Don’t Lose Heart  
God Healed Me Of A Life Threatening Disease  
by Jim Newsom

This is the written testimony of the fact that God healed me of a life threatening disease in 2006. I initially wrote “testimony of how God healed me,” but I realized that would be presumptions of me to try and instruct others on the “how” of anything that pertains to God. As much as I would like to think that I had anything to do with this healing, I have to admit to you right at the beginning, if the healing depended on anything that I said or did, I would still be sick. During this process, I can’t tell you about any great faith that I expressed, most of my prayers where like the father of the boy who couldn’t speak in Mark 9, “I believe, but please help me with my unbelief.” And God didn’t heal me because I am a good person, because I am not. I have realized over the years, that the more light I receive from God, the more darkness that is revealed in my life. Each day, I need His mercy and grace for not only the sins that I commit, but also the righteousness that I attempt, for it consistently falls short of the righteousness that God requires. It is this same mercy and grace which released His miracle working power and brought healing to my body.

The Christian life more often than not is a quandary. Searching and disturbing questions far outnumber absolute and air tight answers. The more we try to mine the knowledge of God, the more we realize how little we know. This is especially true in the area of human suffering caused by physical sickness. Healing, like most things of God, is shrouded in mystery and it is imperative that we learn to respect the mystery. If you are hoping for a formula, that you can apply to your life to ensure that God will heal you as well, you might as well stop reading now. For God and His ways can never be reduced to a formula. Real faith cannot be reduced into a spiritual three step process and merchandised into success stories. Real faith is refined in the fires and storms of life.

My father in the Lord, Charles Simpson once said concerning God’s power, “we can never make anything happen, but we can make room for it to happen.” In other words, there are things we can do to position ourselves to receive God’s grace. This testimony is not just about how I got sick and then God healed me. It’s more about how God used the sickness of my body to bring healing to my soul. The miracle that I want to testify about isn’t just what God did for me, but also what He has done in me and through me, through this whole ordeal. I don’t know why God healed me, but has chosen not to heal others. All I can do is offer you my story, and hope that it will ignite faith in you to embrace your particular storm, be educated by it, and finally be extricated from it by an all loving and powerful God.

THE TRIAL

In December of 2005, I received a phone call from my best friend, Jim Britnell, who lives in Pensacola, Florida. He was calling me to tell me that he just got back from the doctor’s office where he found out that his blood work, from a few weeks early, indicated that he tested positive for the Hepatitis C virus. He also informed me that he had a viral load of 173,000 which was high and can be life threatening. He told me that I should get tested because people who were in prison are considered a high risk group.

Before I go any further, let me tell you a little about this virus. It is in the same family as the AIDS virus, both are incurable and both can be lethal. Where the AIDS virus attacks the immune system, the Hep C
virus attacks the liver. But unlike AIDS, the Hep C virus isn’t spread through immoral behavior, but can only be contracted by blood to blood contact. It is known as the “Silent Killer” because a lot of people exhibit no symptoms up until the day their liver ceases to function and they die.

After I got off the phone with my friend, I called my family doctor and make an appointment to get the necessary blood work done. In January, while I was on a ministry trip, I received a call from my family doctor. He informed me that the blood work results came back I had tested positive for the Hep C virus and my viral load was 10,600,000. He sent me to a Hep C specialist for further testing. The subsequent testing indicated that I had severe liver damage. The tests showed: I had an alarming amount of fat in my liver; I had a dangerous amount of iron in my liver; I had a dangerous amount of ammonia in my blood; I had damage on the cellular level; I had scarring on my liver; my liver was enlarged and so were some of the organs attached to it. All of this indicated that I was at the fourth and final stage of liver damage, known as Cirrhosis of the liver. The doctor told me that I had anywhere between two and five years before my liver would fail, at which point I would need a liver transplant or die.

As you might expect, this was very devastating news to me and my family. I was 55 years old and had always enjoyed excellent health. I have never taken medication on a regular basis and it was rare for me to even get a cold. But now, not only am I sick, I have an incurable disease that could end my life within a couple of years. When I got back from the doctors, I sat my family down and broke the news to them. After many tears, we began to pray. As we prayed, the peace of God permeated all our hearts and we all had a sense that God was going to help us.

The one good news from my doctor’s appointment was that there is a treatment for the Hep C virus. It doesn’t cure it, but it will bring it down to what they call the “undetectable stage.” At that stage it no longer damages your liver, which then gives the liver an opportunity to begin to heal itself. But this treatment only works for 55% of the people. The way they know it is working, is after you have been on the treatment for two months, your viral load should drop by 90%, and then every two months after that, it should drop by an additional 90% each time, until it can no longer be measured and is undetectable. For most people it takes a year to get down to the undetectable stage, but because of the high viral load and the severity of the damage to my liver, if the treatment worked for me, I would have stay on it for two years.

I started the treatment on March 20, 2006. Because of God’s mercy and grace, the treatment began to work for me. Two months later in May, my viral load went from 10,600,000 to 787,000, it dropped by more than 90%. In June it dropped to 43,000, again by more than 90%. Both my family and I were very encouraged.

This treatment consists of a cocktail of two medicines. The first was a weekly injection of Interferon and the second was a daily dosage of two pills consisting of 600 milligrams of Ribavarin. I soon discovered that medicines that help you in one way, usually hurt you in other ways. These are called side effects. There are other medicines that you can take to combat these side effects. Initially, I resisted taking any other medicines, because in my thinking it was absurd to take medicines to help me with the medicines. One of the side effects that I experienced from the weekly injection was sleeplessness. But after not sleeping for a month, I reluctantly starting taking a sleep medicine called Ambien CR. I was able to start sleeping, but the side effects of this medicine was memory lapses and disorientation. The side effects from the daily pills were loss of appetite and a metal taste in my mouth. The loss of appetite and metal taste caused me to lose over thirty pounds. The only medicine that would help me with this contains THC, which
is the active ingredient in marihuana, so I refused to take that one and just tried dealing with weight loss by drinking a product called Ensure.

But the most debilitating side effect that I had to deal with was from the weekly injection. The doctors simply call this one “abnormal thinking.” For someone who would never be accused of thinking normally in the first place, this took on a whole new meaning. I would take my injection on Monday morning, and for three days my mind would race, it would exaggerate circumstances, it would obsess over things, and it would cause extreme paranoia. Let me give you a couple of examples of what I am talking about.

One day, I was sitting in my office, which is in my home. I notice that the floors in the house needed cleaning. My wife was at her part time job, so she couldn’t clean the floors. The more I stared at the dirt, the dirtier the house seemed to be. Finally, I decided to get up and vacuum the floors. While I am vacuuming the floors, I begin to notice other areas of the house that needed to be cleaned. Nine hours later, I had the entire house cleaned. When my wife got home, she tried to get me to stop, but I couldn’t until all the dirt was gone. Though my wife was concerned about my obsession, she was please with a very clean house. Jokingly, she asked me if I would mind if she rented me out to help the other women of the church with their house work.

My paranoia also became a problem. Since I couldn’t travel and because the co-pay for the medicine was extremely high, our finances were really taking a hit. In July, our mortgage payment was two weeks late, but in my mind, I built it up to the point that I just knew we were going to lose everything. So right away I called up a realtor, who went to our church, and asked him if it was possible for me to sell my house by noon. He assured me that it was not possible. I then called the bank that held our mortgage and told them to come get the keys to our house and for them to start the foreclosure process. Luckily, the loan person that I talked with was an elder of the church that I attend and he was able to talk me into waiting to see if things would change.

During this time, I also tried to fire the Board that oversees this ministry twice. I thought they didn’t care about me and were out to destroy the ministry that I had been serving for the last 22 years. The reason I tried firing them twice, was because I didn’t remember that I had tried firing them a month earlier.

I also experienced extreme agitation over anything and everything. I would snap at my wife and children over little things. My outbursts of anger were really beginning to hurt my marriage and my family. These side effects would last until Wednesday night, by then that aspect of the medicine would wear off, and I would regain my composure and my mental faculties. It got so bad, my pastor put a moratorium on me making any decisions between Monday and Wednesday. My wife would want to divorce me every Monday morning, but then she would want to remarry me every Wednesday night. There was a medicine that I started taking for this, it was an anti-anxiety medicine call “Lexpro.” But the more the Interferon built up in my system, the less this medicine worked, until it quit working all together.

The sickness and the medicine put a strain on every aspect of my life: my body; my mind; my emotions; my marriage; my family; my finances; and even my salvation. Nothing was left untouched, everything that I had, knew and believed was being tested. This started me on a journey to understanding why I got sick and how I could be healed.
For a Christian, all journeys should start in scripture. Psalm 119:105 states, “Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.” I knew that the answers to my questions, and the provision for my problem would be found in the Word of God. Psalms 107:19-20, clearly states this, “Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions.” The New Living Translation says it this way, “LORD, help! they cried in their trouble, and He saved them from their distress. He spoke, and they were healed, snatched from the door of death.”

This is what I needed, so I started searching the Bible for the words that would bring hope, faith and ultimately healing to my body. I searched to see if there was anyone in the Bible who was experiencing to some degree what I was. I found several, but the one that spoke to me the most was what the Apostle Paul went through in Asia. He speaks of it in 2 Corinthians 1:8-11 which states, “For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, you also joining in helping us through your prayers, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed upon us through the prayers of many.” I love the way the Message renders this passage, “We don’t want you in the dark, friends, about how hard it was when all this came down on us in Asia province. It was so bad we didn’t think we were going to make it. We felt like we’d been sent to death row, that it was all over for us. As it turned out, it was the best thing that could have happened. Instead of trusting in our own strength or wits to get out of it, we were forced to trust God totally — not a bad idea since He’s the God who raises the dead! And He did it, rescued us from certain doom. And He’ll do it again, rescuing us as many times as we need rescuing. You and your prayers are part of the rescue operation — I don’t want you in the dark about that either. I can see your faces even now, lifted in praise for God’s deliverance of us, a rescue in which your prayers played such a crucial part.”

The first thing that caught my eye, as I began to meditate on this passage, was the link between prayers and the promise of deliverance. Paul knew and stated in verse 11 that “help and favor come through the many prayers of others.” In the Message it states, “that the prayers of others are part of the rescue operation.” This encouraged me because over the years, I have prayed for thousands of people, many of them receiving a miracle to some degree and now it was my turn. Surely, the Lord would respond to my prayer for myself as He had responded to my prayers for others. In order to let God know how serious I was, I decided that I would fast and pray for three weeks. I was confident that within those three weeks, I would be healed. At the end of three weeks I lost weight, but I didn’t gain a healing. Though my body responded to the fast, the Lord didn’t respond to my prayers.

I then thought if the Lord wouldn’t respond to my prayer for me, maybe He would respond to the prayers of others for me. So I started asking everybody to pray for me. I told my cell group of my need, I put it in both the monthly newsletter and the weekly E-letter that I send out. When I ran into people that I didn’t know at the gym, airports or other places and found out in our conversations that they were Christians, I would tell them of my need and ask them to pray for me. This was a little difficult because this sickness
has some negative connotations to it. So by asking people to pray for me, I was also letting them know something of my past sins and lifestyle. But I couldn’t afford to worry about that, because I needed deliverance more than I needed my dignity. But again, it didn’t seem like God was responding.

But I wasn’t about to take no for an answer. If God wasn’t going to respond to my prayers, maybe He would respond to His Word. So I got a concordance out and looked up all the scriptures that I could find on healing. I then made a list of them and then divided that list by seven, and each day of the week I would read and prayer one of those seven lists. But as with the prayer and fasting, there still didn’t seem to be any visible response from God.

At this point, I was both depressed and desperate so I started staying up late at night and watching Trinity Broadcasting Network. I was hoping that one of the Faith Healers would miraculously call out my sickness on their broadcast and even if they asked me to put my hand on the TV and pray, I was prepared to do so. But as with everything else, nothing seemed to happen.

After all of this, I went back to the scriptures in 2 Corinthians 1:8-11, to see if I missed anything since the “rescue” was not happening. This time, I saw a phrase in this scripture that showed me that healing and deliverance a lot of the time is not instantaneous, but a process. Out of the NASB the phrase reads like this, “in order that.” The Message states it this way, “as it turned out.” Indicating, though the rescue didn’t immediately happen, it did however ultimately happen. It also indicates that God had a purpose for the problems that Paul was experiencing. The purpose for the problems in this particular case, was to bring Paul to a place where he and his friends “no longer trusted in themselves but in God.” Again, the message states it this way, “instead of trusting in our own strength or wits to get out of it, we were forced to trust God totally.” Paul implies in this scripture, that once the purpose of “trusting in God totally” was accomplished, then deliverance from the problems followed.

As I meditated on this phrase I sensed God speak to my heart these words, “son, I know you are trusting Me for a healing, but will you trust Me with your health.” I interpreted this to mean that God was going to allow my health to be taken for a season in order to bring a much needed seasoning to my life. As is my practice anytime I hear God speak by the still small voice, I then look to scripture to see if God had spoke anything similar to someone else. I found several examples where this dynamic happened, Job in the Old Testament and Peter in the New Testament being the most well known.

One of the things that I began to understand, is that the Devil is God’s devil. Psalm 119:91 states, “For all things are Thy servants,” therefore Satan is God’s servant. If you are a born again believer in Jesus Christ, Satan has to get permission from God to do anything to you. We can see this in the Book of Job, where Satan was given permission to afflict Job. We can also see this in Luke 22:31, where Satan asked permission of Jesus to sift Peter as wheat is sifted. Everything that the enemy does, God can use to serve His purpose. The weapons Satan uses to hurt us, God can use as tools to help us; the things he would use to tear us down, God can use to build us up; and the things he would use as stumbling blocks, God can use as stepping stones. In the afflicting of Job, God was glorified and Job was abundantly blessed. In the midst of being sifted, Peter had something converted in him, which equipped him to be a strength to his brothers. Armed with understanding, I then decided to stop trying to get out of my sickness and to allow God to use my sickness to get something out of me.
Since God wasn’t going to deliver me from this affliction until I allowed Him to develop me through it, I started searching scriptures for some insight so that I could learn my lessons well and quickly. This search brought me to James 1:2-4. Out of the Phillips Translation it states, “When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don’t resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends.” I began to see from this passage in James, that God was trying to teach me that “trials” are part of His plan for my life, and the way I respond to them will either hinder or help this plan.

The first thing that James points out about trials is that they come without invitation or permission, they just begin to “crowd into my life.” I may not like them, but I have to take the posture that I must need them. If I see trials as “intruders,” which is the way the enemy wants me to see them, then I will see them as being forced upon me to hurt me. As a result, I will spend all of my time and energies trying to get them out of my life, instead of allowing them to get out of me those things that God is after. Therefore, I need to see them as “friends,” sent by God to teach and transform me, as the rest of this passage in James attests to, “Realize that they come to test your faith and produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character, men of integrity with no weak spots.”

As I began to understand this, then instead of running from this fiery trial of physical sickness, I decided to remain in it, until it yielded some treasure for my soul. And instead of praying “deliver me from” my present circumstances, I began to pray “develop me through.”

I also found that Paul in Philippians 4:10-12, had experienced the same understanding as James, “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” (KJV) What makes this statement by Paul both profound and powerful, is where he was at when he wrote those words. He was in a Roman prison, shackled between two Praetorian guards. He wasn’t seeing the opposition: imprisonment, shackles, loneliness; he was seeing only the opportunities: time to write the churches and the challenge of leading his guards to the Lord. His contentment comes from not dwelling on what he didn’t have, but realizing what he did have. In verse 12, Paul gave me the secret to finding contentment in my present circumstances. He said, “everywhere and in all things I am instructed.” The Greek word for instructed is “mueo,” which means to initiate into the mysteries or knowledge of God. The implication is that God has allowed my difficult situation, in order to teach me something. In other words, until instruction took place, provision or deliverance would not take place.

I also found this same understanding in Psalms 46:1 which states, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” The question that I had was, “Why didn’t God help me out of the trouble?” I was beginning to understand that is not His order. He must first adjust me to the trouble and cause me to learn my lesson from it. His promise is, “I will be with you in trouble.” He must be with me in the trouble first, before He would take me out of it. God used my present trouble to teach me some precious lessons. The trouble was intended to educate me.

In 1 Corinthians 10:13 I learned that when my faith is being tested, I shouldn’t look to escape the test, but to embrace it, “God is faithful, He will not let you be tested beyond more than you can stand. But when
you are tested, He will also make a way out.” (Beck) I like this translation of this verse, because the translator uses the word “test” instead of “temptation.” If I saw the difficulty as a temptation, Satan would then try and use it to bring out the worse in me. If I saw it as a test, then God could use it to bring out the best in me. The word temptation in the past caused me to misinterpret this verse, which then caused me to focus on the last part of the verse, “the way out,” instead of on the first part of the verse, “being able to stand.” Paul is saying that the faithfulness of God would not let me be tested or tempted beyond what I was able to handle. It implies that if something is on me, then I can handle it, no matter what my feelings, friends or finances say. If for some reason I buckle under the test, instead of standing in it, then God will provide “a way out.” He does this, because He will not let something He allowed into my life that is designed to help me, begin to hurt me. Through this whole ordeal, I was beginning to learn that difficult experiences are designed to train and prepare me for a new movement of God’s Spirit in my life.

I also discovered two stories in the “Gospels” which illustrate this principle. The first story is found in Mark 4:35-40, where Jesus tells His disciples, “let’s go to the other side.” As they get into the boat and launch out into the will of God, a furious storm (This is Standing Operating Procedure) comes upon them. Even though most of these disciples were seasoned fishermen, who have been in storms before, this storm is so bad, they begin to fear for their lives. This fear causes them to wake the Lord, who is asleep (even though it is stormy), and accuse Him of not caring about them. He rebukes the storm and causes it to be still, then He rebukes the disciples for having no faith. This story is not about God’s ability to still storms, but about God’s ability to keep His disciples in the midst of storms. The stilling of the storm was a result of no faith on behalf of His disciples. It was never Jesus’ intention to still the storm, but to set an example on how to get through the storm. Which was by resting in it and not running from it. Jesus was trying to teach them through the storm that they had no reason to fear, because He was in the boat with them. When He is in the boat with you, no storm can hurt you. By taking the way out, they didn’t learn this lesson.

The second story is found in Matthew 14:22-32. This story is also about the Lord telling His disciples to “go to the other side,” and as they do, another storm comes upon them. This time, one of the disciples, Peter, decides that he is going to be instructed by the storm, instead of seeking deliverance from it. As a result, he learns to walk on the very thing that had previously threaten him. Jesus didn’t still this storm, once Peter passed the test, the storm was stilled automatically. Once he was instructed by it, he was then delivered from it. Through this I learned that the best way to still a storm in my life, is to be instructed by it.

Through this ten month ordeal, of having a life threatening disease and as a result dealing with debilitating medicines, God educated, edified and equipped me. Time and space will not allow me to tell you all of the things God taught me during this time, but I do want to share with you two of the main ones.

The first thing that God was after in my life was my indifference toward people who were sick and on medicine. When I realized I was sick, I was 55 years old. All of my life I had enjoyed good health. It was even rare for me to get a cold or even a headache. Because of this, I very rarely took any medication. Instead of being grateful to God for keeping sickness from me, I had the attitude that I never got sick because I ate right and exercised daily. Because I believed that my health was a result of something that I did, I became indifferent and judgmental towards those who were sick. Though I would try to act
compassionate and caring on the outside, my heart was both callous and cold where their situation was concerned. I would pray for them if asked, but my prayers were ineffective because I prayed with no love and no faith. I had no love, because I felt if they weren’t so lazy and undisciplined, then they would be healthy and not need my prayers. I had no faith, because I felt their sickness was God’s judgement on their life, because of the sins in the midst of their lives. When I heard that side effects of the medicine were affecting them emotionally and mentally, I thought they were using it as an excuse for bad behavior that they didn’t want to change.

As you might guess, I no longer feel that way. Though sickness is not from God, God did use my sickness to deepen my capacity to feel compassion towards those who are sick. Because in the midst of all my right eating and disciplined exercise I still got sick. I realize now, that health is a blessing from God. I understand now the depths of despair, depression, and despondency that physical sickness can bring to a person. I understand now, how important a caring look, a kind word, and a helping hand is to one who has been robbed of their health. But most of all, I understand the need for the kind of hope and faith that can only be imparted by someone who has walked in your shoes. Through this whole ordeal, it wasn’t the healthy people that minister the most to me, but those who had been or were still afflicted by some physical ailment. Their faith was able to touch me deep in my soul, because it had been refined in the fires and storms of their own afflictions.

Through this I learned that you can’t really comfort others in their afflictions until you have first been comforted in yours. This is clearly stated in 2 Corinthians 1:3-5, “The God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” Because I received compassion from so many others, it imparted a much needed compassion for others in my soul. This compassion is actually allowing me to feel what others are feeling. It seems like I am now able to feel the limp of the crippled; the hurt of the diseased; the loneliness of the outcast, and as an added bonus I am now able to feel the embarrassment of the sinful. Once I feel their hurts, I am compelled to do everything I can to heal their hurts. I have found that once I am touched by their needs, I begin to forget my own. I am learning that the best medicine for my problems is to get involved in someone else’s.

The second thing God was after in my life was a weakened belief in the power of prayer. At the time of getting sick, I had been a Christian for 33 years. In those 33 years, I had seen many tangible answers to prayers, but I was also aware of even more prayers going unanswered. In my early years as a Christian, I would pray about everything, with an expectation that God would both hear and answer. But as the years went by, I began to pray less and less because more times than not, I felt like my prayers went unanswered. Don’t get me wrong, I still practiced the daily discipline of prayer, in that I had daily devotions. But I did this more for the value of demonstrating to others that I had this discipline, than I did in actually believing that God even heard or cared about my prayers. Now don’t get me wrong, I still believed that God answered prayers, but my weakened belief came from the perspective that He was selective in the prayers that He chose to answer. And because I didn’t know what qualified a prayer to be answered, I then stopped praying about most things, and the prayers I did pray, were more a expectant formality for the sake of others, than they were an exercise of faith towards God.

Through this affliction, I learned that God responds to every prayer that is prayed. In 2 Corinthians 18-11 Paul understood that “help comes through the prayers of others.” The word “help” in this passage means
to provide assistance. It has the idea of providing what is needed while you are still in the affliction, so that you may endure it until the lessons are learned. I am so grateful for every prayer that was prayed on my behalf, for I realize now that without them, I would have perished in my affliction instead of persevering. God used those prayers to keep my marriage in tact, when the strain of the disease and the medicines were trying to tear it apart. God used those prayers to give me and my family enough hope to keep moving forward in the process, even when things seemed hopeless. God used those prayers to move on people to assist us financially, when our personal finances were depleted. God used those prayers to move on people to call me or write me to lift me up, especially at the times I was at my lowest. God used those prayers to keep my Board of Directors loyal to me, in the face of false accusations and the threat of being fired unjustly. The point I am trying to make, is most of the prayers that were prayed on my behalf, God used to assist me while I was in the affliction, so that the lessons could be learned, which would then position me to be delivered from the affliction.

Also in verse 11 of 2 Corinthians 1, Paul makes another statement about prayer, he states that “God’s favor is bestowed upon people through the prayers of many.” The Greek word translated “favor” is “charisma” which is defined as “a gift of grace.” The implication is that once the assisting prayers have done their work, and you have received the instruction that you needed, He will now respond with favor, by providing the gifts of grace you will need to be delivered. Which now brings me to the third and final part of this testimony.

THE TRIUMPH

By the end of August, I began to realize all of the great things that God had done in and for my life, in the midst of this terrible affliction. As I became more compassionate toward the plights of others, I soon found myself praying for them with a faith that I hadn’t experienced since the early days of my Christian experience. I found myself thinking more of the sufferings of others, than I was about myself. All of this combined together gave me reasons to believe that soon God was going to bestow the “gift of grace” that I would need to be delivered totally from this affliction.

I was encouraged because the medicine that I was on, was working. My viral load over the past 8 months had dropped from 10,600,000 to 5,500. At this rate soon I would be at what they call the “undetectable stage.” It is at this stage, that the virus is no longer strong enough to do any more damage to my liver, and because the liver is so resilient, it then begins to heal itself. At this point, I was beginning to think the “gift of grace” that God was going to use to deliver me was in the medicine that I was taking.

All of that hope came crashing down during my monthly visit to my doctor in September. I had hoped that my viral load would have dropped by another 90%, but the opposite happened, it increased by 90% to 48,000. My doctor was convinced that it was a lab error, because it is rare for this medicine to begin to work and then stop. My doctor’s assurance helped deal with Diane and my disappointment. They did some more tests, with the hope that when I came back a month later, it would verify my doctor’s suspicion that it was a lab error. However, in October when I went for my visit the tests showed that the medicine had indeed stopped working, and now my viral load was up to over 780,000 and climbing.

At this point, I only had two options. The first, was to go on a daily injection of a much stronger medicine. If I took this option, I would experience the side effects of abnormal thinking more intensely, and would
have no break from them, since it was a daily instead of weekly injection. The doctor also told us, that there was less than a 20% chance of this medicine even working. The other option was to wait for a new medicine that was coming out in 2 to 3 years that may help me. The problem with this option was that my doctor didn’t think I had 2 to 3 years left before my liver would fail, and I would die.

Since the chances were that the first option wouldn’t work anyway, Diane and I decided I should get an extensive liver biopsy, hoping that it would show I had enough time left to wait for the new medicine. I left the doctors office that day with a sense of hopelessness and despair. I was also disappointed and disillusionsed because I felt I was learning the lessons that God had been teaching me, and I had faith up until this point that the storm would soon be stilled.

During the next couple of days, I felt myself getting angry at God. Why had He abandoned me? Why did He give me hope only to take it away? When no answers came to these questions, I then resolved myself to the fact that I was probably going to die. At this point, my major concern was how my family was going to be provided for after I was gone. I had two children in college, a house mortgage, and car payments. I had no retirement, no life insurance, and no savings. In the midst of my anger towards God, and my anxiety about my family, I felt my faith beginning to fail. Everything in me just wanted to give up. As I was sitting there all stirred up with anger and anxiety, I was reading the story in Matthew 7 about the “wise and foolish builders.” What caught my attention was that both the wise man and the foolish man had to endure a storm. The only difference was that the wise man’s house stayed intact, whereas the foolish man’s house was destroyed.

In that moment, I decided that even if this storm takes my life, it was not going to take my faith. I resolved that I was going to go through this storm with everything that the Lord had given me intact. Not only was I not going to let the enemy rob from me. I was going to do everything I could to take back from him everything that he had stolen from others. I was going to make him regret the day that he afflicted me. If I was going to die, I was going to die with gratitude in my heart, joy in my life, and a resolve to move forward in my faith. Just as the way I lived my life ministered to people, I now wanted the way that I died to minister to them as well. I was determined that in these final couple of years, I was going to live my life in such a way that it would live on after I died.

Armed with this new found resolve, and the fact that I was no longer taking medicine, I began to travel and minister again. At the end of October 2006, I was asked to conduct a weekend retreat for a church in St. Louis, MO. The retreat was held at a retreat center about 100 miles south of the city. I had the privilege of ministering Saturday morning and evening, and then again on Sunday morning. When I finished ministering on Sunday morning, I gave an altar call for people who wanted to be prayed for. The first people to come to the altar was the Pastor of the church and his son Caleb, but instead of wanting me to pray for them, the Pastor said that Caleb wanted to pray for me. During the service, I had seen his eyes full of tears, which I thought was the result of conviction over some sin. But the tears that he expressed weren’t over his sin, but over my sickness. Caleb told me that God had given him a burden to pray for me. Before I go any further, I need to tell you a little about Caleb. Though Caleb was the pastor’s son, he wasn’t known for his prayers, his Bible knowledge, his church attendance, or even his spiritual gifting. He was known as a good son, who truly loved the Lord, but whose passions in life included being a fireman, hunting, and fishing. So I was a little surprised that of all the people in the church, God gave a burden to him to pray for me. I was even more surprised when he said that he simply wanted to pray the Lord’s
prayer over me, and he even asked me if I would pray it with him. I must admit, though I was touched by the fact that he was burdened to the point of tears, and that he wanted to pray for me, I didn’t have any confidence that God was going to respond to this very simple prayer. But when we prayed the part that says “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” I sensed God touch me. At the time, I didn’t think it was a healing touch, more than anything, I felt the peace of God infuse my soul, and I had the sense that no matter what happened, everything was going to be all right.

The following Tuesday was when my extensive liver biopsy was scheduled. The procedure went well and I was told that my doctor should have the results by Friday. On Friday, I called my doctor and the secretary told me that he was out of town and wouldn’t be back until the following Friday. I asked her if she could please call the doctor, and ask him to give me a call back with the results from my biopsy. A little while later, the secretary called me and told me that the doctor had received the results, but that he needed to discuss them with me face to face, and I would have to wait until the following Friday for that to happen. This response from the doctor caused me to start thinking the worse. There is always a chance that Cirrhosis of the liver can digress into cancer of the liver. But even with this thought, I still sensed that everything was going to be all right. I left on Saturday to go minister at a church in Columbia, PA. I was to minister Sunday morning and then nightly through Wednesday night. While I was there, I was telling someone about my situation with the doctor, and they told me that I didn’t have to wait on the doctor, I could get my own results from the medical records department at the hospital. I then called the hospital where my biopsy was performed, and they verified what this person told me. So after the Wednesday night service, I drove all night in order to get home by 7:00 am. A little while later, I drove to the hospital and had the records department make me a copy of all my test results.

As I stood in the hallway of the hospital reading my results, I could not believe what I was reading. The results revealed that I had no steatosis, which meant I no longer had any fat in my liver. They revealed that there was no hepatocellular necrosis, which meant there was no longer any scarring on my liver. They revealed that I no longer had a dangerous amount of iron in my liver, it was in fact below normal. They revealed that I no longer had a high amount of ammonia in my blood, it too was in normal range. And they revealed that I had no fibrosis, which meant that my liver damage was at “stage 0,” indicating there was no damage at all. As I was reading, I let out a yell of joy, a hospital employee walking by told me that I shouldn’t yell in a hospital. I told them I had just found out that God had healed my liver, and we both yelled with joy. I then went to where my wife worked in the hospital, and shared the good news with her. We rejoiced together.

The next day, I went to my family doctor who is a Christian, and we both praised the Lord together. The following day, I went to the specialist that had been treating me, and I told him that I had already received the results of my test. This doctor is not a Christian, and he told me that the reason he wanted to tell me the results face to face is that he couldn’t explain them. He proceeded to show me all the other test results indicating how bad my liver was, and how up until two weeks ago, I was not getting better but worse. I told him that I could explain it, that God healed me. He couldn’t believe that with me. He still believes that his original diagnose was correct, and time will show that he was correct. He asked me to come back in six months for some more testing, which I agreed to. The reason I agreed to is that I want him to see that there is a God in heaven, who is both all loving and all powerful.
It has now been five months since God healed me, and I feel better and stronger than I ever have in my life. I am continuing to seek to learn from this ordeal. **Luke 12:48** states “where much is given, much is required.” Therefore, the more I can gleam from this, the more I will be equipped to minister to others. As I stated earlier, I believe God responded to every prayer that was prayed on my behalf. All of these prayers but one, God used to provide me with help, assistance, that helped me to embrace my affliction while I was being educated by it. As I began to learn the lessons, then God responded to Caleb’s prayer by providing for me His favor, a gift of grace, that then eradicated me from the affliction.

I believe that God responded to Caleb’s prayer because in responding to his prayer, God got all the glory. Caleb’s prayer was a simple one, that was full of love for me and faith towards God. Caleb understood that the power of prayer is not in the one who says it, but in the one who hears it. I am grateful that Caleb stepped against his fears, his lack of skill in prayer, and gave the little that he had, hoping that God could do a lot with it, and guess what, He did.

Caleb’s prayer reminds me of the little boy who gave his sack lunch of two loaves and five fish to the disciples in order to feed a multitude of people in **John 6:5-13**. He only had a little, but he gave it in faith to a big God. The disciples attitude almost kept this miracle from happening because they said in verse 9, “how far will they go among so many.” I believe this is the same attitude that keeps a lot of miracles from happening today, because most Christians only have a sack lunch, and because what they have won’t go far, they won’t let it go at all. Through this whole ordeal, I have learned and am learning that God wants to do a whole lot more than we ever thought He would or could. The only thing he requires from us is the little that we have, with the belief that in His hands, He can do a lot. I believe there are three parts to every miracle. There is the part of the one who is in need of a miracle, his or her part is to seek God for His purpose. There is the part of others who know and care for the one who needs a miracle, their part is to serve through their prayers. And there is God’s part, which is to save through His power.

As I close out this testimony, I would like to share my appreciation for all the people who gave support to me and my family during this very difficult and debilitating past year. We felt this support at the church services that I ministered at, in the form of caring questions, encouraging words, and warm smiles. We felt this support through the continued financial support that sustained us, and gave us faith to believe that God would move on others as well. We also felt this support through the many prayers that were offered on our behalf during these very difficult days. I want to share my appreciation to God, and the best way that I can show Him my appreciation is to allow Him to do through me, what He has done for me.

Since November, I have shared this testimony many times all over this country, and I have had the privilege of praying with others for them to receive their own miracle. In fact, I have prayed for more people in these past five months, than I have in the last several years. The reason I have, is not only that God has healed me, though that would be a sufficient reason, but I am also praying because I can’t not pray. Because of what I went through, I can no longer be indifferent toward the hurts of others, and I now realize more than ever, how much power there is in prayer.

**Jim Newsom**