

# Finding Strength through Faith

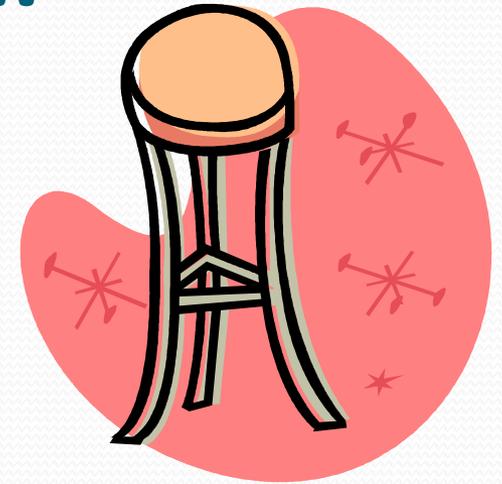
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**TMA Board Member**

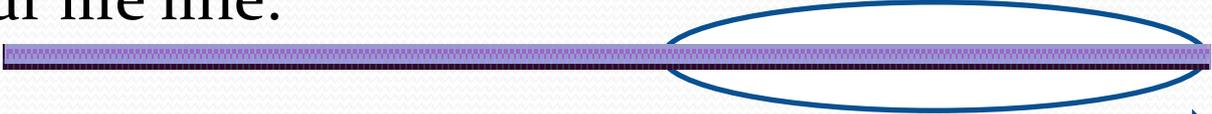
**IBM since 2007**

# Keeping your life in balance...

- Your body is like a 3-legged stool....
  - Physical leg
  - Emotional leg
  - Spiritual leg
- If one becomes weak...
  - Physical: Doctors, meds, PT, etc. can help
  - Emotional: Family, friends, counsellors can help
  - Spiritual: If it becomes weak, can lead to a spirit of “ingratitude” and even depression.



# Keeping your Perspective....

- Dealing with chronic illness shortens your focus to the “here and now.”
- Here is our life line:  

- But here is our life line compared to eternity: 
- Our focus of “here and now” pales in comparison to what lies ahead of us in eternity.
  - We all have 2 options of where we will spend eternity, and the choice is ours
  - Our tribulations today are insignificant compared to what is waiting for us.
  - Don’t focus on our “broken bodies” of today; change your perspective to our “restored bodies” for eternity!

# My Story....

- This was my previous life.....
- 2008: The Diagnosis.....IBM
- Five stages of grief:
  - Denial: “It must be a mistake! “
  - Anger: People often blame God
    - “Why me, God?”
    - Answer I kept hearing: “Why not you?”
      - “Who would you like for Me to give this to....your mother, your wife, your child?”
  - Bargaining: “God, if you’ll take this away, I’ll .....” or, “Please take this away....I have plans!”
    - God whispered, “I have plans for you.”
  - Depression: More on this later
  - Acceptance: The more I prayed for healing, the more I heard, “Accept it.”



# More on Acceptance....

- Realize that God is allowing us to have our disease because He has a plan to use it for HIS purpose.
  - Rom 8:28; Next time you bake a cake....
- We can make all of the plans we want, BUT...
  - God is in control, not us
  - He orders our steps
- Try looking at things from His perspective.
  - He wants us to be a walking example of acceptance of His will
  - He wants us to show others that God supplies the strength that we need on a daily basis;
  - Every day we are given opportunities to share with others about how we are dealing with our illness;
  - And every day we can build up rewards for our upcoming “extended stay” in His kingdom.

# It's All About the Attitude!

- What is our attitude? Where is our focus?
  - The choice is ours: “**Bitter**” or “**Better**”?
- **Bitter** (not a good choice) ☹
  - What happens when we focus on what we have lost;
  - Can lead to anger issues;
  - Or worse.....depression.
- **Better** (good choice!) 😊
  - Focus on what we DO have (loving spouse and family, supportive friends, etc.)
  - Make a “Gratitude List”; would you trade for.....?
  - Ask God to heal our heart; let others see His work on the inside
  - Don't be afraid to step out and TRUST HIM!

# Enhance your perspective...

- Read about others who have had to overcome much worse challenges:
  - Joni Eareckson Tada—quadriplegic at 19; now an acclaimed artist; author of 50 books; popular speaker around the world.
  - Dick Woodward—quadriplegic who went on to become an internationally known Bible teacher and author.
  - Nick Vujicic—Australian born with only stumps for arms and legs. Can now write, use a computer, comb his own hair, brush his teeth, answer the phone and shave on his own. Travels the world as a motivational speaker.

# Strengthening the Spiritual Leg...

- Seek Godly counsel
  - Look for advice from people who have a “God” perspective, not a worldly one.
  - Discuss ways that you can become a positive influence on others.
- Be intentional about staying in touch with God:
  - Find a Bible-based church
  - Make prayer a regular habit
    - Remember to give thanks IN all circumstances; not FOR all circumstances
  - Establish a “Quiet/Devotional time” in your daily routine.
    - Consider it “tithing” the first part of each day
    - Make sure it includes actual quiet time...you can’t listen for His voice if you’re doing all of the talking!

# Getting Outside of Ourselves...

- Inward focus → Pity Pot → Depression
- Outward focus → Helps Others → Better for you!
- *“In this life we cannot do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” (Mother Teresa)*
  - Example: Listening to others who are hurting; you can find comfort in another person’s story.
- Share your story with others...
  - God is your partner; He provides your strength and hope
  - You might inspire the right person!
  - Remember: Fellowship with others helps our faith to flourish!

# God's Plan for You...

- Strength—God wants you to depend on Him and He will supply you with the strength that you need.
- Joy—When you begin to see God's transformation in you, joy and peace will be the result.
- You don't have to leave home to make a difference
  - Your story of receiving the strength you need from God will touch others.
  - Remember: you only need to touch one life to make a difference.
  - Drop a stone...

# The Power of Prayer...

- *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God.” (Phil 4:6)*
- Prayer in the face of suffering leads to new spiritual territory.
- If you have an urge to pray it’s because God is calling you.
- Prayer is a good way to take the focus off of us.
- Develop the habit of little “microburst” prayers....utilize your idle time:
  - While stopped at a light; waiting in line; walking back to your room.
- Count your blessings each day!

# Closing Thoughts....(FINALLY!)

- Faith means believing God for the future;
- Faith is like a muscle....it needs to be exercised to grow
- Draw your strength from God daily:
  - Keep your eyes on eternity; not the problems of today
  - Know He is using you as a walking example of His grace and mercy.
- Disease and suffering are part of our world...how we deal with them will determine our future.
- Store up treasures in Heaven by doing God's will today!