

# Survivor Spotlight

## *Survivor Spotlight*

Mary Snyder



## ***Mary in her own words...***

September 23, 1996, was a day when my faith was really put to a test. Though I reported to work as usual, unbeknownst to me, my daughter scheduled me an appointment with her doctor to see if my findings were correct. You see, I had discovered a mass in my right breast as well as a nipple retraction. The appointment my primary doctor had given me was too far off and my daughter was too upset about the finding to wait a couple of weeks. So, I went in to see her doctor.

In spite of what was happening in my body, I had a very good office visit. The doctor confirmed the mass and said nipple retraction is one of the signs of breast cancer. Afraid that I might go into shock, the doctor would ask every few minutes if I was okay and did I understand the diagnosis? My heavenly Father had already prepared me for the doctor. However, my most prized possessions were the assurance of victory over breast cancer and my involvement to help others be overcomers. After leaving the doctor's office, I set out to visit my aunt in the hospital. It was then that I discovered that my aunt passed while I was keeping my appointment. I knew it was time for me to take a firm stand and not allow negative thoughts to flood my mind like, "why me?" or "how could this happen in one day?" I was comforted by remembering the story of Job in the Bible. Once home, I began spending more time in personal praise and worship, prayer and the Word of God. There was not time for a pity party or for depression to set in.

Learning everything I possibly could about my case was one of my best weapons. Undergoing a modified radical mastectomy on my right breast and having 11 lymph nodes removed (eight positive) didn't upset me at all. I came through surgery with flying colors. Everything the doctors said I couldn't do, God and I proved them wrong. The doctors agreed to let me go home early because I was doing so well. Approximately three weeks later chemotherapy started. I endured six cycles of cytoxan, doxorubicin and fluorouracil. These are cancer drugs and are used to slow or stop the growth of cancer cells.

My worst moment came one morning as I was preparing to take treatment number three. While in the shower, almost all of my hair fell out. It took about four doctors and two nurses to convince me that this was the easy part and my hair would grow back. My hair began to start growing back before I started taking radiation therapy around March 21, 1997. I had a total of 35 radiation treatments and then I graduated.

As I look back over this experience in my life, I thank God for showing me the way so that He could receive the glory due His name. I thank God for my pastor and his wife, the woman of the church who prepared food and brought it to my house. I thank God for my family and friends, the breast cancer support groups and the leaders. Now when I hear the word cancer, it's not the bad "C" word. It's the word "Conquer" because there is so much strength, power and encouragement to let the newly diagnosed clients know they too can conquer cancer in Jesus' name.