

FaithBIT



Peace...like a superpower

Reflection by Tony Szczepaniak

“Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.” James 1:2-3

Although I’ve read those verses many times, it was not until 2019 that they became personal. Last year I experienced a non-life threatening but life-altering medical issue that gave me new context for how God works all things for good, no matter what! This most recent trial is the most trying medical issue I have experienced, and it strengthened my relationship with God and my family.

I have been diagnosed with ulcerative colitis which is caused by an auto immune deficiency in my body. This has impacted what I eat and drink, how I exercise, and how I deal with stress in general. Foods that I have enjoyed for years are now restricted and some of the adrenaline producing stress that I have thrived on for years needs to be better managed.

And that is how the story would end if it were not for our wonderful, amazing, Father above. While I could have easily turned negative and full of self-pity, I found the exact opposite happened. During the worst of the trial, my prayer was not about cure or pain relief. Instead, it was focused on two things – my trust in Him to be in control and my gratitude for the people He has surrounded me with.

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I’ve heard about trusting God and letting go and for years but had not grasped what it meant much less how it feels. The peace that God has brought me through this has almost been like a superpower in and of itself. At times, I’ve almost felt untouchable and that has given me a sense of calm and peace that is truly amazing.

I’ve felt the prayers of faithful family and friends and have experienced relationships grow closer. My wife, Jill has been an absolute source of strength and comfort for me. I have seen God through her medical research, doctor visits, prayer, and hugs. The love we share has been strong and it has grown stronger because of this trial!

While the long-term treatment is stable, there continues to be some uncertainty. But I know one thing that is rock solid – God loves me and I love Him. While trials are never fun, this one is perfecting my faith and through it, will help me be reflection of God’s love not for my benefit, but for the benefit of those he puts in my path, and that is a wonderful thing to be joyous about!