

July 2007

Hi, Janet

"*Cancer?*" I wasn't sure if I actually said the words or merely breathed them. I was sitting next to my husband in a plane parked on the tarmac at Dallas/Ft. Worth International Airport, preparing to take off for a relaxing week in Florida. My third novel, *Vital Signs*, had just released the day before, and I was more passionate than ever about my blossoming writing career. Then my cell phone rang, and the doctor delivered the grim news: the biopsy was positive. I had breast cancer. It was October 11, 2002. I remember the date because my life has never been the same since.

The following week in Florida was anything but relaxing. I didn't panic. It wasn't death that scared me—going home to be with the Lord was the good part—but *dying* of cancer wasn't the path I would choose to get there. Neither was submitting myself to the treatments and the awful side effects. The idea of undergoing chemotherapy scared me more than the having the disease. And what about my husband? My kids? Grandkids? Friends? If I didn't survive, how would they deal with my being plucked out of their lives at fifty-three-years-old?

I wrestled with the questions. The Lord and I had some long talks about how my death would affect the people who loved me. Plus, I still had a contract for two more books in The Baxter Series, and there was never a doubt that He had opened that door. Was He going to close it before I'd had the chance to make good on my contract? Ironically, the novel I had just finished writing was grounded in Romans 8:28, "*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*" I believed this truth with all my heart. Now it was time for me to walk my talk.

The weeks that followed were a blur—doctors, tests, additional tests. Then more bad news: the tumor was much larger than originally thought. The doctor would have to perform a mastectomy in order to get all the cancer, after which I would need to undergo weeks of radiation and several rounds of chemotherapy. The elders at our church and hundreds of others prayed for my healing, but the circumstances didn't change and I accepted that God

had a different plan. For a while I had peace. But ever so slowly, the enemy was gaining ground and fear was starting to overwhelm me. Not fear of dying, but fear of living with the physical and psychological challenges ahead—and the uncertainty.

I battled the worst of my fears in private. And at the height of feeling trapped and overwhelmed, I got an email from my publisher with an attachment from a reader named Belinda. Her message was short and desperate: "Please get me in touch with Kathy Herman. Her books made me want to accept Jesus!"

Belinda's need had a profound effect on me and jolted me back into the reality that God still had a purpose for my life. In the days that followed, Belinda and I had some amazing online exchanges back and forth, after which I wrote a sinner's prayer tailor-made to her circumstances. She eagerly prayed the words of the prayer and accepted Christ. It was a perfectly timed divine appointment—for both of us!

By His grace, I survived the cancer and was actually spared the treatments I had spent so much time worrying about. But my perspective completely changed. Now I rarely think about what tomorrow might bring. Instead I try to embrace every second that I'm still breathing as an opportunity to use my storytelling to touch another heart for Him. It's a privilege I will never again take for granted.

Blessings,
Kathy Herman

~~~~~

Kathy Herman is the bestselling author of *The Baxter Series*, *Seaport Suspense Novels*, *Phantom Hollow Series*, and *Poor Mrs. Rigsby*