



Michal Bell
Colon and Liver Cancer

For the past year and a half (at least), I experienced stomach and gastrointestinal (GI) problems. The doctor said it was endometriosis. I completely trusted my doctor and never thought it could be anything else. The pains continued to worsen until I couldn't stand it anymore. My doctor sent me to a GI specialist for a colonoscopy. On Dec. 22, 2008, I went in for upper and lower GI procedures. They found a mass in my colon. I remember waking up and looking at my husband's face knowing something was wrong. The nurse came in, showed me a paper with some pictures on it and said they found cancer. I just remember thinking, 'No...I have endometriosis and not cancer.' All I could think at the time was, 'I don't want to die yet. I don't want to leave my children...I'm not done.'

We met with the surgeon on Christmas Eve morning to talk about doing a resection of the colon to remove the cancer. We decided to wait until after the holidays to have surgery, which gave us time to share the news with our family. That was difficult. We waited until after each gathering to tell them. I didn't want them to feel the way I felt inside. We had told everyone but the two little ones, and I really didn't know how to do it.

David, my husband, suggested we go away to Brown County, spend a night at the lodge, and just have some fun; such a wonderful idea! I don't know if the little ones really understood, but we were very truthful with them. I believe you

have to know what you're praying for, and I knew they would want to know the truth. Amazing things started to happen to our family; my husband became the strength I had always needed and our friends just stepped up and took care of everything.

Surgery was on Jan. 7, 2009. Again, when I woke up, I looked at my husband who was by my side. I said "are we done?" He said, "We're just starting." I knew at that moment the cancer had spread and my life would change forever. The next thing I heard was, 'they say you have about a 30 to 40 percent chance with chemo.' NO...I want to see Jon get married and start a life of his own. Alex is only 10 years old. I want to watch him grow up, start to date, and drive. Nathan turned 7 years old just a few days earlier...he's still a baby! My husband and I were finally realizing how important we are to one another...NOT YET ~ PLEASE!

It seemed that, just then, I felt this peace - God was still there and He was in control. I was the one giving up. The days were so peaceful. I knew God would bring me through this, but the nights were challenging. I would lie in my bed, in the dark, with arms reached out to God, saying please not yet Lord. I love you with all my heart, but please let me watch my children grow up! I had so many people praying for me and my family; it was the most amazing thing I'd ever seen.

I thought of all the things in my life. Even if I go now, I have seen so many things that other mommies never get to see. I watched Jon grow and become a man. I watched my two younger children get baptized and give their lives to God. What an amazing thing that is! I know God has me, my husband, and my children in His hands.

I pray I can stay and watch my children grow and continue to be the wife my husband needs, but if God needs me now, I want to do whatever I can to help draw others to Him. I plan on winning this fight. I feel like God is going to do some amazing things through this journey. I feel honored that He chose me...still not sure why. I will try my best to do whatever He wants!