

Nicole Postel
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Dear Lurlene McDaniel,

A few years ago I read your book, Always and Forever. Before reading the second part of the book I had just gone through a rough struggle with the death of my friend's dad. Along with her being my friend's dad he was also my basketball coach for about four years. This book gave me many things such as hope, comfort and knowledge.

When my friend told me her father had been re-diagnosed with cancer I didn't know what to think. At first we all thought it'd be like the first time and he would survive it. But, when he started coming to practice with less and less hair, skinnier and skinnier, and eventually not showing at all, we were all beyond worried. Although, like Jory had hoped that her best friend would get better, I had hoped that Denny would as well. Just as you quoted Romans 5:2-5a (NIV): "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us..."

It was very difficult to show up at the hospital and see his family sitting around and waiting. When I read about all the friends and family that came to support Melissa it really made me feel like God was doing something for a reason. Surely it wasn't a positive that someone was dying, but He was bringing friends and family closer together. It brought me a sense of comfort that so many people would come to support one person, in both Denny's life and Melissa's. I also came to realize if Denny and Melissa didn't have that kind of support they probably wouldn't have made it as long as they did.

Denny battled his cancer as long as he could, just like Melissa battled out her cancer as long as she could. When Denny and his family finally decided it was his time to go, he was set up in a comfortable room for him and his family. He didn't want to leave his family and they sure didn't want to see him go. Just like Melissa's friends and family had to let God take over, Denny and his family let God take over. Just as you quoted Hebrews 11:1(KJV): "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Although Denny did pass away, he had a beautiful service and none of us will forget him. Jory thought she could feel Melissa's presence, just like she could feel it, you could really feel Denny's presences at the funeral. I don't think there was a dry face in the church.

Andrea has and probably always will be one of my great friends. We are always there to make each other laugh, but when her dad was dying I didn't know what to do. I didn't know how to comfort her. But as I read this book, it helped show me how to comfort Andrea. I knew that it was best to stick to the normal conversation and typical jokes. Then if she wanted to talk about it, I was all ears.

This book helped me with a lot of things during that time. I would like to thank you for helping me help a friend and just helping me through a time of struggle. If I hadn't read this book I don't know if I would have known what to do half of the time. So, once again, I thank you.

Sincerely,
Nicole Postel

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