

Something More

By Maria Houston

“How are you praying through this?” I asked my dear friend and mentor over the phone. We met years ago when I attended the college where she worked. My college roommates and I were seeking a mature woman who desired God to teach us more about Him. She eagerly jumped at the task.



In the years that followed she opened God’s word to me and challenged my thinking. She has alternated between serving as my spiritual mother, confidante, therapist and friend. Along with my diploma, I took our unique friendship with me when I left college. I depend on our weekly phone conversations to continue learning how to apply God’s truths to my life.

She and her husband are now facing his second round of cancer. I have dealt with my own child’s chronic illness and have learned that what you pray for changes over time. In the beginning, I prayed for quick healing, the obstacle to be removed, and for life to go back to how I imagined it would be. But I soon realized, like Paul, that sometimes the thorn remains. At this instance you come to a crisis in your faith. Do you abandon your faith and say “God is not real because I prayed and He did not heal?” Do you say, “God is not good because He allowed this pain to occur and allows it to continue?” Or do you learn to seek God in your pain even if the hardship never leaves? I chose the latter and for the past few years she has helped me navigate these choppy waters.

So now I was asking her about her own prayer approach. After a slight pause she said, “that God would use this to reveal Himself to us and others, that it would be used to fulfill His purposes, and that we would trust Him in all of this.”

I knew immediately that her prayers were influenced by her favorite passage of scripture, 2 Corinthians 4: 17-18. “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (NIV). She was asking

God to use this “light” and “momentary” trouble, also known as cancer, to fulfill a purpose she and her husband cannot see. For we are only here for a time, but the “eternal glory” from this trial “outweighs” it. All the pain and suffering and stress will be eclipsed by something far greater than we can even imagine. We must focus our eyes not on what we are experiencing but what we know will come.

She reminded me of Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”(NIV) It is so easy for us to determine what is good and bad, right and wrong, and how to solve problems with our earthly perspective. We need God’s eyes in this journey. We need His wisdom to show us how to proceed.

As I hung up the phone I realized that this prayer request can be applied to any circumstance. It is truly how deep contentment is found. As I am tempted to be anxious about my child’s health, her day at school or her future, I am challenged to keep this prayer at the forefront. I am not to put my hope in a circumstantial outcome but rather in the Creator. When my hope is put in the right place, only then am I unshaken.

Today when I dropped my child off at school I remembered this prayer once again. I let go of my earthly requests for good news and happy circumstances, exchanging them for something more, something eternal. For the goodness He has planned will far outweigh anything this day could offer.