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# They said I have CANCER!

The results of the tests have come back from your doctor, and he has diagnosed that you have cancer. Thoughts and, yes, even fears race through your mind. A rush of feelings and emotions holds you almost powerless, maybe even a little speechless. Questions come to mind so quickly that you haven't even had time to write them all down. You want to ask your doctor everything at once. How did this happen? What kind of cancer is it? What will happen to me? Is there any successful treatment for my type of cancer? Can I survive this cancer? So many questions. So sudden. So frightening.

You are not so different from anyone else that has had the same diagnosis. Please know that you are not alone in this battle.

Though He cause grief,  
He will have compassion  
according to the abundance  
of His steadfast love.

*Lamentations 3:32*

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## What does this illness mean to me and to my family, and to my friends?

Any time someone you know receives news of this kind there is genuine concern. First of all, we need to cope with the feelings that come with this kind of news. One of the first feelings is shock. "What a sudden surprise," some have said on learning of their illness. While others exclaim, "I didn't feel as good as usual, but I would never have thought that I might have cancer."

The next likely emotion that comes is that of fear. *Cancer*. Many people panic at the mere mention of the word, let alone at the diagnosis of the disease; however, more often than not, the fear is really that of fearing the unknown. We just have little or no idea what it is that we can or should expect regarding such a disease. There are so many types and forms of cancer that we don't know where to start or how to react. Fear is a very common early reaction. Perhaps we fear the process of dying or the pain that may be associated with dying. We fear leaving our loved ones or of becoming a burden on them while we cope with the cancer. It can often be helpful for us to determine what it is we are afraid of. Perhaps it's dying, perhaps it's pain, or perhaps we fear the struggle we may have to endure as we cope with this disease.

Anger is another emotion that many cancer patients must deal with. Sometimes they become angry with themselves for not doing what they should have done to help prevent this disease. Others become angry because they did what they thought

they needed to do to prevent cancer, yet they still got cancer. Some people become angry just because they have cancer, and some even turn their anger toward God, asking, "God, why me? What did I do to deserve this?"

And finally, people with cancer often experience the emotion of guilt. They sometimes think, "If I had only taken better care of myself, then this wouldn't have happened." While they may be very correct in this thinking, they place the blame on themselves, which is not needed. Feeling guilty and placing blame on one's self is just not helpful in coping with the disease. While we need to face our emotions forthrightly, and squarely, we needn't be carried away with our emotions nor allow them to take away from us our will to live. Emotions and feelings that are properly viewed, and understood, can be a very helpful coping resource.

But now thus says the  
Lord, He who created you  
... : "Fear not, for I have  
redeemed you; I have called  
you by name, you are Mine.  
When you pass through the  
waters, I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they  
shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire  
you shall not be burned, and  
the flame shall not consume  
you. For I am the LORD  
your God."

*Isaiah 43:1-3*

## How do I cope with cancer?

With the diagnosis of cancer, we are usually forced to consider some rather important issues, such as the meaning of life, our purpose in this life as one of God's children, heaven, our salvation, our death, and the relationship we have with our Savior, Christ Jesus. Perhaps we even face some anxieties and doubts regarding our life and death, and salvation. You might even ask yourself the question, Is God using this cancer to test me and my faith? You know that God is a God of love, and not a God of "getting even." God uses trials to test and strengthen our faith in Him, and He uses those tests to bring us closer to Him, not to drive us away.

As a believer, you know and you confess that through Christ Jesus' death and resurrection, God is looking out for your good, and that this cancer may not be your final and fatal end. And even if your cancer is what God uses to call you home to Himself, take great joy in the fact that He is the one who calls you from this vale of tears, calls you to Himself in heaven.

It is in and through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that we have and are renewed in the faith that He is there with us, and is in control of the events of this life. In Him, we have faith to see us safely to our eternal rest with Him. And if it is not God's good and holy will for this disease to be our call home to heaven, then we can rest assured that He will give us healing as we need it, to endure

this disease and to carry on in this life. Either way, our heavenly Father cares for us, and provides all that we need to sustain this body and life.

Your faith is then secure in Christ Jesus, who will give you all that you need to cope with this disease.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

*Philippians 4:6-7*



1-800-325-3040

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3558 S. Jefferson Avenue  
Saint Louis, Missouri 63118-3968



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