

Recently I was asked two questions: how can you have joy and how has this helped you persevere? But before I answer, let me tell you a little about my present situation (as of this writing). I was diagnosed with colon cancer in May of 2013. The first surgery in June 2013 was unsuccessful due to the surprising large size of the tumor growing on the upper end of the descending colon and that it was attached to the back abdominal lining, so the surgeon suggested chemo in an attempt to shrink the tumor and referred me to a specialist. After healing from the surgery, four cycles of chemo were received. One week before the second surgery was scheduled, September 2013, I was admitted to the hospital due to a bowel obstruction. Turned out the chemo had not shrunk the tumor but instead the tumor had detached from the abdominal lining and in doing so attached itself to a section of the small intestine, causing the obstruction. September's surgery was successful (clear margins) by removing a section of the effected colon and small intestine. Two weeks after being discharged from the hospital an infection set in as a result of a leaking bowel reattachment joint so I got readmitted and spent two more weeks in the hospital. Today, November 14, 2013, I am home under care of home health nurses for IV antibiotics every 6 hours, drain tube care of the infection site and medications to manage pain.

Of course along with the above stresses on the family comes the added financial burdens to the household, one can say trials a plenty. But still I feel very blessed and fortunate to be alive and am very humbled by all the prayers and support from family and friends.

So on to the answers of the two questions, "How can I have joy and how has this help me persevere?" Well the short answer is, the joy and perseverance comes from a deep and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. You see, throughout this experience I have been at peace which has allowed me to feel and express God's joy; but this peace and joy has little to do with me and everything to do with the overwhelming love that comes from the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit within. The only part I play is choosing God's joy every morning.

Like most of us, this is not the only or first trial I have ever faced nor will it be the last, it has been during all the previous trials, that in looking towards and trusting in God for comfort, strength, and guidance, that has produced the perseverance I experience today.

Trials will come and go but if you choose God's joy every day, you will persevere.

In His Love,

Rusty Escandell