

The Faith Script

CPFI Serving Christ and the World Through Pharmacy

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The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Exodus 33:14 (NIV)

[Prayer Wall](#)

It's been nine years since I was diagnosed with cancer. Many will tell you that the blessings bestowed and lessons learned through a journey such as cancer are life changing and simply incredible. I would agree with that and continue to be amazed by how I continue to be blessed. As I reflect back on when I was first diagnosed, I am reminded of the call for Lenten devotionals from our university chaplain at about that same time. I decided to write one to express my feelings for the journey I was going through then. As we approach Lent, I began reflecting on this time of my life. The following was my 2006 Lenten devotional....

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"Oftentimes in life, we are confronted by challenges that test our faith. Recently, I have been confronted with some health issues that have tested my faith in many ways beyond my imagination, yet the blessings that I have received during this time has made my resolve and trust in God even more resolute. I have truly been blessed by a loving family, career, and good health thus far in my life. Of course there have been challenges along the journey of life, but none that seemed insurmountable. Over a month ago, however, the biggest challenge of my life confronted me. When I noticed right-sided abdominal pain, my physician ordered a CT scan to evaluate the possibility of a kidney stone. A call from him later that evening was quite surprising as he informed me that there were no stones and my kidneys were just fine, yet the abdominal CT scan happened to identify two nodules in my left lung and one in my right lung. My emotions at that time were of disbelief and denial. Regardless, more tests were ordered, and the conclusion was that the nodules could represent anything from a benign process to infection to malignancy. Unfortunately, based on their location, the only option was to surgically remove the nodules and biopsy them. My emotions at this point were changing from disbelief and denial to some fear of what lay ahead of me. Yet through this whole time, a friend and fellow Bible study partner from my church gave me some comforting and wise advice that carried me through all of the tests and surgery. He told me that in times of challenges in his life, he took comfort in knowing that God was there. He routinely prayed not necessarily for one outcome vs. another, but just to know that *God's presence was there* with him during challenging times. I found myself praying this often over the next few weeks....The final diagnosis of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma was made. A myriad of emotions ensued again. The prognosis is good, yet there are still many challenges confronting me over the next several months, including chemotherapy. My trust, however, rests with God for I know that he will always be there for me regardless of the circumstance, and I now pray this often."

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So nine years later, I am a survivor. It was by God's grace that I was saved. I look back on my experience and can without a doubt say that God's presence was always there with me—there were no coincidences. Many examples of this abound, including: the time that a nurse's cross bracelet dangled in front of my face as she held me and calmed me down enough to get through a lumbar puncture; trying to

get through PET scans and MRI's with extreme claustrophobia, yet praying constantly for God's presence to be felt and as a result being able to get through the tests; having the University chaplain unexpectedly appear in my pre-surgery hospital room right before I went into the operating room to offer prayer; the time that I was home recuperating from chemotherapy and could not work, and was begged by my children to help them learn to ride bikes (despite previous attempts, they picked it up almost immediately in that one afternoon); the phone calls in the hospital from high school friends and even former pharmacy school professors that I had not spoken to in many years; the daily suppers that were made for us by family, friends, and neighbors for over one month. The list goes on and on... But through it all, it was God's presence revealed through others that got me through. I felt God's presence. Despite going through cancer, it's a feeling I never want to forget.

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him for God is our refuge. Psalm 62:8 (NIV)

Prayer: Lord, just let me know that you are there, and thank you.

On another note, the CPFI 2015 Annual Conference and National Student Retreat is a great place to experience the presence of God. This year's conference will be held on June 4-7 (National Student Retreat on June 3-7) at the Bonclarken Conference Center in Flat Rock, NC. This year's program will feature educational sessions providing 12 CE credits, fellowship, devotional time of praise and worship, and recreational opportunities in a beautiful setting in the Blue Ridge Mountains. If you have never been to a CPFI Annual Meeting before, you are in for a life changing experience that's different from any pharmacy conference you have ever attended.

Mark Johnson, Pharm.D., BCPS
CPFI Board Member
Winchester, VA

Registration is open!

2015 CPFI Annual Conference & National Student Retreat

Bonclarken Conference Center

Flat Rock, North Carolina

Conference: June 4 to June 7, 2015

Student Retreat: June 3 to June 7, 2015

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