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#GodKnowsWhatsBest

By Teresa Hampton

Her name was Ashleigh. She put on the Lord in baptism when she was a teen. Now, as a more mature twenty six year old, she faced an obstacle that many do not confront, at least not until aged.

The doctor told her she had cancer. Her mother, a registered nurse, was with her. The news brought much concern, but they remembered God's promise, "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Ashleigh endured months of radiation, chemotherapy, and surgery, which at first appeared to rid her body of the cancerous cells. But each time they returned, seemingly more aggressive than before.

I attended her memorial today. Our large church auditorium was practically filled with people who adored her, many of whom were not members of the church, but coworkers or classmates.

Through her struggle I noticed several things that were quite powerful. Ashleigh had an amazing smile. It is the one thing about her that many people said impacted them. Her smile gave the feeling of hope, peace, patience and much more. She frequently posted on a social network the treatments that were upcoming, and her complete confidence in God through the whole process. She also often posted a picture of her smiling face. Always stunning. Always exuding Sunshine. At the end of her posts her hashtags went like this: #ExtremelyBlessed, #GodKnowsWhatsBest, and #TheBattleBelongsToTheLord.

These are some of the words friends and coworkers used to describe Ashleigh: Strong, Genuine, Positive, Kind, Beautiful inside and out, Unconditional love, her “smile and kind words could change any setting,” “smooth, soothing voice,” she “delights in the Lord,” she is “a beautiful example of God’s love.”

I do not believe I have ever witnessed one so young have such courage in the face of a ferocious disease! I also do not believe I have ever seen such enormous faith and trust in the Lord! Her example inspires me to grow in faith, *Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God* (Romans 10:17). The way to increase faith is to be in the Word often. Not just a casual glance at scripture, but deep study. Her example inspires me to trust the Lord with all my heart, and not lean on my own understanding (Proverbs 3:5).

Ashleigh’s example also inspires me to exude joy, confidence, and peace as a child of God, *Rejoice in the Lord always, Again I say rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand* (Philippians 4:4-5).

People are watching me and you, just as they watched Ashleigh. I want them to be enriched by my influence, not discouraged. I want them to see God’s perfect strength in my weakness and be drawn to Him (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). And in the end, I want to leave a legacy like Ashleigh’s. I hope you do, too!

Today’s verse: *Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them”* (Revelation 14:13).

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