



The Constancy of Faith

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During the journey of life, traveling through hard times is inevitable. Whether the challenge is encountered at home, work, or in your personal life, each circumstance changes who we are from that day onward. We can allow hardships to bring us down or we can use the lesson or experience to help us become the best version of ourselves. In a world of constant change, I realized the only constant is my faith in God. While facing hardships, I am comforted by His consistency, love, and most importantly His grace. No matter if we doubt, forget, or veer off the religious journey, He is always there, no matter what.

I want to preface this chapter by stating that my faith and Christian journey has not been perfect or constant. In fact, there were years when I lost touch with my faith. However, I was honored to write this chapter to share my personal experience on how religion has impacted my resilience and share how it has played a pivotal role in both my personal and professional life.

My faith grew tremendously during the journey of having kids. I can remember it like it was yesterday. The day I had been looking forward to for years, especially the last 9 months. There I was, laying on the labor and delivery bed as I just delivered my first child and waiting for the nurse to put my little girl on my chest for the very first time. However, instead of holding her within minutes of birth, she was quickly taken to the infant warmer and resuscitation efforts began. This was a distinct moment in time when I felt completely helpless. I could have screamed, cried, yelled, demanded things of the medical team, but instead I laid there quietly and prayed. I was extremely anxious about this pregnancy and delivery since I had already lost my first child to miscarriage. To ease my anxiety, I elected to listen to Christian worship music during my delivery to provide some calm and peace through the birthing process. As I laid there, watching them resuscitate my little girl, the song “God, I Need You” by Matt Maher played. It was at that moment, through

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those words, that I had overwhelming peace overcome me as I was reminded that only He had control of this situation and I needed His help no matter the outcome of the situation.

This was only one of many difficult moments in my life when feelings of extreme exhaustion and being overwhelmed have caused me to lean on my faith and ask for help from God. My faith journey is not perfect. I do not go to church every Sunday, nor have I read the Bible from cover to cover, but I do know the truth that my faith is my foundation. My faith is the only source of constant consistency, comfort, and unending love and grace. My faith provides me with a never-ending source of comfort, love, and grace.

Faith has also taught me coping mechanisms and allowed me the opportunity to look at life through a different lens. When things are difficult, frustrating, or do not make sense, I challenge myself to consider the potential purpose behind these obstacles. At times, the answer is clear while at other times the answer appears many years later. Believing that everything happens for a reason and for a purpose provides comfort, peace, and hope.

The pandemic had a tremendous impact on my faith journey as well. One year before the pandemic hit, I transitioned into my first executive job in a new hospital. Knowing I was new at the position and had much more to learn, I found myself allowing fear and doubt to cloud my vision for my career. I felt unworthy and incapable of being successful or helping others. These feelings quickly lead to feelings of wanting to give up and walk away from the profession. I know I am not alone with that thought, as I have heard many health care professionals pondering that dangerous thought during the pandemic. We dedicate lots of money, time, and effort building our careers and it was depressing that I felt it was easier to just walk away. After an exhausting and extremely challenging day, when I constantly questioned if the actions taken that day were the right actions to protect and support the staff and patients, some small gesture would remind me of God's plan, grace, and love. For example, during one of the most horrible weeks of my career, one email from a nurse changed my outlook and caused me to refocus. Her message was simple yet impactful and the timing was absolutely perfect. Her message read: *"I just wanted you to know I see you I see you taking each day in stride... I see you not knowing all the answers to the questions (because right now no one does know). But I see you smile and say we will try to find the answer. I see you and the admin team being, more than ever, on call to your staff on the front line. And even though you may not be the one donning the PPE and entering those rooms, you are still trying to protect your staff. Just wanted you to know I am thankful that you are in the position you are in - a position that may not be thanked enough."* This nurse granted me grace when I was not giving it to myself. Some may view the timing of this message as a coincidence, but to me and because of my faith, I saw it much differently. To me, her message was a reminder from Him and she was the messenger.

The ultimate grace giver is God. I read a quote from Joel Osteen recently that said *"His grace doesn't mean He's going to remove the challenge; it doesn't mean the opposition is going to let up. It means He's going to increase your strength so that it doesn't feel as difficult. As you get stronger, what you're up against becomes*

easier. God won't always lessen what's coming against you; He'll add to your strength." This message is comforting to me during difficult times. It is unrealistic to believe the remainder of our career will be without challenge or hardship, but if you believe in God and accept His grace, you will come out stronger on the other side.

In addition to unending love, a relationship with God offers amazing grace. Experiencing His grace in my imperfect life, has changed me. Now, providing grace to others is one of my core values. Life is hard and we do not know the battles others face. However, we have the power to be kind and provide grace to others in all situations. When we are having a bad day or are struggling to resolve a conflict or challenge, would you rather someone tell you *"I see you. I know you don't have the answers and that is okay, you will in time"* or that *"you will never be good enough."* We all struggle, we all doubt. Why don't we overcome those feelings by being kind to one another and offering grace? Through grace, comes hope. And out of hope, comes love. Jesus was the ultimate granter of grace. His disciples sold him out prior to His death but He forgave them even before they betrayed Him. How powerful is that? What a phenomenal teacher He is for all of us. Grace is not only something to be granted to others as a show of kindness and support, but it is also needed for self-care.

So, whenever you feel dissatisfied with your professional impact or performance or the life you live outside of work, grant yourself some grace. You do not expect others to be perfect and have it together all the time, so stop expecting that of yourself. When faced with difficulty, remind yourself that the situation is tough, but so are you. You may not be able to control a situation, but you have the power to control how you respond. See challenges as lessons, seek to learn, improve each day, step by step, and rely on God for His help, support, and guidance.

My faith has also caused me to pause, be thankful, and take in the little moments especially after the pandemic hit. Moments found in the perfect stillness of a sunset can provide peace and hope for a better tomorrow, even if the day was unbearable. At the conclusion of every day, I have experienced benefits from entering in a journal three good things from each day. This practice instills gratitude and reflection into my daily routine. From a fun memory made with my kids, to a sincere thank you from a patient or staff member, it is powerful to reflect on the positive moments that might be too easily missed. If you take time to look, it is easy to identify those moments.

I feel blessed to have been called into the profession of healthcare to live out my mission to positively impact the lives of those I serve. However, I recognize I would not be successful without the foundation of my faith. You may not be where you want to be yet in life, but you are also not where you used to be. Take a second to realize how far you've come and grant yourself some grace, you deserve it.