

## WHEN WONDER WOMAN MEETS HER AWESOME GOD by Fran Curtis 11/2010

How many times this week have you heard a friend say, "It's just been a busy week" or "Life is just so busy"? Recent publications from Franklin Graham and Charles Stanley speak of the busyness taking over our lives. Perhaps it's an American disease. Doctors tell us that a large percentage of our health issues can be related to stress.

I was one of those women feeling overwhelmed. A few years ago, I was critically ill. God gave me a miracle. I had many prayer warriors and my church as a loving support I shall never forget. Among the many cards and notes I received, there was one that held my attention in a special way. It read, "Not only does God know your story, He has written it." I am here to say that He is still writing it, and that's the part of the story I want to share with you.

I grew up in a Christian family, the oldest of three girls. When I was twelve years old, I walked down the aisle of our church to ask Christ to be my Savior. It was in that same little church, years later, that Bob and I were married. During the next thirteen years, God blessed us with five children: two daughters and three sons. When our youngest was a year old, I felt the need to enter the work force as additional income was needed for our large family.

Those were busy years. In retrospect, it was probably during this time that my Wonder Woman Syndrome was developing, wanting to do it all and believing I could. Could I be thinking that all my efforts and service could substitute for my intimacy and quiet time with my God?

Who could forget Martha and Mary from the Bible? Martha was so busy preparing--the house had to be just right, everything organized to a fine detail, and the food gourmet, of course. After all, Jesus was coming to visit.

Busy, busy Martha; she had no time to sit at the feet of Jesus. Then Jesus says, "Martha, Martha! You are worried and troubles over many things. Mary has chosen the best part and it shall not be taken from her." He wanted to teach Martha about priorities and our God had some life lessons waiting for me, perhaps even sooner than I realized.

In 2005, while working as the General Manager of a local homeowners association, I became extremely fatigued and felt exhausted. After several hours in the E.R., the doctor said, "Well, Mrs, Curtis, we know that your kidneys are no longer functioning." An intern said, "I think you may have Wegeners Granulomatosis." I was rushed to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore and later told I had two rare diseases: Wegeners and Goodpastures, both autoimmune vasculitis diseases. They had destroyed my kidneys and were attacking my lungs.

I was reminded many times during my dialysis that God was with me. One the first day, a nurse named Warren, who was connecting me to the dialysis equipment said to me, "Mrs. Curtis, we are purifying your blood here. Do you know that the blood of Christ was so pure that it was an acceptable sacrifice before Almighty God for the sins of the world?" Oh, yes! I had known that for a long time.

The next day, Jerome came into my room. His job was to deliver food trays. He saw my Bible on the table and we began talking. He said, "Mrs. Fran, I want to pray for you." He knelt by my bed, held my hands, and prayed for my healing.

On the third day, a nurse named Edith came into my room. We talked and as she was leaving she said, I am a miracle." She told me how she had a brain disease and the doctors had failed in their attempt to help her. However, she then attended a women's Christian conference. Women were praying for her up and down the east coast. When she returned, the doctors could no longer find evidence of the disease.

After leaving Hopkins, I began a year and a half of dialysis, four hours at a time, three times weekly. My life was changing quickly, but God was there moment by moment, and it was a sweet time of rest for the wonder woman who thought she could do it all. Then during my time with the Lord one day, He showed me the

symptoms of my Wonder Woman Syndrome:

1. I am slow to bow my knees but quick to roll up my sleeves.
2. I try too hard to make everything just right.
3. I have this desire to fix everything and believe that I can.
4. I can't say "No" when there is a call for volunteers.
5. I feel that I can control the behavior of others.
6. I feel that I have all the answers.
7. I feel overwhelmed and keep pushing myself.
8. I think too highly of myself and pride rules.
9. I think if I don't do it, it will never get done and nobody can do it as well..("Me?..a perfectionist?")
10. I am reluctant to ask for help; watch me do it all by myself.

After I had been on dialysis for almost two years, my doctor suggested that we look into a kidney transplant. Our oldest child, my dear daughter Carolyn said, "Mom, I have prayed about it and I want to give you a kidney." On September 20th, my birthday, nearly five months and some twenty-nine doctor appointments with two hospital coordinators, Hopkins called to say the transplant had been scheduled. What a birthday present! Our family made flight arrangements to be in Baltimore.

The following morning in the operating room as we laid side by side, Mary Antrada, my Johns Hopkins coordinator, on her day off, came to pray over us just before surgery. I spent three weeks in the hospital, my daughter Evie, with me the entire time. God gave Carolyn and me good recoveries. My new kidney was working well.

Unfortunately, just two days after leaving the hospital, I was back in the emergency room again, my lungs filled with fluid and blood. I could not breathe. The doctors told my family they did not expect me to live through the night. I was facing death but in a peace that was amazing. I believe I was called to be willing to die and then to be willing to live. It was then decided to rush me to Fairfax Hospital where I received nineteen plasmapheresis treatments to clear my lungs.

For over thirty-five years I had been working in a career. My own choices and decisions had brought pressure and stress into my life. My faith and trust had ever so gradually shifted from the Lord I loved to my own strengths and abilities. Had I forgotten the words of Christ in John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing."

I have learned that our service can never be a substitute for our time alone with Christ. We are made to have an intimate relationship with our God, to love and enjoy Him forever. As we rest in Him, He will let us know how and when to serve.

God is still writing my story, just as I am sure He is still writing your life story. It's a difficult thing for some of us to give up directing our own story and turn to God the Author. He has given me a greater love for others, teaching me the importance of being open and transparent. When that happens, pride is released through the Holy Spirit. He tells me to watch and listen and do not think that we must do and do all the time, but know that God will do and work through us. We must learn to live in such a way that worship flows from our hearts, slows us down, and causes us to rest.

Well, I still have the diseases. There is no cure. They are in remission, always with the risk of return. I am on a lot of medication, but my doctors tell me I am doing well. Thank you, Lord Jesus! I have seen God's hand at every turn and bump on the journey, blessing upon blessing and miracles too. I've only had time to tell you of a few. These days I call "bonus days". Life is a precious gift. I want to embrace the moment and be thankful.