

## Diabetes (2)

In the last issue, we learned about the disease and its impact on life. In this issue, we continue with the symptoms and conclude by looking at this disease in the light of Scripture.

Another bad episode was a few years ago. I was in a mad rush to get the kids out the door to meet my parents at a restaurant. I was late and frantically struggling to get the kids to understand that we **NEEDED TO GET IN THE VAN!** When all of the sudden I found myself sitting in my recliner in my living room talking on the phone. The person I called was a very good friend who's daughter is a diabetic and she clearly could tell that something was wrong. She tried to get me to hang up the phone so that her line was free to call my brother but I was so out of it I sat there with the phone in my hand just looking at it and wondering "how do I hang it up?" My brother showed up but the house was locked and he had no way of getting in. He saw me through the living room window and tried to get me to open the door. I looked at him in a delirious state and was like "how do you open a door?" Again I was thankful beyond words that I had picked up the phone and just so happened to call that specific friend.

High blood sugars happen when there is too much sugar in the body and not enough insulin to transport it to the cells in the body. Signs for me of a high blood sugar feel like a bad stomach flu. Most of the time it's taken care of with a shot or two of insulin (and also continuous monitoring of the blood sugars). But there are times when insulin just doesn't cut it. You start to get dehydrated and your veins close up—and what's needed is a trip to the ER for IV fluids and more insulin.

I ended up in the ER more times than I care to count due to Diabetic Keto Acidosis (or high blood sugars). Quite a few times it almost happened that I never left the hospital alive.

Throughout Junior High and High School I rebelled against my disease. I would refuse to test my blood. I didn't take my shots and this would all lead to high blood sugars. I even suffered from a form of what's called Diabetic Anorexia. I had a terrible self image problem and was not happy with the way I looked. I realized that if I took shots that meant I had to eat, otherwise I would suffer a low blood sugar. I found out that if I skipped my shots, either my sugars would go up high and I would get sick—throwing up—or I wouldn't have to eat at all. I failed to see that what this was doing to me wasn't helping and causing me great harm. Instead of seeing myself as committing a slow suicide, all I saw was me getting thin.

Complications from this disease are blindness, nerve damage, kidney damage and heart damage—but eventually death if the Diabetes is not controlled or treated properly. I've developed a few of these complications—my eye sight isn't as good as it once was and I've had to endure many eye surgeries to correct bleeding blood vessels in my eyes. I've also had nerve damage to my feet and in my hands—can't feel when my feet are in hot water or ice cold water.

Diabetes is a constant. You don't just take your insulin and forget about it for the rest of the day. You go to sleep with it being on your mind and you wake up with it being on your mind. You never get a vacation or even a small break from it—no matter how many times you wish for one.

Someone once asked if I was ever teased about my disease. I was never teased about having Diabetes. I think for me the biggest problem was not knowing anyone else that had it. I felt alone and abnormal in a way. I was different—and who likes to be different? Diabetes made me different and from that very day that I turned 6 I developed a hatred towards it for stealing away my “normal” life. I never really looked at it as God giving it to me for my good. If you were to have asked me then if I was “fearfully and wonderfully made” my honest answer to you would be no. How could this all be so wonderful? Where was the good in it all?

It took a lot of second chances for me to finally realize just how important it was that I come to grips and accept my disease. It wasn't going anywhere and no matter how hard I tried to rid myself of it or not think of it—it was always going to be there. There is no cure for it—yet. My outlook is a positive one. I believe that the day is going to come when I'm free from this and able to live life like each and every one of you.

Looking back and seeing all that I went through: the depression, the rebellion, the denial and even the eating issues I had, I know now that as hard as that road was to travel on—it has led me to where I am at today. Would I have done anything differently? Sure. I wish I wouldn't have put my body and my family and loved ones through the torture I did. But that's the thing, we can't turn back time—what's done is done. We grow from the mistakes we make. God has a purpose in the journey I had to travel on. It's caused me to see that my disease isn't so much a burden (although there are some days when it sure seems to be), but it's an opportunity for me to share with others my struggles and possibly help others that suffer from it or the issues associated with it.

Had I not had Diabetes, would I be as sympathetic to others with a disease or disability? Would I be here today talking to you about it? Who knows? All I know is that I have it and I'm here today to share with you my experience of it. Maybe this was God's purpose in me having my disease, to realize that each of us are given trials by God, ones that were specifically chosen JUST for us. My trial just so happens to be

Diabetes. I probably haven't 100% accepted it, as I said, there are days when I'd love to scream WHY? But I look at how far I've come in life and I see the intense truth that scripture states "All things work together for good to them that love God." I am constantly reminded that through trials God also bestows great joy and blessing. I am married to a wonderful man who shares with me the same belief of our heavenly Father and he loves me—diabetes and all. And God has blessed our life with 4 healthy and beautiful children.

At 6 years old I may have felt alone and strangely abnormal in some ways. But at the age of 35 I know now that I've been created just how I was supposed to be and that I've been fearfully and wonderfully made by God.