



A MIRACLE  
ON THE  
JOURNEY

*Mark and Joan Erwin*

# A Miracle on the Journey

April 14, 2015—August 31, 2016

*“And now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling and lift us from the dark valleys of despair to the mountains of hope from the midnight of desperation to the daybreak of joy; to Him be power and authority, forever and ever.”*

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

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Cancer is a dreaded diagnosis for every family and brings on so many emotions and anxiety for all involved. It makes everything else far less relevant.

We are hopeful that our story will bring you and those you share it with comfort and joy on your life journey.

Mark + Joan

We live in Charlotte, NC and have been gifted with a wonderful life full of dreams realized and a few setbacks and disappointments. We have been blessed to have our Lord and our family as we travel through our years together. We have travelled the world and have known many of the wonders of life.

In early April 2015, Joan began to complain of pains in her midsection and also became lethargic. Her personal physician, Dr. Lorri Ayers prodded and poked and ran some tests. At first she thought Joan might have viral hepatitis since the liver was inflamed and quite sore. She ordered a CT scan and on April 14th she was at our house to share the most evil words nobody needs to hear. She took Joan's hands in hers and said, *"Joan, you have Metastatic Breast Cancer. It has spread to your lymph node and the liver."* Lorri went on to say that she was going to get the best people on the case and

would make all the right things happen immediately. The next day we met with Dr. Antoinette Tan at The Levine Cancer Institute who gave us more details. Joan's liver was full of diffused tumors and was losing function fast. She said the cancer was quite aggressive so Joan had her first chemo treatment on Friday the 17th.

The following emails along with Facebook posts were sent to our friends around the world in order to share the horrific news and seek their comfort, love and most of all, prayers. The loving responses have been a sure and powerful cause of strength to us and might be an inspiration to you if you or a loved one are dealing with this horrific disease.

**April 18, 2015**

Dearest Friends,

You are receiving this note because Joan and I consider you dear friends, good friends or wonderful friends. (You choose)

Joan had been feeling a bit under the weather last week and her doctor, Lorri Ayers, began searching for the cause. This Monday she ordered a CT scan and then came to our house that evening to tell us Joan has Metastatic Breast Cancer which has spread to the lymph nodes and the liver. It is inoperable and is apparently very aggressive so we spent this week in a blur of tests and consultations. Our lead oncologist, Dr. Antoinette Tan of the Levine Cancer Institute is brilliant and one of the best in the field.

Friday was a long day during which the first infusion of chemo was administered. The future schedule calls for chemo once a week for three weeks followed by one week off and then the next round.

Thankfully Joan has not been nauseous and has not had any adverse reactions to the three drugs they administered. Today she feels pretty good but is weak. Her spirits are generally good with moments of despair.

Our daughters, Jennifer and Missy are on the case. Jennifer is a nursing student at Queens University and is doing research and consulting with her contacts. Missy is bringing meals and running errands.

Our granddaughters, Della, Lila and Virginia have been cheering Grand mommy with beautiful works of art. My new job is "humble servant" which is not really that new.



Several years ago a longtime friend of mine, Bob Mingle wrote to me after he was diagnosed with cancer, *"I find I don't have nearly as many 'important' things in my life anymore. I see that as a good thing! I have important people and a few possessions. It just seems that so much which was once important, no longer is. It's actually a very liberating feeling—you don't have to worry about nearly as much stuff."*

Joan and I have strong faith in the power of God the Healer and we cherish all prayers on her behalf. Nothing else will do. I have copied Joan on this email since some of you might not have her current email address.

April 25, 2015

Your outpouring of love and support has been nothing short of a miracle for Joan and our whole family. The hundreds of calls, emails and notes has buoyed her spirits and given us the assurance of love from near and far. You have sent prayers from around the world. You have sent words which have touched our hearts more than you will ever know. One dear friend said, *"My eyes are full of tears but my heart is full of hope"*. Another good friend said, *"Miracles happen every day. You will win this battle. You have an army behind you."*

Joan has remained strong this week and has thankfully not suffered any adverse side effects from the chemo treatment. She is tired and sleeps more than normal while her body fights the good fight. She eats several bird size meals each day while

drinking alkaline ionized water. At first she lost a few pounds but she has now put one pound back on. So many of you are providing great food that I am adding on a bit of heft. Bad Mark.

Let me tell you how your prayers are working. I was in Washington this past week for meetings with former president Bill Clinton and was given the glorious opportunity to meet with Dr. Ronald DePinho, President of MD Anderson, the premiere cancer research institute in the world. He has now committed his team to Joan and they have already reviewed all of the diagnostic and treatment information. In summary, he has said, *“Joan is in good hands and receiving proper therapy (through The Levine Cancer Institute) which is how we would treat her as well.”*

He went on to say that depending on how the current treatment plan progresses there

is a new drug which can be added which attacks the HER2 protein and they also have several excellent clinical trials available. He added, *“Bottom line, we will be with Joan at every step in her cancer journey and provide the very best chances for making her disease history.”*

And the story continues...When I returned to Charlotte Wednesday, I stopped by Jason's Deli on the way home to grab a sandwich for Joan and me. At the counter I noticed a display of kerchiefs in pink available for sale to help a Cure Cancer cause. I bought two and when I arrived home I opened one for Joan.

Here it is:



We could not believe this small reminder  
that prayers really do work.

Joan's personal physician, Lorri Ayers said, *"The Lord's hand seems to be in Joan's treatment every step of the way."* Joan had her second treatment yesterday. The first thing they do is draw blood and send it to the lab for analysis. The nurse came to us with the wonderful news that Joan's liver tests were quite improved. When Dr. Ayers heard the news her response was excitement and cheers. We know there is a long journey ahead but we also have so many prayers and so much loving support. Joan and I are blessed in more ways than we can comprehend.

May 3, 2015

Joan's third treatment went well with another slightly positive result on the tests. Her appetite is good and although she tires easily, she finds the energy to take an occasional walk. Unfortunately, her hair is now "blowing in the wind." Her hairdresser noticed the beginnings of this latest transition.

We will be shopping for wigs this coming week. Joan loves the encouraging visits, emails, notes and cards she has received. She is cheered by your caring and concern. Some friends have written wonderful gifts of thought and prayer.

One friend from Massachusetts wrote, *"Remember the one weapon we have against cancer is to stay positive."* Another

dear friend from Mexico who is traveling wrote, "*We prayed for Joan in Sagrada Familia in Barcelona and yesterday we prayed for her in the cathedral in Pisa.*"

The ladies of our church made a beautiful prayer shawl which Joan wears most of the day and evening.

Our house is now part flower shop and part cafeteria, thanks to so much loving generosity. Our dear friend and favorite caterer has been making recipes from Joan's cookbook, *Around the Family Table*, which she wrote several years ago as a tribute to her mother as well as other family and friends around the world.

Our good friends who own a chain of restaurants brought what might have been the contents of one of the stores for us to enjoy. We were able to share the wealth with other visitors and friends.



One of Joan's dear friends from high school days in Maryville, Tennessee has been visiting for a few days and has been a wonderful blessing to us. Here is a beautiful thought we received which we wish to share with you:

### **Dancing With God**

*Living God's will is a lot like dancing. When both partners try to lead, nothing seems right. The movement doesn't flow and everything is uncomfortable and awkward. When one partner realizes the problem and lets the other lead, both begin to flow with the music. The leader gives gentle cues by moving lightly in one direction or another and suddenly it's as though two become one. A remarkable dance requires surrender and attentiveness from one and gentle guidance*

*and skill from the other.*

*To dance through life with God, trust Him to lead and guide you through each season of your life.*

May your prayers continue to flow like a healing stream. We send blessings back to each of you.

**May 10, 2015**

We had some positive news Thursday when Dr. Tan, Joan's oncologist, said the tumor mass had noticeably shrunk since she first detected it. This, along with the continued improvements in the lab results are strong indicators that the treatments are helping. On the other hand, Joan began noticing that her hair hurt and there was significant hair loss. On Friday she asked me to cut her hair...off. The good news is that her hair no longer hurts but it really made the journey more real for us.





I am reminded of the story Bob Timberlake and I put in our book *Life's Lessons: Lines of Wisdom from a Faithful Stream*:

### **All About Attitude**

There once was a woman who woke up one morning, looked in the mirror, and noticed she had only three hairs on her head.

*"Well,"* she said, *"I think I'll braid my hair today!"* So she did and had a wonderful day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and saw that she had only two hairs on her head. *"HMM,"* she said, *"I think I'll part my hair down the middle today."* So she did and she had a grand day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and noticed that she had only one hair left on her head. *"Well,"* she said, *"today I'm going to wear my hair in a ponytail."* So she did and she had a fun, fun day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and noticed that there wasn't a single hair on her head. "YEA!" she exclaimed, *"I don't have to fix my hair today!"*

*"Be kinder than necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle. Live simply, Love generously, Care deeply, and speak kindly.....Leave the rest to God. Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass... It's about learning to dance in the rain."*

We have been blessed by your prayers, visits, cards, gifts, flowers and most of all your outpouring of love and support. Life is doled out one day at a time and my God answers prayers...in God's own way and on God's own good time. Please keep the prayers flowing. Blessings to you all.

May 17, 2015

This morning Joan and I watched the show Sunday Morning as they interviewed Judy Blume, the pioneering author who has sold more than 80 million books. Judy is a 77-year-old breast cancer survivor who wrote in one of her early books, *"It is not God's job to determine what happens; it is His job to help you through it."* After breast cancer she said, *"There is joy in life even after terrible things happen."*

Joan received more good news this week. Her lab reports indicate that almost all indicators are in normal ranges. Her oncologist, Dr. Antoinette Tan as well as her internist, Dr. Lorri Ayers were excited with her progress.

Some minor side effects have cropped up but are manageable. One change is she is



now craving hamburgers which makes her a cheap date.

*A dear friend told us, "The care Joan is receiving is the best that can be obtained and all physical comforts are tended, so it leaves friends to say nothing more than a prayer as our only contribution to speed her recovery. Perhaps not seen, but evident and hopefully felt by way of just knowing that we share in the journey. Her silent army of friends and loved ones creating an aura of support."*

On Friday, the day after her treatment, Joan was busy making her world famous strawberry jam with two of the grandchildren and yesterday she attended the dance recitals of both Lila and Virginia to cheer them on.



We continue to be blessed with the incredible outpouring of love and support from almost every corner of the world. Please keep Joan in your prayers and know we are constantly grateful to have you in our lives. Blessings to you.

May 26, 2015

Joan's latest blood labs were very good. There are two liver main function measures. One was back in the normal range with the other just one point above normal range. She is getting used to wearing wigs and can even make fun of them. The brown wig is named "Joan" and the silver one is "Diane" (her middle name).

We have been searching for an Integrative Oncologist to join Joan's medical team in order to explore any mind, body or spirit treatments to supplement the current chemo treatments.

Sunday morning, we listened to The Peoples Pharmacy on NPR and the Graedons were interviewing Dr. Kelly Turner, Phd. who instantly defined our goal. We are seeking **Unexplained**

**Remission**, also known as **Radical Remission**.

May 30, 2015

Joan and I were in the examining room at Dr. Antoinette Tan's office in the Levine Cancer Institute earlier this week. Dr. Tan was searching and poking around when she glanced up with a serious look on her face and said, "*I cannot feel the tumor in your breast.*" She searched a bit longer and said, "*No, it's either not there or it is so small I can't feel it.*" She then felt the lymph node and looked up to say, "*It is clearly smaller.*" Later, the lab reports came in and Joan's liver function was completely normal. All other labs were normal. This brought a tear to my glass eye! (No, I don't have a glass eye.)

Now this may not be a Radical Remission but it is wonderful news and could lead to one. We are so grateful to God and all of

you for all of your encouragement, love, support and prayers.

Last week our dear friend Rita, a retired Broadway actress from NYC wrote, *"Thank you for the good news. I know that this will all be OK. I'm always right. As for the wig. Doesn't everybody wear them these days."*

The doctors are giving us a week off from treatments in early June. We may go to the mountains but are not yet sure. We are open to ideas.

Dr. Turner, who I mentioned last week, discovered that although many scientists, researchers and doctors have been studying methods of slowing down or stopping the growth of cancerous tumors as well as cures for various cancers, none were researching the phenomenon of Unexplained Remission or as she has

coined it, Radical Remission. There are thousands of documented cases of seemingly miraculously cured cancer patients. Her research reveals that these people share several things in common. These are the mind and spirit ideas they all shared:

*They found it was important to release any suppressed or negative emotions. (Live in the present and forgive the past)*

*They worked hard to increasing positive emotions. (Have a positive attitude)*

*They embraced and were encouraged by social support. (We are so thankful for each of you and your encouragement)*

*They worked to deepen their spiritual connection with their God. (Praying)*

*And they all have strong reasons for staying in their bodies. (Living)*

**June 08, 2015**

We received wonderful news this week from an unexpected quarter. Our daughter Missy and her husband Ted are expecting a baby boy this December. This will be a first boy for the Erwin family.

Joan has been unable to taste foods so is not as interested in eating. She has lost some weight as a result but not enough to be alarmed about. Her liver function is well within normal ranges now. Typically, the range for normal liver function is AST between 10 to 40 and ALT between 7 to 56. When Joan was first diagnosed, her liver function numbers were AST 58 and ALT 64. This week her numbers are AST 32 and ALT 28 and Joan has her first week off from treatment since we began this journey.



Wednesday we are meeting with an Integrative Oncologist, Dr. Bailey-Dorton to consider other complementary treatments to her protocol including approved naturopathies.

Months ago we offered to hold a wedding ceremony in our back yard for a young friend of ours, so this Saturday we will celebrate their marriage and then go to our mountain house for a few days before the next treatment.

Dear friends of ours from Michigan wrote the following note this week: *“It’s Monday morning and I’m at the office reading my emails. I have tears running down my face as I read your email.*

*We have been praying for radical remission and although we don’t know for sure if we have it yet, we know for sure*

*that God is in control and He is hearing our cry."*

Another great friend from Lexington said,  
*"God is still in the healing business."*

We continue to seek your positive thoughts and loving prayers for a cure for this life challenge.

**Jun 21, 2015**

We have enjoyed the week off from treatments. A week ago Saturday we celebrated a small wedding service at our home for some young friends. Joan sat with the pianist and avoided the crowd. The next day we went to the mountains for a retreat time together. Longtime friends of ours joined us for part of our time there.

Several years ago while staying at our place in the NC mountains, Joan and I met a local man named Pastor Jim.

In addition to being a pastor, he owns a small antique shop.

Over the years we became friends and would see him each time we were in Banner Elk. Along the way he told us of his ministry and he clearly had a deep passion

and faith. He came from a long line of local ministers. One time he spoke to us about healing by faith alone and told stories of the gift he had been given and some of the people he had healed. We were both impressed and skeptical but liked his enthusiasm and grace. (I wonder if that is what people in the first century said about Jesus?)

And then just a few years ago a cousin of Joan's who we both cherish joined us at our mountain place for a visit.

He had been very ill for some time, was on dialysis and had lost sight in one eye.

In addition, the other eye was now also failing. While there we took him to meet with Pastor Jim at his little shop. Jim asked Doug several questions and then began praying and holding Doug's head. He then began speaking in an unknown language. After a little while Pastor Jim declared that

his eyesight would return. Amazing as it sounds, over the next few days Doug's eyesight returned....in both eyes!

When we arrived in the mountains this week, we reached out to Pastor Jim and he came to our home where he performed another faith healing.

He first took Joan's face in his hands and spoke to her in quiet, peaceful tones.

He then began to pray as Joan relaxed and he put her head back as her eyes closed.

Pastor Jim then placed his right hand on the top of her head and sat quietly as Joan slipped into a deep slumber. Her lips moved but no sounds came out. Later her eyes fluttered as if she was trying to open them but could not. Pastor Jim said, "*Joan, what are you seeing?*" She responded, "*I see a lot of dark and a little bit of white.*" He began to pray, first in English and then

in a mysterious language we could not understand.

Next, he asked again, *“Joan, what do you see?”* to which she responded, *“I see the most beautiful place...everything is the most beautiful white. I feel so wonderful and I want to stay.”*

Pastor Jim continued to embrace her head a bit longer, as though time was not important and Joan awakened without any prompting.

I asked her what had happened and she said, *“I don’t know but I was in a beautiful place and wanted to stay. Then I knew I needed to return but when I tried to open my eyes they would not open.”*



Only time will tell if we witnessed one of God's many daily miracles. We continue to hope and pray for a radical remission and ask you to do the same. Joan had her ninth treatment this last Thursday. Her labs were all great! We will know more when Joan has her next CT scan in the next few weeks. Blessings to you and all of your loved ones.



**June 27, 2015**

Great news! Joan received another week off for good behavior. Her checkup with Dr. Tan went well. The liver numbers are now so normal the doctor is not planning to check them every week anymore. Her other labs showed all normal too. The mass in the breast is not detectable by touch. A new CT scan has been ordered for the week of the 6th and we will meet with Dr. Tan on the 9th. Pray for an amazing diagnosis.

Last week a dear friend wrote from Kenya and then again in Uganda that he was praying for Joan while there.

Another longtime friend of ours wrote to say, *"I've had a few miracle experiences, and my primary reaction to them was*

*“Thank you, God. Why did you choose to show that to me!?”*

Why indeed...we will never understand the ways of our Lord. We do however know that He asks us to be good to each other and believe in Him.

These pictures are made last week in the mountains with Pastor Jim. A bit more about him. His family is from the Banner Elk area for several generations.

The small town of Heaton, NC was named after his grandfather who helped found and supplied free lumber from his mill for eighteen churches in the area.

His 93 year old father was a pastor for many years and although he no longer preaches, he sings and knows hundreds of songs by heart. Everybody has a story. Bless you Pastor Jim.

Jul 9, 2015

Prayers work and God is great! Joan had a wonderful report on her CT scan and blood tests this morning. There was no tumor evidence detectible in her breast. Tumors in the lymph node and liver are quite a bit smaller. Dr. Tan has temporarily stopped the chemotherapy and is only giving her protein therapy every three weeks for a while and then will reevaluate. The report could hardly be better.

Our dearest friends in Mauritius sent this story about their nephew: *“My sister in law’s nephew who was about 10 years old was completely paralyzed.*

*He was English and Doctors there had tried just about every possible treatment without any success.*

*His Mum brought him to Mauritius for a holiday and while they were here they met a healer whose only method of treatment was to hold his hand. To cut a long story short he was completely cured within a few months. Harry now has graduated from Oxford and also has a 5 golf handicap. You will never believe that he had any physical disability by looking at him. There is no doubt that there are people gifted with such powers to heal."*

Our long-time friends from London sent the following last week which is so true: *"I think that all of your good friends around the world praying for you both does show that God is looking out for you both."*

Jul 24, 2015

We have shared with you the great news we received from Dr. Tan at The Levine Cancer Institute on July 9th. No evidence of the breast tumor, minor evidence of swelling in the lymph node and substantial reduction of the liver tumors. The written report said that it might only be residual necrotic (dead) tissue.

We sent the CT scans and reports to Dr. Tripathy, Head of Breast Oncology at MD Anderson and he responded below:

*"I just received the scans and reviewed them...There has been a remarkable response in the liver. I estimate a 70-80% reduction...clearly there is improvement to the point where I feel comfortable that she can come off the chemotherapy component and continue with the two antibodies – Herceptin and Pejeta. We continue this*

*treatment as maintenance therapy. It is difficult to know how long the response will last – some responses last for years (with Herceptin alone, we have patients who have gone 15+ years - about as long as that drug has been around). And this newer antibody combination is even more effective."*

When this news arrived Joan and I were elated and it has not let up yet. But we are not sure what has happened.



Was this wonderful news a response to your prayers from every corner of the world? We know prayers work. Healing the sick was a central part of Jesus' ministry. The gospels are full of stories about Jesus healing the sick, and Jesus commanded his followers to go and do likewise. *"Ask, and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you...And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith...Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours...Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."*(In Mathew, Mark and John)

Alfred Lord Tennyson said, *"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."*



Was it the power of the faith healing conducted by Pastor Jim Heaton in the mountains of North Carolina? This was a life changing experience for sure and we know of a multitude of miracles God provides every day throughout the world. Hands-on healing, also known as spiritual healing, has been practiced for thousands of years. In Greek mythology, Chiron, taught Asclepius, the God of Medicine, hands-on healing. This practice was so revered that Grecian statues of Asclepius were made with gold-gilt hands, celebrating the power of touch to heal.

Was it the wonderful healing powers of the doctors? It all began with Dr. Lorri Ayres and Dr. Antoinette Tan in Charlotte. They were later joined by Dr. Ron DePino and Dr. Debu Tripathy at MD Anderson who miraculously were brought to us through a

mutual friendship with Bill Clinton. We believe that bringing us all together was a **“God Bump”**, as a friend told us.

We believe it was all of the above.

Along the journey, this frightening experience has led us to opportunities to be helpful to others. We have received many calls and emails from friends as well as strangers who are experiencing the same fears of the dreaded diagnosis of cancer.

Like us they are frightened and are reaching out for lifelines. In one instance, a long time good friend was told by his doctor he had Stage 4 cancer of a critical organ. His doctor was dragging out the tests and my friend was scared and frustrated. At one point he was ready to give up and not seek any treatment. We put him in touch with our new friends at MD Anderson and they got him right down there, conducted intensive tests and told

him he did not have Stage 4 cancer but had Stage 1 lymphoma which would only require monitoring for now. He was given a new lease on life.

Here is some more good news: Joan's taste and appetite have returned. She is enjoying meals and has started cooking again (Thank you Lord). Her neuropathy is improving and touch is returning. Her energy is back up and she is positive and upbeat once again. She sleeps well at night and awakes refreshed and ready to challenge the day.

Our prayers now begin with gratitude for this gift of renewed life, but we also know life is short. None of us know when it is time for us go. Our time on earth is shortened by every moment, and once a moment is gone, it is gone forever. We are now working hard to love more, hate

less...hope more, worry less...and simplify everything!

Myra and I have moved my offices to our guest house out back, now known as HQ. What a blessing. We are so grateful for all of your loving words of encouragement and magnificent prayers.

Please don't stop now. We pray to God our gratitude for you all being an important part of our lives.

Blessings and hope to each of you,

**August 12, 2015**

Well, wishes do come true. Years ago Larry Hagman of "*I Dream of Jeannie*" fame gave me his genie bottle and I have had it on the shelf ever since. Just today I got it out, dusted it off and in a weak moment made a wish for two beautiful blondes in my life. As you can see, it still works after all these years.

Joan is doing so well that Dr. Tan as well as the MD Anderson folks advise that she will only need to be examined every three months. Her energy has returned and it is a true joy to see her so happy. Her hair is returning quickly now, helped by my head massages.





We have been going to the mountains more often and are celebrating our 47th anniversary this month. I say it is our 94th year of marriage since we have invested 47 years each.

We thank the Lord our God for the grace and joy we are experiencing. The prayers of so many good and faithful friends around the world have been perhaps the most powerful blessing Joan has received.

We also know that the medical teams at Levine and MD Anderson are incredibly powerful healers. And so is Pastor Jim Heaton of Banner Elk who has the gift of healing which he shared with us. And then there is Joan's acupuncturist, Chuck Hipple who is also a wonderful healer as well as Dr. Bailey-Dorton who is managing Joan's integrative alternative medicines.

We are now praying our gratitude for all of the blessings we have received thus far. We



know that there are no known cures for metastatic breast cancer so this hateful disease can reappear. But for now, life is really good and we also know that life is given one day at a time.

**Sept. 11, 2015**

Joan had her six-week checkup today with Dr. Tan, her oncologist and had a great report. No evidence of tumor in the breast and nothing new in the lymph node. Her energy is back and she has a wonderfully sassy attitude. We have been spending time in the mountains this summer and feel refreshed and renewed. Since we mentioned Pastor Jim and his gift of healing we have had others with serious problems reach out to us to speak with him. Great things have continued to happen to others now. God is amazing to behold.

**Oct 18, 2015**

We are going in for the three month CT scan and echocardiogram tomorrow morning. Joan is feeling well and had a great trip to the mountains with our friends Lin and Sandy Johnson last week and went back again this weekend.

We are hopeful and praying for continued remission.

Pastor Jim has been busy with several folks who have asked for referrals.

Joan's hair is wavy and soft like a cocker spaniel. I rub her head a lot for luck. A long time very good friend of ours, Marianne Hickman painted a wonderful portrait of our granddaughters Della, Lila and Virginia with Dolly for Joan. Here is a picture of the little girl I married. Isn't she cute.



**Oct. 25,2015**

Great News! This morning we met with Dr. Tan and the reports were extremely positive. The CT scan shows no evidence of tumor in the lymph node or breast. The liver scan shows the tumors have shrunk to one centimeter (slightly more than 1/3 inch) each and are separate rather than massed. The treatments for HER2 will continue for now. Dr. Tan said she knows of a patient who has been on this same protocol for eleven years now. Joan and I are over the moon with gratitude to our Lord and Savior and especially to all of you who have been so supportive with all of your prayers and hugs by email and in person. Your encouragement has made the difference.

Joan's energy and enthusiasm for life are such a blessing. We send our blessings to

each of you. We will be travelling to New Orleans to board the American Queen Paddle Wheeler with friends from Washington to celebrate this wonderful news.

Signing off for now. We will keep you posted of any further changes so please keep Joan in your prayers for a Radical Remission. God is great and so are you.



**August 31, 2016**

As you may recall, on April 14, 2015 Joan and I received some terrible and frightening news. Joanie was diagnosed with Stage Four Metastatic Breast Cancer which had metastasized in her liver. Since the cancer was diffused throughout the liver, the doctors were truly frightened and started aggressive chemo within days. This turned our world upside down. On April 18th I wrote my first of many email updates to all of you because Joan and I consider each of you loved ones, good friends, dear friends, or wonderful friends.

Today, **August 31, 2016** we went back to the oncologist for the usual three-month checkup.

As we were waiting in the examining room I looked out the window and noticed four crows sitting in a dead tree preening and



cawing. That concerned me because of the bad myths surrounding crows. The moment Dr. Antoinette Tan entered the room the crows flew away. Dr. Tan had the biggest smile and said, “Your latest scan and other tests show *“No evidence of disease”*”. She was amazed and repeated the statement again. As cancer patients and their loved ones all know, these words hold magic. Joan is now cancer free! Hallelujah!



Does this count as a miracle? It sure feels like one to me!

After all, our friend, Pastor Jim from the mountains conducted a faith healing on Joan last June which was spiritually moving.

Was it the love and prayers for Joan sent in faith by so many of you from around the world?

Was it the wonderful healing powers of the doctors? Our journey began with Dr. Lorri Ayres and Dr. Antoinette Tan in Charlotte. They were later joined by Dr. Ron DePino and Dr. Debu Tripathy at MD Anderson who were miraculously brought to us through a mutual friendship with Bill Clinton.



Hillary was one of so many who shared  
Joan's joyous news.

Was it our acupuncturist, Chuck Hipple who treated Joan throughout the whole ordeal? Was it Joan's Integrative Medicine Doctor, Chasse Bailey Dorton who provided alternative medicines? These healers are all exceptional people.

Our faith in God and our belief in prayer have comforted us along this journey. You, our friends and family have given us encouragement and compassion and so much more. We will never forget.



Make a difference – Do good and have fun!

## Meditations

We try to keep God in church on Sunday morning. We do like to have Him around during sickness

and, of course at funerals.

However, we don't have time, or room, for Him during work or play because that's the part of our lives we think we can handle on our own.

May God forgive us for thinking that there is a time or place where He is not to be first in our life.



Of all the gifts we may receive, prayer is the very best one. There is no cost, but wonderful rewards.

Isn't it strange how simple it is for people to ignore God and then wonder why the world's going to hell.

Isn't it funny how someone can say 'I believe in God' but still follow Satan (who also believes in God)?

Isn't it weird how we are more worried about what other people think of us than what God thinks of us?



There are limits to humans and beyond these only God can work. Only then comes God's Grace.



The will of God will never take you where the Grace of God will not protect you.



God's love is Pure...Unconditional...

Without Doubt...Everlasting...All  
Powerful...Beyond Comprehension ...Of  
the spirit not the body. Purest love is not  
easy but is simple. It is not for us to know  
how God works...only to know He is there  
and sent His Son to instruct us.



What is most valuable is not what we have  
in our lives, but WHO we have in our lives!

To: YOU

From: **GOD**

Reference: LIFE



This is **GOD**. Today I will be handling all of your problems for you. I do not need your help. If life happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, do not attempt to resolve it yourself! Kindly put it in the SFGTD (something for God to do) box. I will get to it in **MY TIME**. All situations will be resolved, but in My time, not yours.

Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold onto it by worrying about it. Instead, focus on all the wonderful things that are present in your life now.

Should you notice a new gray hair in the mirror; think of the cancer patient in chemo who wishes she had hair to examine.

Should you have a bad day at work; think of the person who can't find a job at all.

Should you despair over a relationship gone bad; think of the person who has never known what it's like to love and be loved in return.

Should you find yourself asking what is my purpose? Be thankful. There are those who didn't live long enough to get the opportunity to have a purpose.

Now you have a nice day, and remember I love you.

**GOD**

## Matthew 13:58

*“And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.”*

We all long for miracles. We pray for them. In seeking miracles, we hope that they will inspire our belief. But Jesus has shown us something remarkable in this passage. He does not perform miracles in the midst of unbelief. Instead, Jesus calls us to believe in him in order to witness his divinity. Belief precedes the miracle.



### Prayers

Source of all life and healing,  
Be with me in this time of physical,  
emotional and spiritual need.  
Help me cope with the challenges I am

facing.

Comfort and encourage those who love and care and whose lives have been unsettled and disrupted by illness.

I pray for patience and for understanding.

I pray for strength and wisdom.

I pray for healing and for inner peace.



Lord, You have taught me that faith as small as a mustard seed can grow into an amazing tree.

Today I give you my little seed of faith. I place it firmly in the ground of your word. I water it with truth. The warmth of your love will make it grow.

Today I ask by faith that you would bring healing from this cancer. I place my trust in you. May this seed sow healing into every area where the tumor has emerged. May it

grow into a strong work, redeeming and restoring with great strength and power.



Lord, Please hold me close at this time of uncertainty.

Remind me of your promises when I am feeling overwhelmed.

Whisper words of love when I feel alone.

Lie me down in peace when I am weary.

Give all who care for me great waves of wisdom.

Lead me through this journey singing songs of hope over my life.

Quiet my soul as I face the surgery and treatment of this breast cancer.

Come quell the fears that I have, and fill my heart and mind with your everlasting love.

## About the Authors



Mark and Joan Erwin met at the University of Tennessee and have been married forty-eight years. They have two daughters, Jennifer and Missy and now four grandchildren, Della 12, Lila 9, Virginia 5 and Thomas 1. The whole family lives in Charlotte, North Carolina.



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