



Stronghold Ministry's The Exchanger

August 2009

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Joe's story on his battle with cancer is now in print. The Lord's plans often involve unimaginable twists.

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Prayer is not an after-thought, but a major tool in our support. Please pray with us.

New Toll Free Number

Tell us your story.
We want to help.
877-230-7674

Coming Events

- **Cancer Support Group** in Dallas. Thursday evenings @ 7 p.m. Call for location - 214-221-7007.



Grabbed For A Purpose

-Joe Fornear

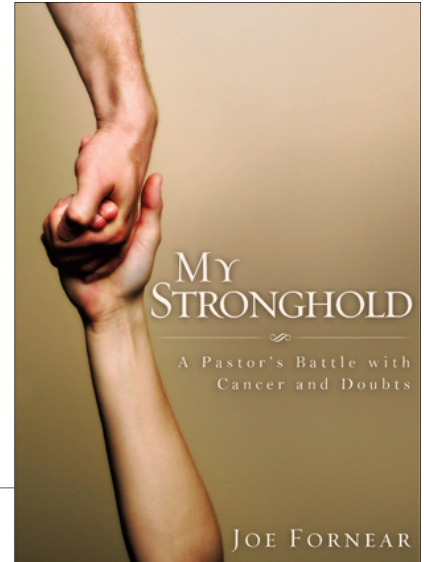
From the time I first experienced a thirst for Christ, and during seminary and years of pastoring, I read a few books on spirituality and ministry. I fancied that I might some day write a book. Not any book, but an instant classic. *The Super Secret Key to Uber-spirituality*, or, *How to Grow a Church to 20,000 Through Irresistible Charisma*. I never imagined I would write a book about battling cancer, but yes, my full story is now in print. It is entitled: *My Stronghold, A Pastor's Battle with Cancer and Doubts*. I share the lessons I gleaned from the edge of life and death. I was a reluctant student, as you can gather from this excerpt in chapter one.

During my twelve years of pastoring, I served from time to time at the front lines of the war on cancer. Many heroes of medicine and support have pitched their tents there, but I had never even spent the night. I had done what pastors do. We sit at bedsides. We hold the soldiers' hands. We whisper our prayers, and repeat His comforts. Oh, we care deeply, but before evening falls, most of us retreat quickly to civilian life. During my trips to the front, I considered myself a chaplain, somehow shielded by the rules of engagement. In my subconscious, I wore that special armband with the bright red cross signaling non-combatant status. I was never to be lined up in any crosshairs. Then in late 2002, I received my draft notice. A ticking time bomb had been planted under my arm.

- from *My Stronghold*

Not to give away the end of the book, but despite an intense struggle with Stage IV metastatic melanoma, I'm still around. My relationship with the Lord was severely tested, and trust me, I'm not the hero of the book. I learned more about my weaknesses than strengths. I remain in awe of "The One who can do immeasurably more than we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). The Lord is the only hero and His ways are always best! If you're interested in reading:

- *Purchase the book on our website - www.mystronghold.org/My-Stronghold.html.
- *For a minimum donation of \$25 to Stronghold Ministry on our donation page - www.mystronghold.org/Donate.html, we will send you a complimentary copy. (Cost of book + shipping subtracted from total donation for tax deductible amount).
- *Previous donors to Stronghold Ministry will be sent a complimentary copy.
- *Previous recipients of Stronghold's spiritual care package will be sent a complimentary copy of the book. **If you have cancer, or if you're a caretaker, please write us and tell us your story and prayer requests, and we will send a complimentary copy.**



Testimony Time

*We are featuring the stories of warriors and caretakers we serve. This month, we share (with permission) a thank you note from **Laura R.**, who is caring for her husband, **Tony**, who has kidney cancer. They live in Florida and contacted us through our website. Tony is undergoing chemo right now, please keep him in your prayers.*

Thank you so much for the spiritual care package. I could not believe it as I opened the package. I was having a very rough day. Tony has been vomiting on and off for the last week and his spirits are low. I was feeling sad and starting to get afraid and there was your wonderful package to show us how much God loves and cares about us. Thank you so very much! I am very interested in hearing more about your story and how God healed you. I believe 100% in God's healing power. Tony had a cat scan last week and we will get the results on Wednesday. He feels something is going on in his stomach. He doesn't talk much about the discomfort he is in. It has been very difficult the last few days. I am usually very positive and stay in the moment. And continuously thank God for all he has done. My mind has wandered and I don't want to think of the worst. I want to think of all the miracles. I've started reading the *Streams in the Desert* devotional. Thank you for the Boston Market gift certificate, the "Believe" plaque and devotional books. Any information you can share with us is greatly appreciated. -Laura R.

Abiding in the Valleys

-by Terri Fornear

Thus says the Lord, "Because the Syrians have said, 'The Lord is a god of the hills but he is not a god of the valleys,' therefore I will give all this great multitude into your hand and you shall know that I am the Lord." (1 Kings 20:28).

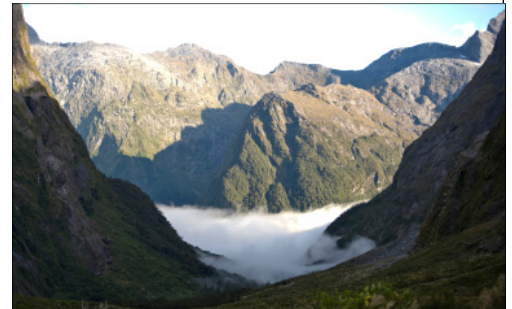
Is the Lord only God of the hills, but not God of the valleys? Why do I think I am close to God when I see His blessings; when my children are flourishing with success and happiness; when my husband has a painless day; when money is no object; when my hair looks great and I'm eating healthy and exercising without "discipline?" Then there are those valley days and that Syrian voice, "Your God is only a god of the hills."

My eyes are focused on life, but not His. Why do I get so distracted with the good... when I have the best? The valleys feel lonely, dark and fearful. I'm lost and confused when evil and trials touch my life.

He is opening my eyes to His work in the valley, and the beauty it possesses after the storms. He is giving me eyes to see the invisible war. He is making an army ready to fight. He whispers in my ear, "*Will you let this trial, this valley, be something I can use to speak my Life into others? Will you become part of those who will care for the weak and broken? I am equipping you in this valley with the only weapon that can break through the enemies' territory. My Life is released in the weak, the humble, the empty. That's how I show Myself to the world I died to love.*" He took me on that cross the day He died. He also took me to the heavenlies where He is seated now. So, if He is now seated in the heavenlies, then so am I.

Colossians 3:1-4: "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory" (NASB).

When I sit in the valley, I feel invisible, but Christ in me becomes my mountain top. He is there making Himself visible. Praying for eyes to see.





Stronghold Prayer Room



Please join us in prayer for these warriors

As Stronghold reaches out to these individuals who are fighting cancer (some listed have no evidence of cancer and a few have other serious illnesses), we don't want to neglect the centrality of prayer for healing and continued healing. Will you take a moment to intercede with us for these warriors? It is motivating to know our prayers are like a sweet incense to the Lord (Revelation 5:8).

*Lord, please bring
complete healing,
strength and
comfort to each of
these You love
so much.*

Revelation 5:8

The twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Betty	Milton	Mr. S	Vicky
Mike D	Sara	Susan	Beth
Brisy	Rex	Mrs. L	Tiffany
Bekah	Monette	Priscilla	Rachel
Mike P	Joan	Stephanie	Stephanie
Donna	Brian	Lynne	Judy
Janice	Joanne	Althea	Terri
Mr. W	Kathy	Kevin	Megan
John	Sue	Robbin	Ruth & Hank
Bill	Dave	Amy	Vivian
Jon N	Garrett	Correy	Tony
Rich	Kathy	David	Melody
Gloria	Peggy	Angela	Phyllis
Claudia	Mr. L	Maryann	Michael
Jeff	Becky	Bill	Joe F
Carolyn	Frank	Tina	Susan
Laura	Lori	Edward	Jeanette
Mary Sue	Randy	Dianne	Joseph
Ed	Sue	Michelle	Emily

