**Acing Your Tests**  
-Joe Fornear

I like to watch kids at the end of the school year. Naturally, they have an extra bounce in their step. Were you ever sorry that school was out for the summer? No more classes, homework or TESTS? It was the mother of all no-brainers for me to trade tests for fishing, wiffle ball and bike rides. Yet James asks maturing adults to have a different perspective on tests. We are to “consider it all joy” when our faith is tested:

> Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance (James 1:2-3).

Tests of faith can reveal how little we know of the subject matter. Tests can hurt too, and their timing is never convenient. If applied to very rough trials, like cancer and natural catastrophes, James’ view of tests may even disturb some people. Is it even possible to mix joy with tears? Can we have a positive attitude as our world seems to crumble at our feet? Can anyone crack a smile when their body is wracked with pain of chemo or tumors, or both? James not only believes it’s possible, He says God can help us “ace” these tests. Trials have a simple goal: endurance. Why endurance? Children only want to play, laugh and have fun. They have zero patience for adversity. Mature adults accept and patiently work through hard times, and their character becomes fully developed. They ultimately become truly happy, as circumstances don’t dictate their moods.

Thank God, a permanent break from tests will come at our graduation. In the meantime, we are not left to our own resources to pass these tests:

1) The Lord provides supernatural strength so we can patiently endure the unbearable. This is how we “Let endurance have its perfect work, so that we may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:4).

2) The Lord allows us to lean over to check His paper to see the right answers during tests of faith. He gives wisdom to lead us through dark times (James 1:5-8).

3) Our teacher is the tested and tried one, Jesus Christ, Who is “the author and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

4) The Lord offers unlimited retakes. A very good thing for me. How about you?

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**Abiding Prayer Group - For Women**

“Abide in Me, and my words abide IN you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7). God has gathered a group of women who desire to do Abiding Prayer together... We are learning to gaze at Jesus, opening our hearts to receive from Him, as we learn to sit in silence and meditate on Him. We then share with each other His Word given to each one, and watch Him take our burdens as we lay them in His hands. We are experiencing His peace, healing and unconditional, loving Presence.

Friday mornings - 9-10:30 a.m.  
Dallas Bible Church - 15765 Hillcrest Road, Dallas, TX 75248  
Call Terri Fornear at 214-221-7007  
No child care currently provided.
Testimony Time

We are featuring the stories of warriors and caretakers we serve. This month we share the story of Joanne M. The Lord touched her with a supernatural peace that sustained her while fighting breast cancer that had spread to her liver. Joanne is pictured here with her husband, three daughters and son-in-law.

This is my journey, my walk with cancer. In July of 2008, I went for a mammogram, which was soon followed by a sonogram and biopsy. These tests changed my life, hearing “You have cancer.” A few days later the Lord came to me and gave me strength. I was standing in our front yard speaking with our daughter, Allie, about my cancer. As I stood watching her drive off, I felt a flush of warmth go through my body from head to toe as the wind blew through the trees. I knew at that very moment, the Lord had literally touched me and spoken to me, filling me with a peace I had never known. In a split second, a miracle had occurred that released me from the grasps of fear.

Many tests followed the original diagnosis and I received news my malignant breast cancer had metastasized and spread to my liver, so I had Stage IV cancer. Unfortunately, my liver tumor was in an inoperable location. I was sent to "the best liver specialist in Dallas," who told me of a new procedure called Cyberknife. Through technology I was given the equivalent of 6 weeks of radiation in a 3-day period. I waited 3 months to do an MRI to see if the procedure worked. I am happy to say that Cyberknife was a success! I still have MRI's every 3 months and am currently clear of cancer in my liver. Praise the Lord!

Throughout this time, I had been undergoing chemotherapy for my breast cancer. I would spend one day every three weeks receiving four chemotherapy medications. In March of 2009, I took a break from chemo and had a double mastectomy including removal of lymph nodes on my left side. I resumed chemotherapy a month later and underwent eight weeks of radiation therapy. My chemotherapy sessions ended in September of 2009, exactly one year from the time I started.

There have been some bumps in the road along my journey; however nothing that we haven't been able to handle. Anytime I begin to get down or feel the "poor-pitiful-me" mantra trying to weasel its way into my mind, I think back to that warm, summer afternoon when the Lord filled me with peace. It is that one moment that has truly sustained me throughout this journey! The Lord was standing next to me on that day. And it may sound odd, but other than the fear and sadness it caused my children, I can honestly say that having cancer has been a gift to me. I am a better person for having had cancer. I have received so many gifts, spiritual and emotional, that I would never trade. And by having cancer, I have been able to help others whose journeys have begun recently. God Bless to each and every one of you as you walk your journey. I pray that you too will see and receive the gifts the Lord has for you. Even if it means in order to see those gifts, you have to walk, hand-in-hand, with cancer.

- Joanne M.

My Stronghold - The book

Visit our website for more on Joe Fornear’s book on his cancer battle, called My Stronghold, A Pastor’s Battle with Cancer and Doubts - www.mystronghold.org/My-Stronghold.html.

If you’re a cancer patient, or caretaker, we’ll send the book to you at no cost. Simply write and tell us your story. We want to share your burden.
Please join us in prayer for these warriors

Stronghold has reached out to this list of individuals who are fighting cancer or have fought cancer (a few have other serious illnesses). We don’t want to neglect the centrality of prayer for 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).

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.

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

Mike D  Edward  Ruth  Kaye  Virginia  Holly
Brisy  Dianne  Sam  Lois  Linda  Rachel
Mr. W  Vicky  Pete  Graeic  Prudence  Steve
John  Rachel  Gina  Tom  Cristina  Vicky
Bill  Stephanie  Duke  Johnnie  Inez
Jon N  Judy  Don  Linda  Kate
Rich  Terri  Jack  Maurice  Tom
Gloria  Megan  John  Lung  Debbie
Claudia  Ruth  Richard  Gary  Sara
Jeff  Hank  Lori  Pat  John David
Carolyn  Vivian  Sheila  Dylan  Ethan
Laura  Tony  Betty  Caroly ne  Myrna
Mary Sue  Melody  Beverly  Rusty
Ed  Michael  Darlene  Bernard  Will
Milton  Susan  Cheryl  Cindy  Rice
Sara  Joseph  Karon  Lisa  Randy
Rex  Emily  Jacob  Brian  Carlos
Monette  Michael  Rebecca  Nisha  Mike
Joan  Robert  Susan  Sherri  Tina
Brian  Mike  Ms. M  Ted  Les
Joanne  Debra  Bill  Darcelle  Traci
Kathy  Michael S.  Sharon  Alan  Trista
Sue  Debbie  Luke  Jennifer  Timi
Garrett  Barb  Nancy  Agnes  Jordan
Kathy  Kent  Bill  Fred  Scott
Peggy  Ted  Holly  Dave  Maria
Mr. L  Andy  Diane  Mary  Jack
Becky  Steve  Allison  Joanne  Naomi
Frank  Lois  Randy  Marilyn  Matthew
Randi  Karen  Nelia  Johnny  Lori
Sue  Pat  Rick  Pat  Kristen
Mr. S  Jodie  Linda  Mary  John
Susan  Matt  Akadrianna  Charles  Leonard
Mrs. L  Susan  Janet  Bill  Penny
Priscilla  Hudson  Julie  Karen  Betty
Stephanie  David  Delora  Betty  Lisa
Lyne  Darlene  Clayton  Mr. H  Mechias
Althea  Lynda  Kathy  Manuel  Phyllis
Robbin  Yvette  Sherry  Bob  Mike
Correy  Sean  Adair  Nick  Hal
David  Frank  Matt  Bonnie  Frank
Angela  Larry  Mike  Misti  Evelyn
Maryann  Lori  Mildred  Kristine  Mary
Bill  Katrina  Anne  Alfredo  Tina
Tina  Gregg  Fred  Sandi  Marty

We try to maintain a balance of privacy and personalization. If your name or a loved one’s name appears here and you do not wish to be listed for any reason, please write and ask us to remove - jfor@mystronghold.org.

Sign up for “In His Grip”

In His Grip is a weekly devotional e-mail intended to encourage and inspire those fighting cancer and those in crisis.

To subscribe to In His Grip go to - http://www.mystronghold.org

In His Grip Archives are at Joe’s blog - just click on the “Blog” link.