

*Real Life Stories*  
*The Battle Of My Life by Joni Eareckson Tada*



For 50 years I have survived as a spinal-cord injured quadriplegic. But that's a walk-in-the-park compared to my battle against stage III breast cancer. Less than a week after I discovered the lump in my breast, I was at the doctors for a needle biopsy. As soon as the results were in, I was in the hospital for a mastectomy. Then, after several uncomfortable weeks of recovery, I was finally able to begin treatment – five months of chemotherapy. It all happened so fast, I hardly had time to process what was going on!

On the night before my first round of chemo, I read Jesus' words in John 21:18, "... someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." Yes, that day my husband had to dress me and take me where I "did not want to go" – a dreary chemo clinic.

I felt absolutely overwhelmed. After all, I'm a quadriplegic. Plus, I deal with chronic pain. I often thought, Lord, this feels like way too much for me to handle. Are you sure you know what you're doing? Where you're leading me? Yet sitting there, hooked up to an IV with a steady drip-drip of poison being infused into my veins, I knew the answer: "Who have I in heaven but you, Lord? There is nothing on earth that I desire above you; My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever" (Psalm 73:25-26).

Whenever I've prayed that way, the most extraordinary peace would wash over me. And so, during the three-hour chemo infusion, I would spend my time reading my Bible or praying through my intercession list. Often I would jot notes of encouragement to others. Once the infusion was over, I never tried to rush back to work; I was just too exhausted to do much more than head home for an early night.

My battle against cancer made life go slower. And given Galatians 5:25 which says "keep in step with the Spirit," it's obvious the Holy Spirit wanted me to take life in very small steps. It happens to anyone who suffers. Everything is more basic, more simple. I got up in the morning and prayed, "What will please you today, Lord?" I heard Him whisper, Seeing you eat 45 g of protein before lunch. "And what will please you this afternoon?" Back away from your computer and enjoy my hummingbirds at your feeder. "And this evening?" Give the Food Network a rest and pray.

Now that the most arduous part of cancer treatment is behind me, I wonder, what will the future hold? More than ever, I realize how brief, fleeting, and frail our lives are. We are but blips on the eternal screen; wisps of smoke, here one moment, and gone the next. That means what we do in the here and now counts. This is what I must remember on mornings when I feel like "I can't take anymore." Every day we either nudge our souls closer to heaven, or away from it – there's never middle ground.

Yes, it's been hard. Jesus hung on the cross so that we wouldn't have to suffer hell, but not so that we wouldn't have to suffer here on earth. This battle against cancer means something. So if you are dealing with a bad medical report – maybe even cancer — hang in there. God may just want you to live your life in very small steps, too. Yet take heart! Remember that your suffering is giving you something eternally precious in common with Christ!

*About the Author:*

Learn more about Joni here – <http://www.joniandfriends.org/jonis-corner/jonis-bio/>

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