

# God Gives and Takes

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Early this Summer, I had a couple of dreams about a message and even some prompting from God about it. Of course, I hemmed and hawed about it, but eventually gave in. I told Jay that I was to preach on Sept 17. I'm not sure if he was more surprised that I had given him a specific date or the fact that I actually told him I was going to preach. Those of you that know me, know that once I knew God called me to the ministry, I said, OK, I'll be a pastor, but I'm not going to preach. I'm sure God rolled with laughter on that one. He always gets a kick out of us telling Him how things are going to go.

Even though I knew the topic and had the basis for the message, it took me a while to put all the pieces together, but God is always good and it finally came together.

Today it is a different type of message, more like a combination of a Testimony and Sermon.

<pray>

## 1. God Gives and God Takes Away

Many have heard the verse about God Gives and Takes Away. That is from Job

### **Job 1:21 (ESV)**

***And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."***

Satan was betting that Job would curse God after all that had happened to him, yet Job still continued to praise God. With all Job was going through he never gave up on God, he never cursed him, as Satan and Job's wife wanted him to do. No matter what happens in our lives, God is sovereign. He has control over everything.

It is easy to praise God when things are going well, but God knows what is best for us, so we need to praise Him at all times.

While God does give and take away, He always is there for us and always gives us all that we need.

## 2. God Gives

Many of you have known me for several years now. But what you may not know is that yesterday, September 16, is a day that God gave and took away from me.

### **Psalm 127:3 (NLT)**

***"Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him."***

Children are an inheritance to us from God. The idea of this verse is that everything we value, or desire, is a gift from God and it is to be received from Him and acknowledged as His gift.

Sept 16, 1992 was the day God blessed me with being a mom, He gifted me my first son, Ryan. I had always known I wanted children and I was excited to become a mom.

Many of you know Ryan, when we were at the Regent he helped out in Children's Church. The kids all seemed to love him.

However, what many don't know is that at the end of my pregnancy and during labor there were some complications. I developed Preeclampsia (toxemia). I ended up on bed rest and home monitoring equipment. Each day I had to transmit various information to the doctor, including BP, heart rates, and a few other tests.

After a visit to the OB, they were concerned and wanted me hospitalized that day, however, there were no beds available. They scheduled me to return to the hospital the next day. I was admitted to the hospital on Sept 15, the night before they planned to induce labor. They needed to provide medication that would start the pre-labor process. I was nervous, but it didn't really hit me until they moved me to my room in the High-Risk OB ward. Alone that night, I struggled to sleep with all the "what-ifs" running through my mind.

Early the next morning, I was moved to the labor room, they hooked me up to the various monitoring devices and they started an IV with medication that would induce labor. Several hours into labor, my blood pressure shot up and Ryan's heartbeat dropped. They had to stop the medication to stall the labor, to allow me to rest and allow Ryan to regain strength as well.

I knew things had gotten serious. Back then, they only allowed 2 people to be in the labor room with the expectant mom. However, once the labor had slowed and both me and the baby had stabilized, they allowed my grandparents to come back and see me, even with my mom and husband in

the room. They stayed a few minutes and they told me they were praying for me and were eagerly awaiting the birth of their first great-grandchild.

After my grandparents left the room and while they were letting me rest without being in labor, I prayed, I begged. I need to note, that I have always been a believer since a young girl, but at this point in my life, I did not have the relationship I have today with Jesus. So, during this time I asked God to keep my baby safe and to give me the strength I needed to continue with the labor. I prayed He would protect Ryan and keep his heartbeat stable and strong.

### **Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)**

***Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.***

While Isaiah is specifically speaking to the Israelites, it still holds true today. That we are not to fear or be anxious, because God is with us. We will face difficult time and trials, but God has always promised to be there with us, He is our refuge. He has promised to be with us in the middle of any tragedy.

After a couple of hours, they told me they would restart my labor, but if there was any sign of my BP spiking again, or if Ryan's heartbeat dropped, they would be doing an emergency c-section, right there in the room. The nurse went as far as to show me the surgical tray with the various instruments that would be needed. Even knowing that, God had given me a sense of peace and calmness, and I knew that a c-section would not be needed and even told the nurse we wouldn't need it. After many more hours of labor, I had my first born and he was healthy.

God had shown up, given me the peace and strength I needed. And He continued to give.

### **John 16:21 (NLT)**

***It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world.***

This verse is so very accurate. Even after all I went through, the pain and concern, after I held Ryan all of that just seemed to disappear.

We don't realize just how much God gives, does, and provides for us, until we look back. They often say that hindsight is 20/20.

### 3. God Does Takes, Yet Gives Even More

That was my "God Gives Story". Fast forward 22 years.

At the start of 2014, my mom was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. Of course, this news was not what any of us wanted to hear. But my mom maintained a positive and upbeat attitude. Her outlook helped us to keep a positive view of her illness. And, of course we, as God urges to do, prayed for her. We prayed for healing, comfort, and that there would not be any suffering.

#### ***James 5: 14 (NIV)***

***Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.***

James tells us we are to be faithful and pray over those that are sick.

I know my family prayed for healing, peace, comfort for mom.

Mom underwent several rounds of chemo, but the treatment had to be stopped. It triggered her mononeuropathy to come out of remission and nearly paralyzed her. That Mother's day, we visited her in the hospital. She was not able to support her weight to walk, she could barely hold her silverware to feed herself. Yes, she continued to be optimistic, cheerful, and joking with us.

The next option for treatment was radiation. Again, after weeks of this, it too was stopped. We were told the cancer was too aggressive and there was nothing more medically that could be done. The doctors said there were no other treatments, but we did not cease praying and asking God for miraculous healing, comfort, and no suffering.

#### ***Luke 18:1 (NLT)***

***One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up.***

These verses tell us that God listens and hears our prayers. That no matter what afflictions or calamities we face, we should never cease praying. And we continued to pray.

Mom came home from Moffitt and for a while, seemed to be improving. She had energy, she and dad would go out and about. The mononeuropathy was slowly going back into remission. She was always in good spirits when we talked and visited, but we could tell she had not regained all of her strength and stamina.

But Labor Day weekend she took a turn. That morning she would not wake up and was unresponsive. She was taken to the hospital, but the doctors were not sure what had happened. They stated there was no sign of stroke or heart attack. Even in the hospital, she never was responsive. The doctors said she should be placed in Hospice. That day she was transferred to Hospice House.

The next morning, my sister had gone to see her, and I called to get a status. Mom was awake, alert, talking and joking!

**1 John 5:14-15 (NLT)**

***14 And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. 15 And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.***

God had given us more time with her.

Mom was at the Hospice House for several days. One of those days, as we were all sitting around and talking, I was sitting the closest to mom. She looked at me and told me to move so she could see Jay!

A few days later the doctors said she could now be released to a care facility. Mom looked at Dad and I and cried. She said she just wanted to go home. So, arrangements were made for mom to return to their home with Hospice care.

She came home, and there were good days, but we could all tell she was slipping away. Looking back (again hindsight), one of the reasons, I believe, that God gave mom extra time was so that her grandsons, Ryan and Justin, would be able to come see her and talk to her. There was one day that she was particularly awake and chatty. That day I was able to bring each boy to visit with her. Justin after he completed his classes at HCC, and I picked up Ryan from Florida Southern in Lakeland to come see her. As days went by, she slept more and more, and her conversations were fewer and fewer.

On September 15, the Hospice nurse told us that she didn't expect mom to make it through the night. They also told us that there would not be a nurse available to be there overnight. That evening my dad, sister, her husband, my brother, Jay and I all had dinner together at their house. I stayed that night with my dad, as I didn't want him to have to be alone caring for her. We cared for her during the night, giving her medication to keep her comfortable, placing cool cloths on her forehead, and just talking to her.

Early on the morning of September 16, 2014, God took my mom home. So, on the same day, 22 years apart, God blessed me with my first born and He took my mom home.

But as hard as that was, God never left. He had answered our prayers – He healed our mom, ultimately. Not what we really wanted, but He took her to stop her suffering. We have to remember that God can heal 3 ways – immediately, over time, or ultimately by taking them home. He never stopped giving. He gave us extra time with her and a chance for her to see her grandsons one last time and for them to see their Mema. God not only gave me/us comfort and peace, but He sent our church family and our friends to give us comfort and peace.

***Matthew 5:4***

***"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.***

***Psalm 29:11***

***The Lord gives his people strength. The Lord blesses them with peace.***

***Philippians 4:7***

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.***

And finally, we knew it was ok for us to mourn and cry, after all, God did too.

***Jesus Wept***

***John 11:35***

## Conclusion

Yes our God gives and He can take away. But as long as we remain faithful, call on Him in all times, good and bad, He is always there. He will see us through every situation, the good, the bad, and the ugly. While it may not always be the way we want things to turn out, it will end the way God knows it should. God got me through these difficult times, so just imagine how He can get you through whatever you are going through.