

## ***UPDATE ON ALAN'S HEALTH: PART 2***

Two years ago, when I was first diagnosed with leukemia and didn't know that disease took different forms, I thought it was a death sentence. But right away I sensed the Lord saying to me: "You will live another ten years and complete the three books you plan to write." Incidentally, one of the three is the one just being finished. Now I know this may not have been the Lord; rather it could have been Alan's wishful thinking or some sort of defense mechanism, but every time I have prayed about it since, I believe the Lord said, "Hold onto this hope." In fact, the main message coming to me in my quiet times has been, Hope.

I want to live. I have the most wonderful life any man my age could have. Recently, all 18 members of my immediate family (wife, children and their spouses, grandchildren) came over to help me celebrate my 73rd birthday. Willa's and my marriage is wonderful. We live in a beautiful "in-law" addition on my son's house, and live within walking distance of seven of our ten grandchildren. We are in a wonderful church. I have a purpose and challenge in life; writing. I could go on and on about how God is blessing me. I am not quite where Paul was in not knowing whether he wanted to live or to go to be with the Lord. I do want to live out the remainder of those ten years.

As an example of how God works everything out for us, my daughter who lives around the corner, is a nurse who worked in bone marrow transplant at Johns Hopkins for a number of years. She is able to keep an eye on me and make sure the doctors are doing their job. By the way, I am way too old for a bone marrow transplant.

While I love the life God has given me, I don't fear dying. This has been one of the great blessings of the past two years. I don't think we can know how much we trust God until we face death. I have been overjoyed to find that I really do trust Him and I can say with all my heart, like Job, "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him." What a comfort!

For now and the near future, and for your prayers: My pain isn't all that severe, but I am not quite where Job was in being able to say, "Though I be weak and in pain for eight more years, I will hope in Him." Please pray that I will get there. Please pray for continued reduction of the white cell count. I have gone back on a mild chemo, but it is too early to see if it is effective. Pray that it will be, and that I won't have any serious adverse effects from it.

Finally, pray for Willa. Often that spouse suffers more than the one who is sick. Willa, who is almost as old as me, has borne up tremendously through these times, but she has had her own physical problems. She has suffered severe nausea, which they now think relates to her liver and to medicines she has been taking. Pray that this gets straightened out.

There is one more blessing in this life that I have not mentioned. Over the past thirty years, I have been blessed beyond measure by many of you through your words of encouragement, through your expressions of love, and by your prayers. Thank you so much! I have indeed been surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. Few men are so blessed.

God bless you.

Alan