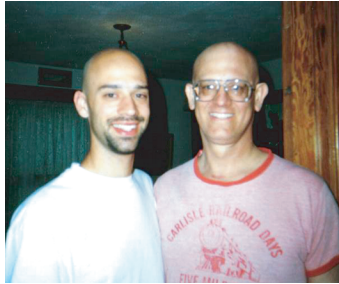


If chemotherapy is part of your treatment, watch for nuisances like tingling fingers and toes. Don's are almost normal now. Food will taste like metal, so use plastic tableware to help the food taste better.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
Psalm 73:26 NIV

Accept Help! Don't Listen to Everyone!

Family, friends and even strangers encouraged us greatly. A card was more than a greeting; a loaf of bread or a meal was more than food. Yard work and house work were labors of love. Every time someone informed us that Don was on another prayer list, we rejoiced at more voices being lifted in Don's behalf to our Heavenly Father. When our son Donald came to visit, his shaved head to "relate to Dad" meant more than his "having no hair."



Don felt impressed by God to read, study and memorize St. John Chapter 15 from the Bible. Since his recovery, he has preached from that chapter many times.

Well-meaning people who had no idea of the effects of their words, spoke of how a loved one "died of just what you have" or told us to "be mad at God." Don decided to "not listen to some people."

Dear Reader, Be lifted by the positive and ignore the negative. You are unique in God's plan! No one knows the path your journey will take. You might find an especially comforting passage to you from God's Word and read it daily.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

Well Again - Or Not.

God granted Don a cancer-free outcome with that bout, for which we are humbly grateful. He kept assuring me that "I'm fine either way. If I live, God has more for me to do. If I die, I've had a great ride." Cancer has invaded Don's body twice since that first time. Today no abnormal cells show on any test.

Dear Reader, Anyone in a health crisis considers the possibility of death. You may need to talk about it with your loved ones. Each of us can be spiritually prepared for that time in life. Though your journey may be uncertain, your path for eternity can be clear and assured. Don and I pray that you will trust Jesus Christ to lead you now and forever. That is a big step for your life, but as simple as ABC:

Acknowledge that you fall short of what God expects and that you need a Savior. Read Romans 3:23
Believe Jesus Christ died for you, providing forgiveness for your wrongdoings. Read John 3:16
Commit your life to Christ. Read John 1:12
Now thank Him for His wonderful gift.

We urge you now to contact a church and a pastor where you are. Talking to caring people helps you keep a positive perspective. Contact us at Giving Thanks Ministries for prayer, encouragement or just to chat with a cheerful, caring voice of one who is traveling the path "just a little further up the road."



Colossians 3:17

To request copies of this pamphlet or to contact Don and Norma, write, call or email:

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FOR YOUR JOURNEY
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FOR YOUR Journey From Our Journey

No one knows with certainty where life's path will lead. Don and I didn't choose cancer for him, but God walked with us on an amazing trek. If this pamphlet has made it to you, you and those close to you are probably traveling a road you would not have purposefully taken.

We wish we could sit with you and talk face to face about our excursion through the unfamiliar territory of hospitals and medicines. Times may come when you feel isolated though you are surrounded by people. You may have questions for which no one knows answers. You may grow emotionally and physically spent, but keep moving in directions you think best. The road may include blind alleys and detours.

Let us share with you in these brief pages some truths we gleaned from our experience and some actions we took as patient and caregiver on our journey through Don's cancer.



*Fellow Travelers,
Don and Norma
McMurry*

We Thought It was the Flu!

Don slept in his recliner several weeks because he couldn't breathe lying in bed. When the problem didn't go away, he took a routine trip to our family doctor. I didn't go with him because he didn't need me to hear he needed an antibiotic-I had diagnosed his problem from past experience.

I stood at the stove as Don entered the kitchen. My smile and cheery greeting quickly faded when his expression alerted me before he spoke that the office visit was not routine. "What did Dr. Whitecar say?" I blurted.

He replied somberly, "The x-ray shows a mass in my chest that we need to check out. It could be scar tissue, or sarcoidosis, or a tumor." Deluged with guilt for not being with Don when he received the report, I took a safe route and asked, "What's sarcoidosis?" While holding me in a big hug, he explained that it is fibrous tissue and collection of cells that form lumps in organs.

"It's better than cancer," he said.

Through my tears, I mumbled, "I'm sorry I didn't go with you today. I'm so sorry you were alone to hear that news."

"Norma, I wasn't alone. I'm never alone. God was with me. He knows what the mass is. He knows the road we will travel. He will never leave us."

We prayed together as we began our journey.

Dear Reader, Times will come when you think or feel you have not done the right thing. Remember-you are taking the best steps you know to take with the information and knowledge you have. God will be with you throughout your journey. Let Him comfort and guide you.

Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you..
Hebrews 13:5

How Many Tests Did You Say?

My heart and mind turned the journey into a race to see the checkered flag at the finish line, but the procedures kept putting out the yellow caution "test then wait" flag on the circular, yet roller coaster track.

Questions for which I wanted quick answers filled my head, while I instead needed patience for the weeks and months ahead. I remember excitement at thinking a biopsy would tell us about the mass. Then learning that three tests had to be run and their results given before the biopsy could be done deflated my hopes for instant answers.

Don kept in touch diligently with doctors who would "tell us the next step." God's peace ruled Don's life through many heart, lung and blood tests.

While we waited for convenient days for appointments and then for test results, God surrounded us with caring people. Our children lived away, but phoned and visited. Friends prayed, waited in offices with us, brought gifts, sent cards, and encouraged us to stay optimistic.

Dear Reader, Waiting to learn of your or your loved one's condition won't be easy. During this time, draw closer to God, family, and friends. Read God's Word and books by and about people who have survived grave circumstances.

Come near to God and He will come near to you.
James 4:8

Surprise and Decisions?!

The waiting ended. Dr. Whitecar's quick step didn't match the look on his face when he entered the room where Don and I sat holding hands. I knew the diagnosis before he spoke. Cancer. The road took a new turn and headed up a mountain!

Dear Reader, Whatever diagnosis you receive, whatever turn your road takes, you can travel it! Accept help and stay positive-most of the time.

Treatment options can overwhelm anyone. Don decided to take what he called "the full-meal deal." For him that included chemotherapy and radiation. Don prayed many times, "Lord, let me get from this everything You have for me." He didn't give in to "If I had..." or "Why didn't I..."

Dear Reader, You may need to decide one treatment or several from options presented.

Once you take a path, don't second guess yourself. You are doing your very best. Since you are traveling this road, let God enrich your life every step of the way.

When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who knows my way. Psalm 142:3

Has It Been Three Weeks ?

A friend advised Don of the value of humor in healing. Medical journals tell of the positive effects of laughter on a person's physical condition.



We made each other laugh every day. We watched television comedy and funny movies. Don took on the project of wearing a different hat each day for 105 days. Our family honored Don with a "glow-in-the-dark" birthday party.

Don found that the company of other patients in the chemotherapy room gave him hope. They shared stories of when they felt weak and when they felt stronger. We are now, several years later, friends with some of those we met while Don took chemotherapy. They are special people in our lives.

The nurses and medical workers who treated Don showed care and efficiency.

In retrospect, Don wishes he had taken more time off from work. He didn't work the day of chemo, but he worked every day other than treatment day. He now advises others to rest more. Missing work is not a sign of weakness, but a time of strengthening.

Dear Reader, Treatments are no fun, but they are for your good. Sometimes the next treatment comes before you feel like you are ready. Your doctor will know if you truly are not able to take a treatment. Even when you don't feel up to it, you can do it!! Keep remembering that this is helping you further down the journey. You may hit a pothole, but you can keep going.