

Fighting God

“Woe to those who quarrel with their Maker,
 those who are nothing but potsherds
 among the potsherds on the ground.
 Does the clay say to the potter,
 ‘What are you making?’”
 “This is what the LORD says...
 ‘Do you question me about my children,
 or give me orders about the work of my hands?
 It is I who made the earth
 and created mankind on it.
 My own hands stretched out the heavens;
 I marshaled their starry hosts.”
 Isaiah 45:9, 11-12

“I don’t want to do this.” I’ve heard this many times as a mother of two young children, usually after I’ve asked them to do some undesirable task like clean their rooms or straighten their closets. Maybe as mamas we’ve said it ourselves looking at the sink of dirty dishes, the hamper full of laundry or the stack of papers on the desk at work. “I don’t want to do this.”

Ever say it to God? Certainly not! Want to double check? Ask yourself again? We end our prayers with “Thy will be done.” and we mean it....right? Or do we?

In September of 2011, I had my own “Sorry God, I don’t want to do this.” session – my personal, internal “fight” with God – resisting his will with every bit of me. It lasted months. It wasn’t the first “Hey God, how about my will be done instead.” situation. But it was the biggest.

In the fall of that year, I felt off. I was having some dizzy spells and irritability. This was absolutely not like me. I prayed and prayed on it. I thought maybe a visit to see if I was hypoglycemic was in order. Instead, the doctor found a lump in my throat – a lump that turned out to be thyroid cancer.

What?! Seriously?! I could not have been more astonished. Having lost my dad to cancer a few years earlier, I was still reeling from that loss. A million horrible thoughts paraded through my mind. *I have a four-year-old and a two-year-old. I’m going to miss their school years, their weddings, and my grandchildren. My husband will have these two little ones alone. Am I going to die? When is surgery? Will I survive surgery? Will I survive this disease?* But the main thought that seemed to literally scream from every pore of my being was: **GOD, I DON’T WANT TO DO THIS!** The thoughts may seem extreme, far-fetched and definitely worst-case-scenario, but when you hear a diagnosis like that, it’s impossible for the lid to stay on Pandora’s Box.

I prayed and I prayed until I thought I couldn't pray anymore. When I felt the winter in my soul of depression, worry and fear, God heard my prayers.

A whirlwind of activities started. Family flew home to visit, aunts came to watch my children, and surgery was scheduled and performed within two weeks. Recovery was painful and slow. My chest felt like every bone was crushed. My vocal chords were affected. I waited for the call from my surgeon to find out my prognosis. A week after surgery he called and gave me an amazing report. He couldn't believe how early it was caught and how clean the rest of my throat looked. I told him God guided his hands and God guided my life. When I hung up with the surgeon I told God I would not waste this opportunity.

I remember hearing one time, long ago, that instead of asking, "God, why is this happening to me?" we should ask: "God, what do you want me to take from this? How can I serve you with this?" I didn't and couldn't ask myself those types of questions that fall, or the few months after surgery, or even the first year after. Truth be told, when I'm scared about future appointments, I still have a hard time asking those questions. And that's okay. It took time, healing, a successful surgery and a fantastic prognosis before I could truly believe I'd be okay. Instead of yelling "God, I don't want to do this!" now I can ask, "God, what do you want me to **do** with this?" Every morning I now say, "Thank you, God, for giving me the **chance** to do something with this."

Healing physically was hard. Healing mentally was harder. It's still a struggle as I approach my biannual tests to check for recurrence. The devil sure loves to scream the worries right into our ears. Yet if I focus on my faith and quiet those screams down, I can remain still enough to hear the gentle whisper of the Lord's promises.

I am a new person with an absolutely changed perspective because of what I went through. Life became a whole lot easier once I stopped fighting God's plan for me. He knew who I would become from this experience. Moreover, he shaped me through this experience to become the person I now am, in order to serve his kingdom.

So I remember Paul's encouragement in 1 Timothy 6:12 to "fight the good fight" – not the fight of wills (mine versus God) – but the fight of staying true to our faith and our God until we are called home to heaven. And that "fight" is the only one worth having.

Prayer Suggestions:

* Thank God for his Son's act of *selflessness* to take away our sin of *selfishness*. We plan and design our lives, but only the true Author of our faith and life knows what's best. Ask God to give you the increased measure of trust it takes to truly let go and surrender your life to him.

* Ask God to forgive you for the times you've resisted his will and begrudgingly did what he laid out for you, knowing it to be for your best. Rejoice in the fact that Jesus kept God's will perfectly for you!



* No one is harder on us than ourselves. We try, we fail. We get down for failing. For those times we just can't make lemons out of lemonade, remember that putting ourselves down doesn't do anything to lift ourselves up towards Christ. You're not perfect. I'm not perfect. Jesus is perfect. Pray for his strength to lift you up, dust you off, and for the strength to follow God's plan anew every day.

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