

*"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."*

***Philippians 4:13***

As I have come to my present age, there have been numerous experiences which have demanded a degree of strength which I personally did not think I possessed. None so demanding as my wife and I experienced almost 17 years ago when she was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer accompanied by a prognosis of almost certain death. Part of the difficulty lay in the fact that our lives at that time were full of promise and being lived without a hint of trouble of the coming magnitude. To be suddenly faced with a life altering circumstance demanded a radical change in priorities and a different kind of mental strength to face the very real possibility of the death of a spouse. We immediately began to pray that God would effect a miracle for us and spare her life.

Over the course of the next seven months, many trips were taken to Shands hospital. A regimen of treatment was followed, ending in surgery to remove a cancerous tumor. Along the way, we were separated from each other, except on weekends when I would leave work and travel to Gainesville. Each night after work and preparation for the next day, I would finish the day on my knees in intense prayer to God that Jane's life would be spared. I remember these prayers were not short but ran into late hours asking that what I really was preparing myself for, her certain death, would not happen. My mother had died from this disease and my experience with it in other situations was not good. As I asked God for encouragement and strength to accept whatever the outcome, I received a growing sense of calm as the time progressed. Each month would bring a small victory that would build hope.

In the end, the disease did not move from the tumor into her lungs and the surgery was successful. That has been 17 years ago without a recurrent problem. I grew in a tremendous way during that time. I was blessed with strength, not of my own, but from the Lord. To this day, there is a sense of calm in my life when difficult situations occur and I am convinced I learned to trust the Lord and rely on His strength when my own is so insufficient.

*Lord, Thank You for Your love of me, a love so great that You sent Your Son into a world filled with sin to provide a means for believers, like us, to one day see Your face and live in Your presence. And thank You, O God, for Your Son, whose obedience to You, His father, allowed Him to die a cruel and painful death and, by so doing, enabled His resurrection unto life and the resurrection unto life for all those who follow and serve the risen Christ. Amen.*

**Frank Higginbotham**

(Submitted in 2007)

