

“Always be joyful. Pray continually and give thanks whatever happens. That is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus.”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Happiness is temporary, as when we receive a gift. Joy is the quiet assurance, deep inside, that God is with you no matter what challenges you face.

A fall on October 5, 2014, has placed me in the group of seniors who walk with a shortened stride, wider stance, and with less flexion than usual. Instead of only feeling sorry for this group, I now admire them for their determination to overcome pain and decreased mobility. This compassion for others with my symptoms has been a gift from God to me.

Charles Stanley has written a wonderful little book called *How to Handle Adversity*.^{*} In it, one cause he lists for adversity is to receive from God the unique ability to comfort others so afflicted. No one can console another like one who has traveled the same path!

In our church family we have scores of cancer patients who, in spite of a myriad of unpleasant symptoms, volunteer to help and counsel others with cancer.

Jesus certainly had a terminal condition in that He knew exactly when and how He was to die. He was (as we would be) depressed (troubled), but said, “Should I say, Father, save me from this time? No, I came to this time so I could suffer. Father, bring glory to your name.” John 12: 27

Jesus knows our concerns. He has been there. He will never lead us into any circumstance which he cannot see us through. With that knowledge, we can truly rejoice in the gift of sharing Christ’s love with others facing similar adversities.

Father, Help us to use knowledge of You gained through our suffering to help others in their suffering. Amen.

Gordon Betts

^{*} *How to Handle Adversity* by Charles Stanley. © Copyright 1989.
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