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What MS Taught Me

By Teresa Hampton

The summer of 1996 was memorable. Mid August we went to visit family and that was when strange things began. My vision doubled, which prompted symptoms of vertigo, and then nausea. My left leg became weak and I began dragging my toe. My neurologist gave me the diagnosis of MS. He put me on a newly approved drug which required a self injection once a week, something I never dreamed I could do. I regained body functions that were affected. I praised God and asked Him to let His strength be seen in my weakness!

It was then that I began writing. I loved to write, but never seemed to have time. I couldn't drive for three months, may as well write. Soon I was driving again, and praising God for that privilege, which I had taken for granted. For the next several years I had periodic relapses, that gifted me with a reminder—I am not in control, but my Father is. He hears my prayers and the prayers of many who bring my name to Him for healing.

I had a painful issue with my vision, Marcus Gunn pupil, in which one pupil stays locked instead of opening and closing. Steroid treatment, provided by God, quickly brought it back to normal. I praised Him for His marvelous care! I was able to continue teaching and writing. I never dreamed I could write a book, but, with the guidance of God's word and my husband's encouragement, it happened.

The relapsing-remitting MS began shifting into secondary progressive. Then God provided me with an amazing new doctor who was in tune with all of the new medications, therapies, and technology. She helped me get a device that electrically stimulated the side of my leg, which signaled an electrode in my shoe to lift my toe. It cost a fortune, and insurance refused to cover it. But, finally God opened that insurance door and I got one. I was later told by an insurance representative that it should never have been covered. The device has given me years of improved energy and a drastic reduction of falls. Praise God for technology and open doors that enabled me to continue being productive in the Lord, and thank God for all the parts of my body that function *correctly!*

Out of the blue, I began having joint pain and was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. I could have bemoaned the fact, but it would change nothing. It would be a gross waste of time and energy. Instead, I trusted that God would bring something good out of it, and He did. There was a drug approved for RA but not for MS. The drug was, however, doing well in clinical trials with MS. So because I had RA they were able to put me on that drug, which, for the past eight years halted the RA and reduced the number of MS relapses. God took a negative and turned it into a positive!

Additionally, the doctor put me on an oral drug that enabled me to walk better. It was very helpful! In fact, I did not realize how much the drug helped me. Recently, I had an adverse reaction to that drug and had to cease taking it permanently. My walking has slowed now and my energy level is low, but I thank God for those very good nine years that I experienced in-

creased energy and had fewer falls. I praise the Lord for His mercy and goodness, and trust that as He did before, He will bring something good out of this slow down.

A few months ago, the doctor wanted to put me on a newly approved MS drug, the cost of which was \$65,000 a year. Not surprisingly, my insurance denied it. We continued to pray if it is the Lord's will, He will provide. A brief time later, we were informed that a foundation had been set up to assist people who had been denied coverage. Secretly I wondered if we would be able to afford it, even with a gift from the foundation, but I should never have doubted. I am receiving the first year of treatment free. Yes, FREE. Never underestimate what God can provide!

MS has definitely taught me many things, and *continues* to teach me.

MS taught me that:

- Prayer is one of the most powerful tools God has given me and others (Philippians 4:6)
- In Christ I can do things I never dreamed I could do (Philippians 4:13)
- I am not in control, but God is (Psalm 23)
- God's strength can be seen in my weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- I should be thankful for all things (Ephesians 5:20)
- Good can come from adversity (Genesis 50:20)
- God anticipates my needs long before I am aware of them (Ephesians 3:20)
- I should eliminate doubts and trust God with all my heart (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Today's Verses: *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning (James 1:17), and Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3:20).*

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