

Do You Trust Me?

By Ruth Busby

That was the sobering question from God, when, at the end of my rope, I realized I could be walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He leadeth me beside the Raging River, and I was scared to death---Literally!

In mid December, I found out four of my coronary arteries were clogging up---again! Two were almost completely blocked, and the others were close seconds.

The solution from the doctors was bypass surgery---again! Been there done that nine years previously. My first response was, no way am I taking that route again! Being pressured from medical professionals to loving family members, I was fast falling apart emotionally.

I was praying, but an underlying current was stirring my thought pattern---some of you know the feeling. I felt a surge of depression and, at times, could not hold back the tears.

I called my younger son (who is also my minister) and started asking questions about death and being ready to die. I had lived for The Lord almost all my life, but knew there were things in my life that might keep me from going to be with Him. I was afraid of dying; and I knew I shouldn't be! I always told myself I wasn't, but now I was faced with reality---and I was scared. He talked with me at length, not about living or dying so much, but why I wanted to live or die. Did I want to go to heaven because I didn't want to go to hell? Or, did I want to go to heaven to be with God? Setting under his teachings---for that is what God has called him to be in the five-fold ministry---I know that hell will be a place where God's presence will not be, unlike here on earth, where the Holy Spirit's presence is. Do I love The Lord and want to be with Him for eternity? Or, do I want to just squeak by so I won't go to hell? As we talked, I realized that was kind of what I had been doing. Slowly but surely, I had been becoming passive about the things of God, and letting the things of this world overtake my relationship with Him. I begin to realize, nothing on this earth is worth it. For as the scripture says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matthew 6:19-21

I knew from years of living for The Lord, I needed to step it out with the options presented---although bypass surgery was not one of those options I would consider, because I could get no peace about that.

As they ran me through the gamut of test and consultations, the options were becoming few to none. After checking my test results, several cardiac and conferring professionals together, decided bypass was my best, and probably, my only option. So they scheduled me to see the cardiac surgeon. Needless to say, I was braced for an argument, but also had a few questions.

I had requested prayer from the few sources God had led me to talk to; and, of course, with fear and trembling, constantly praying within myself.

My husband and I were taken back when the surgeon came in and announced he didn't really want to do another bypass on me, and explained his reasons why. Was I relieved? Was I more afraid? What would this mean? Sure I had told everyone I wouldn't go through bypass surgery again. Then, smack--in my face--that was no longer an option, "according to the surgeon himself."

It's easy to pray for rain when the sky is full of rain clouds, but not so easy when you're in the middle of the desert, the hot sun beating down on you, with no cloud in the sky.

He showed us the angiogram results on the monitor, because I wanted to see and understand for myself just where the blockages were and how severe. It's quite sobering to see your beating heart working to overcome the nearly closed arteries that send life-giving blood throughout your body.

We left there with our spirits low with what we had just heard and seen; but deep within my soul, I knew The Lord had just given the answer to one of the steps being taken. Back to the cardiologist for further steps/options!

God was already directing me toward more of a natural approach, as He had designed my body for from the beginning of creation.

Once he knew I was considering alternatives, my oldest son was of tremendous help, as he was on the internet daily---which I know little about---searching out other natural alternatives and ideas. He was a real blessing as he stood by me with not only encouragement, but example: as he started utilizing most of the information himself, and praying for me with all his heart.

The cardiologist came in with nothing new. He had already told me the difficulty and risk of stents--in my particular case--but he was backed against a wall and could only go back to that option. They would try a couple and

that would give me some relief. I had learned of a procedure called External Counter Pulsation, and with great encouragement and expectation, ask if I could try it. But my hopes were quickly doused as he told me that would not work for my situation, because of the location of the blockages. With all the doors pretty much shut, I knew my second step had been removed.

As I told the cardiologist my decision to try a more natural route, for now, instead of opting for the stents, he reminded me of the risk, but was very much agreeable to my decision---not knowing exactly what to do with me himself.

The tears, the anxiety and depression were at an all-time high---so I thought! Because, while going through all this, they thought they saw something in my right breast, and wanted me to see my regular doctor. So, I made an appointment, just to ease everyone's mind; while at the same time being very confident nothing would come of it, since I had no family history of cancer.

After checking, my doctor said she found nothing suspicious, but would like me to get a mammogram just to be sure. Reluctantly, but to satisfy everyone involved, I did so.

After a dozen pictures, and two and one half hours later, I was told---you guessed it---they saw something; not in my right, but in my left breast. The next step---an ultrasound, because they needed a closer look. All I could think is this can't be happening on top of everything else. "God, what is going on?" After about four hours, very apprehensive, and on the verge of tears, I was in a room, very reluctantly setting-up an appointment for a biopsy.

As my husband drove me home, tears running down my face, I can't explain the gamut of emotions I was experiencing.

Beaten down and depressed, I walked into our home and saw our oldest son waiting in anticipation for the results. All I could get out of my mouth was, "I've got more 'good' news," and burst into tears.

The next twenty-four hours were filled with prayer, trying to find a peace about which way to go. If there's one thing I've learned, it's stand still if you don't know which way to go. So, I called and postponed the biopsy. My husband called our youngest son and told him the findings. I couldn't bring myself to talk about it anymore, right then.

The next Sabbath (Saturday) in service, I couldn't even request prayer, for I knew I'd fall to pieces. After looking over at me, my husband said, "you need prayer," and the

flood gates opened again! As I opened up my feelings and ask questions about pros and cons of the things of God, my son (as my minister) explained the ways of God and my part in making a decision---not which decision to make. Peace started to come, and I knew the answer was on it's way.

I could not get a peace about the biopsy, but was apprehensive about doing nothing.

My regular doctor had gotten the results, and was on the phone early one morning to make sure I was going to get the biopsy, and quite disdainful with me for postponing it. She assured me she would get back with me in a few days.

Every time someone---whether family or others---would urge me to go through with it, the tears and that sick feeling of depression would return. I sensed the anticipation of hope my husband felt, and understood as a spouse; but he was very understanding and knew, ultimately, it was my decision.

My two sons were the only ones who didn't pressure me to do any of it, for they understood it was between me and my Lord. They stood by me in whatever decision I made; at the same time, letting me know they loved me. Reading God's word, praying, and having them stand behind me was the pillar I leaned upon.

Then, one day as I was praying, a still small voice from within seem to say, "Do you trust Me?" Not to heal you, but to accept whatever route I choose to take you! I slowly--but finally--was receiving a peace and the answer I had been seeking; and I was realizing I needed to trust God in whatever happens from here, to surrender my will to Him and let His will be done. My prayers changed. I was not praying for God to heal me, but to keep me and guide me from here. My thought pattern changed. It was no longer a matter of living or dying. It IS a matter of whether I live on this earth or go to live with my Lord! I finally have come to the realization--as Paul said in Phil. 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." If God has further work on this earth for me to do, only He knows; and when my work is done, only He knows. The old saying is true---"Only one life will soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last."

I now realize---which is something I had become passive about---my life in this old world is but a vapor, and as the old song says, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through; my treasures are laid up, somewhere beyond the blue." Through all of this, God brought me back to that realization.

I truly have a peace, and the fear is gone. For you see, from the beginning, I really had nothing to fear at all!