



## Who is God When Life Stinks?

### When I Don't Like God's Plan

"I wish you would just make this cancer go away, God!" I was overwhelmed by my options for treatment—surgery, chemo, radiation, medication, alternatives. I didn't like any of the options, and discovered that none carried guarantees of healing.

It was obvious to me that God CAN take away cancer—either miraculously or in many other ways. Gratefully, no longer is cancer an automatic "death sentence", but without any form of action, an invasive cancer will live up to its name and keep invading!

When news broke out about my diagnosis, many promised to pray for healing. The leaders of the church came to our home to pray. The young moms from the parenting class that I taught gathered around me to pray.

"If it is possible, please remove this!" Those words are familiar to me—spoken by someone who understands so well! It always takes away my breath to hear Jesus' honesty in these words! There is no whining in his voice—just a transparent voicing of his honest desire. These words were spoken just hours before Jesus would face a physical challenge we can only imagine—whipping, humiliation, thorns, nails, taunting, and finally a sword stabbed into his flesh. Of course, anyone in a human body would want to avoid that!

Jesus knew the pain ahead of him. He wished for another way, but desired most for his Father's plan. Oh! How grateful I am that Jesus put God's will above his personal comfort. He said, "Not my will, but yours!"

"Yes!" My heart agrees again. "God always knows best." But how will I know what is God's plan for me?

As we fervently researched treatment options, Bob and I decided that lumpectomy surgery would be best—we wanted to remove the tumor and then we could decide about follow-up. A visit to a very compassionate surgeon (who just "happened" to be the daddy of a former kindergarten student at our school) kindly informed us that a lumpectomy would not be successful for removing everything. Bob and I were shocked—and headed back to rethink the plan.

Two different friends referred us to their own physician friends. (In the whirlwind of our lives, they actually MADE the appointments for me, and I just showed up when told

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to!) One particular physician supported the use of an alternative cancer treatment that was available without prescription, but had been successful for many. His recommended treatment seemed outside of mainstream thinking about cancer treatments, so we studied it carefully. A wealth of scientific data made it appealing to us.

Still I wrestled. Was this MY idea, perhaps a way to avoid the harsh realities of chemo and surgery? Or was it God's desire for me? To be honest, I also wrestled with perhaps disappointing some supportive, loving friends who might fret over my non-traditional choice.

I looked again at my transparent example... Jesus is kneeling in prayer, humbly and honestly dialoging with God. So I follow His example.

Prayer and fasting have over the years become an important part in my life. It's when I set aside time for conversation with God to be top priority. Food and physical appetite are replaced with an appetite for finding direction from God's word. Mealtimes become prayer times. Physical weakness lends opportunity for spiritual dependency.

God kept pointing, through my days of fasting, to the option of this non-traditional, every-four-hour dosing of the alternative, cancer cell-destroying treatment. Will it work? The scientific studies prove that this more natural approach has worked for others. But it takes months before results begin and years before success is achieved. How patient can I be?

Jesus' incredible patience to walk earth, give up his desires, and follow God's will for his life beckon to me to follow his example again. This is not about MY will, but it's about what God wants to do for his own purposes.

Still, I like "sensible" plans. I like clear explanations for WHY God directs me one way or another. It is important to me to make careful, detailed decisions.

Suddenly, I am reminded that life is not about ME, but about the One who is wise and always in charge. Somewhat hesitantly, I choose to accept this alternative treatment, trusting that this is about HIS work, not my efforts. I will follow his lead, and not worry about making sense of all the details.

God can use WHATEVER he chooses to accomplish his work! His ways are always right, and often beyond my understanding.

Wrestling and prayer finally bring me to the place where I can agree again. “This is not about what I want, but I am here to obey what you want to do with my life and my body!” I can smile despite my struggle, because I recognize that my independent strong will is bending in preference to One who is greater than all things. Perhaps that is the essence of what He desires all along!

**Jesus prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me;  
yet not my will, but yours be done.”**

**Luke 22:42**

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*\*Please know that Jesus was not only facing physical pain, but something far greater! A filthy, heavy load of all my sins, and yours, and every person on earth, would be placed on him – making it impossible for his beloved God to even look at him! But incredibly, Jesus agreed to this plan! You may read more about God’s love story for you in Appendix A.*