

## John Tefertiller Health Update - 8 March 2010

Dear friends and family,

It has been over a month since my last message, and I wanted to update everyone regarding progress.

### Status Quo

The bleeding I reported last time has been largely taken care of. I am back on Coumadin, but at about half the dose I was receiving before. At my last chemotherapy session some anti-allergy medications were added to the mix, as history shows that around this time in the process is when allergic reactions to the chemical cocktail begin to manifest.

What has not changed is the severe fatigue that follows each treatment, lasting up to 4 or 5 days. For the last three treatments I have slept for long periods punctuated by an hour or two at the desk or in the recliner chair. The difficulty during these periods is keeping fed and hydrated. During the “off week” between treatments I try to stock up on those things that will keep me properly nourished. The doctor has added a blood sugar reducer to my medications. He does not think that I am diabetic, but elevated blood sugar and cholesterol levels are common in chemotherapy patients. Many of my favorite “comfort foods” I have reduced or eliminated to accommodate the blood sugar medication and, perhaps, increase my natural immune responses by replacing them with fresh fruits.

If all goes according to what the doctor and I have previously discussed, my last chemotherapy treatment will take place during the last few days of March. I am looking forward to a time when my hands and feet no longer tingle at the slightest chill, being able to drink cold (truly COLD) drinks and having my taste buds back. There will be a season of recuperation before surgery to reverse my colostomy- something else I can't wait to be done with.

### State of Mind

There are times when everything seems dark and discouraging. At those times I try to voice my complaints to the Lord with the understanding that I *am* complaining- he's not afraid of my emotional response to circumstances. The trick is to not become a murmurer against what God is doing. There is too much evidence of his provision and care to truly resent present difficulties. So my expression is along the lines of, “Here's what I'm feeling- and it sucks. But I know you already know what's going on and I want to trust you from the depths of my heart, even if my circumstances and emotions seem to tell me otherwise.” I don't want to be “that guy” who fails to trust God when that's all I've got to go on.

### Prayer Requests

1. Keep praying regarding side effects of chemotherapy, which have not been outrageous, but which if they were reduced would be a kindness from the Lord.
2. Keep praying for God's provision in everything. Medi-Cal assistance has finally kicked in, so it appears that major expenses will be covered. However I do have a substantial “share of cost” to be met monthly before they will pick up any expenses.
3. Pray regarding the ultimate outcome of this process. Keep before the Lord the final surgery to reverse the colostomy, that all will go well and life can return to “normal,” albeit with the lessons of this season learned and instilled for life.

## Final Thoughts

I am fully cognizant that I have had a relatively easy road over the last year or so. I have watched as good people have crossed into eternity with far more patience and trust in God than I often feel. I recently attended a memorial for someone who was diagnosed with a brain tumor around the same time I received my cancer diagnosis. He's gone, and perhaps the more fortunate one, as many people have given witness to his uncomplaining spirit and a revival of trust in Christ alone for his eternal security. Apparently I have lessons yet to learn, or greater character flaws to be honed down, or perhaps there is something God knows is down the road for me to do that this season is preparing me for. I don't know.

This I do know: God knows the end from the beginning. He is not predicting, he is not guessing. He is present now in each future moment while I make my way along the time line of earthly life. He also has not run ahead and left me behind. He is equally here in the present, providing for my needs, forming in me the character of Christ (his ultimate goal for this life, if we understand things correctly), and he has a holy and righteous care concerning my well being that transcends appearances and circumstances. There is nothing that I have, or have had, or will ever have, that is not dispensed directly from his hand. My participation is required, but for the purpose of proving his faithfulness. Giving honor and praise to him for the gifts of this life, and for eternal life in Jesus is more than appropriate, even when I don't feel like it for a brief moment.

These are things that I go back to again and again when I am feeling the darkness of this season. Yes, I cry. Yes I complain, but there is this: God's love and care is greater than my feelings, and the light of his face looking upon me is enough to bring me back to the reality of his presence in all things.

With hope firmly fixed in Christ,

John T.