

Three years ago life was going well I had my wife Carianne and my son Trey with another child on the way. I had some back pain that I felt was just normal I mean back pain is common so I thought that it would just go away. One night the pain got to be unbearable so I got up through the night to watch some TV. While I was walking the pain got to be so severe that my legs buckled, after much debate on my part we decided to go to the hospital. When we arrived we were told that it sounded as if I had a kidney stone but they had to do a cat scan to make sure that it was not blocking anything vital. After the scan the doctor came into the room to tell us that they had found two tumors around my kidney. They had already consulted with an Oncologist and they were certain that it was cancer. Once we had this information we talked about it and I told Carianne that I didn't want to tell anyone about it including God. The reason that I felt that I couldn't pray about it was because my prayer life had been pretty sporadic up until this point. I didn't feel right going to God now that I had a problem as if I only wanted him when it benefited me.

We made an appointment to see the Oncologist to find out what was going on. He told us about the two tumors and what the possible causes are, the plan was to watch them to see what happens. To watch the tumors they had to do more scans and every time they did a scan they saw that they tumors were growing. At this point I felt that it was ok to bring this prayer request to the elders but it was still personal so it could not be open to the rest of the church I still did not want to bother anyone with my problems. So they continued to watch the growth and finally they said it was time for surgery to find out what kind of tumors they were. Finally I realized that this problem was too big for me so I said it was ok for this problem to be open to prayer from the whole church.

When we met with the surgeon he explained that this was a difficult surgery and that it would be a long recovery. After the surgery they told us that they got most of the tumors but some was left behind because it was wrapped around a major artery. The good news was that the tumors were not cancerous they still wanted me to see the Oncologist regularly just to make sure that there was no recurrence. After a few months they started doing the scans again and they found that the tumors were back they told us that they would once again watch and see what happens. The tumors continued to grow and they decided to repeat the surgery this

didn't feel right to me so I asked for a second opinion and was then referred to the University of Washington. When I met with the doctor there he immediately knew what was wrong with me he told me that I had testicular cancer but he would have to do a few tests to confirm it. They ran the tests and sure enough it was exactly what he thought it was. They explained that the cancer had spread but not to worry it is the most treatable cancer. He also told us that it might not have anything to do with the back pain the tumors were around my kidney and don't cause the pain that I was having it was most likely a legitimate back injury. My next surgery took place a few days after that diagnosis.

I once again turned to the church for prayer, Carianne and I were also praying frequently. Our prayer was not what I thought in the beginning though, we were now praying for God's will to be done and for him to strengthen us for whatever decision he makes for our lives we also asked for peace through this whole process. We started to notice that we had never been that close to God before. It's amazing what God does to bring us back to him.

Six weeks later they started chemotherapy. The chemo was a very difficult stage it consisted of six to seven hours a day hooked up to I.V.s. This went on for five days a week. The next two weeks I only had to go for once a week and I was only there for two hours and during this time they checked my blood work as well as gave me a shot of chemo. All of these drugs were administered through a pic line which is tube that runs through a vein in your arm and they trace it back to within inches of your heart.

During my second week of chemo I started to have issues with nausea. It didn't seem like and could keep anything down and when I keep my food down it all tasted metallic. They warned me about these problems and I had multiple pills to keep the nausea at bay but that was a chore to keep up on, they said that one of the drugs in the chemo would cause the metallic taste. The other problem was that I started chemo during July so not only was I sick but it was hot outside and Home Depot was sold out of air conditioners. To fight the heat and nausea we found that I could keep down otter pops so we wound up having enough popsicles to feed the army in a heat wave. Week three I started to have some pain in my right arm and me being the stubborn person that I am I hid this problem from everybody. The problem progressed and my arm

started to swell and it turned dark red at that point I decided to call the hospital and find out if this was a normal reaction to the chemo. They told me that it was not normal and I needed to go in right away so we packed up and ran to the hospital. They ran a few tests and found that I had a blood clot in the same arm that had the pic line. They thought that they caught it in time and they would put me on blood thinners but they would keep me overnight to observe. Through the night I had this overwhelming chest pain off and on for most of the night. When we got up in the morning they wanted to run a few more tests and get a chest x-ray. The x-ray revealed that I had multiple blood clots in my lungs the pain that I had through the night were the clots breaking off and going into the lungs. When the doctor explained this to us he used a few choice words to describe the situation I will paraphrase he said I got a raw deal. It was explained to us that the problem with the clots in the lungs were that at any moment they could break off and that it could kill me instantly and there was nothing they could do. They admitted me to the hospital and put me on a heart monitor for the next couple of days when I checked out they sent me home with blood thinners to thin the clots so that there would be no further damage.

At this point in my life I was very at peace. I didn't know if I was going to survive nor did the doctors but I realized that we had no control over our lives. This was finally the point that I realized that it was all in God's hands. I was not afraid to die but I didn't want to either but I could finally accept that God was in control and that whatever his will was that I knew that would be best.

A few days later we resumed chemo but before they could start treatment they had to add access they did this by giving me a porta cath this was done by a minor procedure and a two inch incision in my chest. I was now starting to lose my hair which was kind of strange because I thought that it would be a gradual thing but it would fall out while I was sitting in a chair and just drop into my lap. During week eight I started to get sick and I got a fever. They explained in the beginning that if you have a fever that is over 100 and it lasts for more than a few hours you need to go in to the hospital so they can give you antibiotics. I had a fever that was 102 for a day and a half the reason that I hid this was because I was tired of spending so much time in the hospital so I hoped that it would just go away but it didn't. We went back in and they

admitted me again and they told me that I had a very low white blood count they said that I couldn't leave because my immune system was extremely weak. It was so weak that I couldn't eat vegetables or have flowers sent to my room as a matter of fact someone sent me flowers and I saw them at the nurses station when they were taking me for tests. During this time at the hospital the porta cath had a clog they found this because I was starting to swell in my chest around the access. Once again they sent me down for x-rays and could see the clot, the funny thing is that they said this type never clots but of course what can go wrong will go wrong. Now we had to discuss what to do for treatment. So my Oncologist met with me and said they thought that we might just end chemo a few weeks early so they would do another cat scan and see if the tumors are now gone. If the tumors were gone then I would be done if they were still there then they would have to do a surgery to remove them. I went in for the scans and the tumors were still there so they had to do the surgery.

They could not operate with the chemo in my system so we had to wait about six weeks for my body to recover. After this time of healing I went in for surgery and this was a big deal this was far worse than any other operation that I had gone through they told me that the incision would be from my sternum to about two inches below my belly button. There would be certain dietary restrictions after the operation because my digestive system had to reset and I would be in the hospital for a week followed by six weeks of bed rest. When I woke up from the operation it was kind of odd because my father was asking me to move my feet and wiggle my toes. When I asked him why he said that he said that I needed to wait for the doctor, now at this point I was a little worried. The doctor came in and told me that the surgery was a success so I asked him why my father was so worried and he explained that one of the tumors was on my spine and the fingers of the tumor were hitting nerves he said that it was difficult to remove and he had never seen tumors grow on the spine like that. All along they kept telling me that it would not take care of the back pain now they were telling me that the back pain should have been more severe and I had to remind them that it was always painful. A few weeks after I went home I started to bleed out of the incision so I went back in for them to see what was wrong they said that there was an infection so they reopened part of the incision. For it to heal properly it

had to remain open and Carianne had to pack it and clean it three times a day.

The healing that we usually expect is physical but in this instance the healing that I needed was spiritual. The thing that I struggled with in the beginning was control I had this belief that I could control my life and I needed to be shown that God was always in control. Once I handed the reigns over to God it removed the stress and fear I didn't experience miraculous recovery but that is not the healing that I needed in my life I needed learn who was really in control. I am happy to say that I am cancer free and have been for a little over a year however my health is not one hundred percent. The truth is that I still struggle today there is medication that I have to take everyday and I will need to for the rest of my life it is a constant struggle to keep my energy levels up. The thing that is better is that it is now easier for me to turn to God and I am now passing that on to my children and we always pray with them so that they can see we can ask God for anything.