

Joy in the Journey

There are many life-threatening situations that can impact you and those around you - cancer being one of them. Just like people, cancer comes in many different shapes, sizes, and kinds. I have never had cancer myself, but I have had multiple family members that did get diagnosed with it. My maternal Grandpa fought prostate cancer and my paternal grandmother had breast cancer. I also had a great-grandma that had breast cancer and colon cancer. All of these impacted me in different ways, but my mom's diagnosis of thyroid cancer had the biggest impact on me.

My mom's cancer journey has taught me many things. I started to put my faith in God and realized that anything can happen because of him. I also learned that people around you care about you and will help you in any way they can. Throughout the different situations that I have come across, I started to look up to my mom and think of her as my role model ever since her diagnosis of thyroid cancer.

Our family has gone through many different ups and downs, but hearing that my mom had cancer was the worst news I had ever heard - my heart just sank and went cold. Yes, I put my faith in God before, and yes, I prayed for those in need. When I finally realized that my mom had cancer and that so many things could go wrong that would change my life forever, I put all of my trust in God's hands and prayed every night for courage, strength, bravery, comfort, and faith. I didn't just pray for myself but also my family, especially my mom. My mom already had all of those attributes, but I knew she would need prayer the most. She would try every day not to show that she was hurting when she was around all of us, but we all knew that she was hurting inside. God gave her the strength and courage she needed to get through everything that was happening each and every day.

I never understood why God let these bad things happen, but I always reminded myself that he always had a plan and that his plans were what he thought was best. I knew that we would all have to go through many tough challenges along the way, but I also knew that God was the only one who knew what would happen and could help us whenever we needed it most. After all the prayers and different paths taken, God helped my mom fight to beat her cancer. She is currently three years cancer free of her thyroid cancer!

Little did we know, God still had a bigger plan for us. My mom was told that if we had any idea of having another child, we would have to wait six months after her radiation treatment because of the potential effects on the baby from the radioactive treatment. As a few months went by, we found out that my mom became pregnant just seven months after her treatment. God blessed our family with a baby girl on April 16, 2021. When I found out that I was going to have another sibling, I was so happy I burst into tears. I had always known that God worked his miracles and blessings, but I had never thought of him giving our family a blessing that big. My parents decided to name our baby sister Katie Joy. Ever since she was born, she brought a lot of joy into our house.

Just like God, people care about you and will help you in any possible way. When our friends and family heard about my mom having cancer, they pitched in to help us, and give us comfort. They would bring my mom and the rest of our family up in their prayers, and they would drop off lots of food and other gifts. Everyone around us did so many things, not just for me but also for the rest of my family, that I don't know any way to thank them. None of them were forced or told to do the things they did to help us; they were all willing to take away part of their own time just to help us out. Even the kids at school and the school staff knew what we were going through and tried their best to give us comfort, strength, and courage.

Some people might believe that getting rid of the cancer is easy and that everything will be back to normal once the cancer is all removed. If only that was how it all worked. There are

so many treatments and surgeries that happen, but there will still be a chance of not surviving or cancer spreading to other areas. There are lots of different treatments and surgeries needed for all the different types of cancer. My mom had surgery to remove her thyroid and then had to undergo radioactive iodine treatment.

My mom's journey wasn't easy for me, but I knew that it wasn't any easier for my mom. There were nights when I only had a couple of hours of sleep because I couldn't stop praying for the best and thinking about all the possibilities. I would always think of the "what ifs" instead of trusting God and the plan he had for us. My mom's journey through her thyroid cancer was the most difficult time of my life. Throughout all the treatments and surgery, I was very upset and impatient with God. I didn't understand why God had done this to our family, but I did know that he did everything for a reason. After she had her radioactive iodine treatment, she had to stay away from other people for a while. It was very difficult for both my mom and the rest of our family. We all loved each other very much and still do to this day. We asked for prayer and got through everything with God and friends by our side the entire way.

Going through the journey of my mom having thyroid cancer was the most difficult thing I had to go through. I knew that if it was hard for me, it was even harder for my mom. Every day she tried to show everyone that she was brave, strong, independent, and had faith in God. I knew she was hurting and trying her best not to show it when we were around. Seeing my mom go through everything influenced me to be brave, strong, independent, and put my trust in God. Whenever I have to go through something difficult, I think of my mom and what she did to get through the journey of her thyroid cancer.

The biggest thing I have learned is that God is with me, no matter what. I now know that putting my trust in him will not only help myself but also the other people around me to get through the difficult times. I think that God made humans not only to share his word but to spread kindness around to everybody. That is exactly what the people around us did, and much more. My mom is very brave, strong, independent, and a God-loving person. She has used the things she learned from her journey through cancer and used it to raise her family. Watching my mom grow in her faith and confidence taught me that if you put your heart into doing something, it can happen. Whenever I come across an obstacle in my life, I think of what my mom did and try to apply that to the situation I'm stuck in. My mom has been my biggest role model ever since she had to fight to beat her thyroid cancer. I have learned so many important things that I apply to my life today and share with others.

Cancer can impact others in good ways and bad ways. It isn't something to celebrate or easy to go through, but I tried my best to look at the positives that it would have on my life and others. The person I am today is all because God gave my mom thyroid cancer. It also brought our family closer together going through all the challenging steps before my mom finally became cancer free. Looking at how it impacted so many people in a good way, I am thankful that it happened.