

Have you ever noticed that when life has its most difficult moments, that we reach out to God more? We become more conscious of whom and what is truly important in life. We appreciate more of our blessings, and that God is always there, and has His own plan for us. This is a portion of my story.

When I was 35 I began experiencing difficulty swallowing. It would take me half an hour to eat ¼ of a hamburger. Eventually I was restricted to liquids for the better part of two years. I noticed that there was swelling in my neck. I had a neck size of 19 ¾ inches. I felt pressure on my windpipe. Eventually I felt stabbing pains travel from my neck to my ear. I had read that this could be indicative of Thyroid Cancer. I was terror stricken. I went to several doctors, and specialists. No one was finding the answer. I remember one night lying on my bed. I was crying. I had my fingers interlaced in prayer. I begged God to have mercy on me, to unburden me. At the end of my prayer, I said "Thanks be to God." Immediately I felt a hand on top of my throat. I knew God had heard and would answer me. He did. He sent me to an Ear Nose and Throat Specialist who specialised in Head and Neck Surgery. This surgeon ordered a biopsy of a nodule on my thyroid. They found that I had an autoimmune disorder called Hashimotos. There was also a follicular Neoplasm that may or may not be cancerous. The surgeon recommended that the left side of the thyroid be removed. During surgery they found that there was also a parathyroid gland that was swollen 10 times its normal size. Parathyroid glands should be the size of a grain of rice; mine was swollen to that of a Tootsie coin. Three weeks after surgery I was eating steak. Let me tell you that was the closest thing to heaven on earth I had ever experienced! Lol! It turned out I had a small amount of thyroid cancer. No chemo was needed.

I asked myself, how come it took doctors two years to understand this? Then I realized that I could have received help earlier, but it could have been from a less skilled surgeon. The surgeon that I had was an expert and I was able to return to music ministry to continue singing in summer choir. (Unfortunately I have to take a break from these music ministry duties until there is a vaccine for Covid 19.) When I look at my life I realize there was a method to Gods plan. He allowed these things to happen. He knew I needed to be closer to him. He knew what lessons I needed to learn. He also knew that in time, I could have a purpose, moving back home to help with my father when he developed a type of dementia caused by strokes. My return to the church and to my family may have not happened to such a degree, had I not suffered, and needed desperately to turn to God. I always loved my family, I was just young and enjoying my freedom.

In 2000 I fell down two flights of stairs and injured my left foot, ankle." The left leg as a whole has been affected. I had numerous tests and saw doctor after doctor. My ankle joint would pop in and out of place 15-25 times a day. This injury has been excruciating, and I have been unable to take pain meds due to allergies. A chiropractor told me I had serious ligament damage within the ankle, and required surgery. The medical community told me I had Complex Regional Pain Syndrome but did not require surgery. In 2013 an orthopedic surgeon pinpointed where the damage existed. In 2014 I underwent ankle ligament reconstruction surgery. He installed two clamps and did extensive additional work. It took me 2 years post surgery to learn how to walk again. The surgeon said that there was no stability within the ankle at all. Diagnostic testing cannot determine the extent of an injury the same way a surgeon can during surgery. There are three ligaments that support the ankle. Two out of the three ligaments were shredded to different areas of bone. Bone had died. Going through this experience showed me that God gives us strength to endure what we could not on our own. The doctors then confirmed that I have a severe case of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome Type 1, and it is permanent. There has been a peace and validation in having a diagnosis. I learned that mobility is a real gift. It is a blessing to have family that loves and supports you. It is the ultimate gift to know that even when we are tested to our absolute maximum, God will never leave, and always has the best plan for us in mind. It is wonderful to know that if we place our faith in Him, he will bring us to where we should be.

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