindness." He said, "Then I thank you from my heart." As Howard Kelly left that house, he not only felt stronger physically, but his faith in God and man was strengthened also. He had been ready to give up and quit.

Years later, that young woman became critically ill. The local doctors were baffled. They finally sent her to the big city, where they called in specialists to study her rare disease.

Dr. Howard Kelly was called in for the consultation. When he heard the name of the town she came from, he went down the hall of the hospital to her room. Dressed in his doctor's gown, he went in to see her. He recognized her at once. He went back to the consultation room determined

to do his best to save her life. From that day, he gave special attention to the case.

After a long struggle, the battle was won. Dr. Kelly requested from the business office to pass the final billing to him for approval. He looked at it, then wrote something on the edge, and the bill was sent to her room. She feared to open it, for she was sure it would take the rest of her life to pay for it all. Finally she looked, and something caught her attention on the side of the bill. She read these words:

"PAID IN FULL WITH ONE GLASS OF MILK.

(Signed)
Dr. Howard Kelly."

It always amazes me how many people never seem to fully understand the truth about kindness and putting others first. I talk to people all of the time about kindness, trying to inspire them to make a difference and do things for others. Many of these people smile, nod their head, or state some form of agreement with me, and then go on about their daily lives as if they never were told about what a difference they can make, and how much happier they would be if they would just put forth a little effort and be kind.

And then of course, there are the ones

who think; "Hey, I let someone pull in front of me on the interstate this morning....what more do you want?", not realizing that true kindness comes from the heart.

A lot of people seem to be "too busy" to take the time and do things for others, or they wonder "What am I going to get in return?". However, if you really want to reap the rewards of kindness, you must do things not

expecting anything in return.

Believe me, I can tell you from experience "True Kindness" really does work. When you actually take the time to do something special for that co-worker, cook a meal for your neighbor, go out of your way to help someone, the happiness you receive in return is more than worth the effort.

**DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN,
BY ALL THE MEANS YOU CAN,
IN ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN,
IN ALL THE PLACES YOU CAN,
AT ALL THE TIMES YOU CAN,
TO ALL THE PEOPLE YOU CAN,
AS LONG AS EVER YOU CAN.**

— JOHN WESLEY

Attitude Matters

Several years ago I received word of an eleven year old girl who was suddenly diagnosed with a brain tumor behind her eyes in her brain.

The doctors were giving her treatment that would shrink the tumor, but because it was in her brain, they didn't expect her to live very long.

But rather than just giving up, this brave girl was strong, and was determined at that time to continue her life at school and not give up the fight.

She fought this, and won!

When adverse difficulties come in our lives, the easiest thing to do is to simply give up, throw in the towel, and quit!

The French philosopher, Voltaire, said; "The longer we dwell on our misfortunes, the greater is their power to harm us." And the same goes for trials such as cancer and other life changing problems.

Many people have turned their adversities into something good by having the right attitude. I could go on with many examples of people who have overcome difficulties by having the right attitude, but here are just a few:

When Bethany Hamilton was 13 years old, she had her arm bitten off by a shark while surfing. Later, someone

asked her, "Have you ever said, 'God, why did this happen?'"

Bethany's reply was, "Uh, yeah, but, you know, I kind of realize that it's like it has given me an opportunity to witness for Him and more people will want to talk to me since I'm now that girl who got attacked by a shark, so they'll want to hear what I have to say. And that's pretty good!"

Since then, she has gone on to win in several surfing competitions, and has been able to impact people all over the world.

Joni Eareckson Tada was left a quadriplegic in a wheel chair after a diving accident in 1967.

But, Joni began to make the most of her situation immediately. During her first years rehab, she learned to paint using a paintbrush in her mouth. She is now a highly sought after inspirational speaker, has a radio program, has authored over 30 books and numerous articles and other writings.

Simply put, she did not allow her situation and difficult circumstances to destroy her life. She had the right attitude!

When Helen Keller was just 19 months old, she contracted a disease that left her both deaf and blind. Yet, she is quoted as saying, "Self pity is our worst

enemy and if we yield to it, we can never do anything wise in this world."

In 1904, at the age of 24, Helen became the first blind and deaf person to graduate from college. She went on to write eleven books, and many other articles.

Of course it is true that having a positive attitude doesn't immediately change our circumstances. Having cancer, being blind, facing the trials of life, they are all difficulties. But we can make these experiences a lot more bearable and productive by facing them with the right thoughts and attitudes.

Charles Dickens once said, "Reflect upon your blessings, of which every man has many - not on your misfortunes, of which all men have some.

Henry Ford said, "Life is a series of experiences, each one of which makes us bigger, even though it is hard to realize this. For the world was built to develop character, and we must learn that the setbacks and grievances which we endure help us in our marching onward."

We will all experience trials in life. It's how we handle them that matters. We can allow our problems and troubles to destroy us or we can use them as a tool to forge our future.

Attitude matters!

And it's not just the attitude of the person going through cancer

treatments or some other physical problems. It's ALSO the attitude by which others react and treat them as well that really makes a difference.

When I was in the hospital with cancer many years ago, I was in a room with another young boy who was getting treatment for really bad rheumatoid arthritis. He could hardly move his limbs, and yet his parents just left him in the hospital. They were hardly ever there, but for a couple brief moments.

My mother stayed with me the entire time, except for one evening, she went home for a couple of hours to get some rest.

And she even helped the young boy next to me on occasion when he needed something!

Not only does it matter the attitude WE have when going through difficult times, it ALSO is highly important the attitude OTHERS have towards us.

My parents tried to treat me as normal as possible. Obviously, they had to make some changes as I could not do a lot of things as I usually did - but they were loving, kind, and helpful as they should have been.

I'm not even supposed to be alive! But having a positive attitude even when the doctors gave me no hope, I know that went a long way in aiding my recovery.

**ATTITUDE
MATTERS**

A young boy with short brown hair and glasses is the central figure. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt with thin white vertical stripes and a small polo player logo on the left chest. He is also wearing khaki-colored pleated pants and a dark brown leather belt with a silver buckle. He is standing outdoors, leaning against a dark metal railing on the left. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery and a light-colored wall.

ONE WEEK TO LIVE

THE JOSHUA GOODLING STORY

One Week to Live!

I was born on February 4, 1966, the second of seven children in my rather small family. My life as a young child was as normal as one would expect.

Being raised in a Christian family, we always had a time of family devotions each evening. We would read the Bible, sing songs, and eagerly listen to my father's rather animated stories from the Bible.

One evening after our time of devotions, I prayed and gave my life to Jesus Christ. That action was just the first of the life-changing events which would happen to me at the age of four. The second incident, although maybe not as important in light of eternity, was a much more involved and painful experience.

The area under my jaw began to swell up. Being obviously concerned, my parents took me to a doctor. The doctor closely examined the swelling but could not figure out what was causing it. He began to check through several medical journals and reference books. An operation was performed to remove my lymph nodes for testing. The operation, though it was successful, did not reduce the swelling. Finally, he came to the conclusion that there was probably a peritonsillar abscess. My tonsils were so swollen they almost touched each other. After consulting with a specialist in that field, they decided to operate again and remove my tonsils.

After this second operation, my mother noticed that I could no longer keep control of my eyeballs – they would just roll around in their sockets, like marbles in a bowl of grease. I couldn't keep them focused in the same direction. Because of this, they decided to perform a third operation to take a biopsy of the swelling, and I was soon wheeled into the operating room for the

third time in a matter of weeks. The trauma of having three major operations in such a short time was quite overwhelming for a four year old boy, and the doctors were very concerned about performing this third operation. Following this third operation I spent a long time in the recovery room, having a very difficult time. My mother said I didn't look like I would make it.

A couple of days later, after they had time to check the tissue from the biopsy, my mother was in the hospital room where I was asleep, and the doctor came by and motioned her out into the hall where he told her the results of the third operation. They had finally diagnosed the swelling as a malignant tumor called, "Rhabdomyosarcoma", which is a deadly type of cancer.

The next morning, my parents met in the doctor's office. The cancer specialist described how serious the cancer was. He told my parents that I had only about one week to live. He had looked through his record books, and every case he could find had been terminal. He admitted that there might be an exception, but in my case, it was highly doubtful.

As Chemotherapy was still in development, the doctors decided that my only hope was radiation therapy. My parents were to take me out of the hospital each morning and take me to a different hospital where I was to receive my radiation treatments.

I almost didn't live to receive the radiation treatment! On the night before my first treatment, I was asleep in my hospital bed, and my mother was half asleep in the chair beside me. Because of the swollen tumor in my throat, my breathing made a loud hoarse sound which could be heard across the room. All of the sudden, in the middle of the night, my mother couldn't hear me

breathing. She knew immediately what had happened, and ran to find help. A doctor and two nurses responded to her calls and were able to get me breathing again. They said I looked really bad, as though I were already dead. I guess that is one of the closest moments to death I encountered during this life changing experience.

When my parents took me to receive my first radiation treatment. The Radiologist had more discouraging news. He said that usually when they treated a cancerous tumor like mine with radiation, the cancer spread even faster. He also didn't think I would make it. Every day for thirty days, I returned to receive my treatments. However, instead of the tumor spreading and killing me, it went away, and around the time when everyone thought I would be dead, the cancer was gone. And after spending almost two months in the hospital, I was going home.

But it wasn't over yet. That same year, my family and I took a trip to visit relatives out of town. One night during our visit, I awoke with a terrible headache. Later, when my mother was cutting my hair, she noticed a slightly swollen area in the back of my head. Her first thought was to recall the swelling they had found several months previously, and we immediately returned home and back to the hospital. The tumor had returned. This time it was in the back of my head around the main nerve. Because of the location of the new tumor, operating was impossible without killing me, or at least causing some serious damage.

I continued to have serious headaches, and they continued to get worse. Soon I just had a constant 24-hour a day headache. The pain was tremendous, and I had to be always kept under sedation. As soon as one pain killer wore off, I would cry from the pain. All I did was lie in bed either

heavily sedated in a little pain, or else half-sedated in intense pain. I could hardly move at all. When my parents came to give me medicine, they had to hold my head up, because I was so weak.

This time, I began to receive Chemotherapy. Because of this, all my hair fell out. The new treatments upset my stomach so much that I couldn't keep any food down. I lost so much weight my bones could be seen pushing against my skin. I began to look like the pictures you see of starving children in 3rd world countries.

But again, God had other plans and almost two years from the time the first deadly tumor appeared, the cancer was gone. The doctors said they still considered it a terminal case, and that it would eventually take my life. That was over 50 years ago and there has been no sign of the cancer since!

However, even though the cancer was now gone, it left behind several scars that would remain with me for life. My life was now drastically changed. My vocal cords were partially paralyzed, my growth was stunted, the roots in my teeth were destroyed, and I would face difficulties and hardships daily throughout the rest of my life. I had basically two choices. I could get mad at God and give up on life, or I could trust Him and learn that He does not want us to focus on our problems. He wants us to give everything completely to Him and trust Him with our lives. When we finally learn to do that, He has promised to faithfully take care of every need we have, and to always be with us no matter what.

When I was in the fifth grade, God called me to preach. Some people laughed, and others questioned my ability. However, the Bible tells us, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13) Since then, I have spoken hundreds of times to anyone who will

listen, and have used every means I can think of to reach others and share my life experiences, and my faith in Almighty God.

After all this, you may ask "Why do I believe in God?" The answer to that question, to me, is quite simple - "Look around you!" Look at how the sun comes up every day at a certain time, and goes down at another certain time. Watch how every year, the leaves change color, fall off their trees, and then come back again. Look at the majestic beauty of the mountains, the oceans, the valleys, the rivers, and all the glorious nature around us. And anyone who seriously considers these things has to believe in God.

However, let's take it a step further. "Why do I believe in the God of the Bible?" There are close to 4000 different "religions" in the world today. What makes Christianity and the Bible so worth believing in rather than any other? My answer to that question is found in John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son..." What other religion is there where the god of that religion loved us so much He Himself gave us the solution to all of our problems? There are other religions that teach you have to do certain things to appease their God, but none that teach their god loved us even before we believed in Him.

To me, the Christian faith and belief in Almighty God is the only one that makes sense. And, I know there are countless millions out there who will completely disagree with me, and want to debate and argue that point. I don't demand that everyone else believe in the same God I believe in. You are quite free to worship whomever you choose. I choose to worship the God of the Bible, because in my heart and in my life I've seen Him work, and I know He is true!

Some would say, "What? Your God allowed you to have cancer and almost die!

Your God allowed you to go through so many trials and troubles! Your God ruined your life. Why would you trust a God like that?" And those are valid points. But, you see, I believe the same God who created this world, the same God who loved me enough to send His Son Jesus Christ to die for me, and the same God who created my life and the lives of everyone around me, had a perfect plan when He gave me cancer. Over 50 years ago, when I was lying on a hospital bed and the doctors were telling my parents, "Joshua is going to die!", I didn't understand what God was doing. However, now when I see all of the broken hearts He has used my story to impact, when I see how God has encouraged and changed hundreds of other lives through mine, I see that God indeed had a plan, and I see that like everything else in His creation - His plan was perfect!

That's why I believe the God of the Bible. I know that without Him, I would be nothing, and I know I would make all the wrong choices and decisions apart from Him and His guidance. And I believe He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sins. I know that by faith in Him alone as my Savior, my life has been changed forever. If you don't know Him, I invite you to get to know my God. I'm not saying you have to, I'm just saying, I've found Him to be faithful, gracious, loving, merciful, and amazing! And just as I know He loves me, I know He loves you as well. And I know that His Word - the Bible, is true! It will change your life - if you follow it and use it as your guide. It has changed mine!

I know thousands of people, if not millions, do not agree with me, and I know there are those who will hate me for simply believing what I believe. However, to me - I know that without my relationship with God, my life would be a wreck. I know I never would have made it through all the difficult times I've experienced in

my journey so far. And I know it is Him ALONE who has been my strength and my song.

If you do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, let me tell you that you are missing out on one of life's greatest joys. Now, I feel I must clarify myself here. Many people in today's world "claim" to be Christians, however they do not act or live at all like a true Christian. There is a vast difference between knowing "about" God and personally "knowing" Him.

The Bible tells us in Romans 5:8: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ

died for us." Over 2000 years ago, Jesus Christ gave His life on the cross of Calvary in payment for our sins, and then arose from the grave. God gave the greatest gift ever given — the promise of salvation and life in Heaven when we die. We must simply repent of our sins, and believe in Him — asking Him to change our hearts and our lives and become our Lord and Savior.

If you have never done this, I invite you today to make this life changing decision. The closer we get to truly knowing God through our faith and obedience to His Word, the happier and better our lives will be, no matter what difficulties we may have to face in life.



Make A Difference!



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