

Weekly Health Update from Pastor Jim – Weekend of November 17 & 18, 2018

Dear Friends and Family:

This week it is back on chemo and as par for the course, I was very tired on Monday and slept most of the day. On Tuesday I came down with the dreaded “D” word. On the farm, we use to call that “the back door runs.” I would be interested in how many of my readers remember those days? Our modern-day kids missed out on so much, don’t they?

It’s tough to pray someone all the way through a messy, hard, complicated situation and not see your prayers being answered, at least not right away. Maybe you’ve been there. Maybe you’re there now. I know I am. I have been praying for two boys who in their early life experienced some brain damage. One minute they get on the right track, and the next not so much. We want so much for God’s healing to occur, but so far, not so. But don’t lose hope. There is hope from the Scriptures for our hearts to press through even unanswered prayers.

1. Know with confidence God hears your prayers. First John 5:14 reminds us, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us” (NIV). Notice it does not say God will answer our prayer immediately. But we are assured that if God hears our prayers, the next step would be to answer them. You can’t answer what you don’t hear.

2. Trust that prayer makes a difference, even when you don’t see the difference. It may take a while for you to see God answer your prayers. But don’t miss an “in the meantime answer” you can receive right away. Philippians 4:6-7 reminds us of the immediate answer to every prayer: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And **the peace of God**, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (NIV, emphasis added). Did you catch it? It’s the **peace of God** that will guard your heart and mind in the process while you’re waiting for God to reveal His answer to your request. When you pray, you can trust you’re doing your part, and God will certainly do His part. And that peace of God is totally above our understanding. It seems contradictory that we can be at peace even with unanswered prayer. That’s what is so way beyond our understanding. So many people have found the peace of God amid hellish circumstances. So, when we don’t see the difference our prayers are making, ask God to guard your heart and mind and grant you His peace.

3. Tell fear it has no place in this conversation. These prayers are your gateway to feel an assurance you don’t yet see. But fear will tempt you to focus on the problem more than God’s promises. Isaiah 41:10 says, “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (NIV). Bottom line, nothing is bigger or stronger than God. If God is with us, we need not be dismayed. Tell your fear to get packing. God is here and will handle and an all issues.

It’s been almost three years since I received that telephone call from my doctor saying I have cancer. I can’t tell you how often I have prayed for healing and remission. And all the countless number of similar prayers from family members and friends. Why God has not answered this

prayer request, I do not know? Three words though help me through this difficult time: Confidence, Trust and Peace.

I don't know for sure God will even heal me. He has not promised that. But He has promised that I can approach prayer with confidence that God hears my prayer (and yours); that I can trust my prayer really does make a difference even if I can't see the difference; and I can be at peace even with unanswered prayer. Can you say that? If not, just look again at the cross on which our Savior died. This is the proof that we can have confidence, trust and peace with God, even when He takes His sweet old time to answer our prayers, as we measure time and maybe, even if He does not answer our specific prayer at all.

Please join me in growing in our faith.
Pastor Jim