

Our story begins on July 29, 1999. My wife was at home exercising to VCR tapes with my daughter. Thank God, my daughter was there. I was attending school in Waco, Texas, 45 miles from our home, when I received a life changing call from home. The office worker came to me stating that something was wrong at home and that I needed to go home to our local hospital immediately. My mind began to race immediately trying to figure out what might be wrong as I drove the "long" drive home. Upon arriving at the hospital I was approached by the ER doctor with the news that my wife of 29 years had suffered a major stroke and they were not sure if she would survive or not. He allowed me to see her and from my past medical background as an EMT I could see that things were bleak indeed. She was immediately loaded onto an ambulance for transport back to Waco where I had just been not more than an hour ago. I was not allowed to stay in the back with her as we were transported to Waco but could see her almost lifeless body through the glass-sliding window separating us. The trip seemed even longer indeed as I agonized and prayed that God would save my precious wife as I had so many things left unsaid and undone. We finally arrived at the ICU in Providence Hospital after what seemed an eternity to me. I had watched as the EMT's struggled to maintain an airway and monitor her failing vital signs. I immediately began to pray that God would spare her and that he would allow her to be able to at least communicate with me in some form so that I could take care of her. I almost immediately received comfort from God that she would be "okay" and that somehow she and "I" would make it through this ordeal. The ICU team took charge of her care and elected to place her on a ventilator to assist her failing respiratory system. They placed her in a multitude of other life saving devices so that the next time I saw her I was amazed that she was still alive even with all the sophisticated devices. She was covered with so many devices including restraints that it was almost impossible to touch her anywhere. They told me that the first 72 hours were the most critical in stroke patients' survival and had little hope for her survival. I took this as a sign again that prayer was in order and took my concerns to the Lord again asking for intercession on my wife's behalf and sparing her enough strength to survive and if she did to be able to communicate her needs to me. These first hours and days were the longest hours and days in my life, as I stood helpless outside her room in the ICU waiting room. The third day they placed a feeding tube in her stomach. The doctor's continued their grim prognosis for four days and on the fourth day brought more bad news. She had gained a sinus infection and some type of pneumonia had set in her lungs. I went in and saw the black material that had been aspirated from her lungs and again prayed for God's intervention on my wife's behalf. I then went home for the first time as I was exhausted from the ordeal and called all the prayer warriors I knew in our little town of Mexia, Texas. I went back the next day and was told that the pneumonia that had been found was now gone. I asked the Doctor in charge of her respiratory care if he knew of any medical reason why the pneumonia was no longer present in my wife's body. He could offer me no medical explanation for her recovery. I saw this as a sign from God that my wife would recover from this most recent catastrophic calamity. My wife continued to

struggle through the foggy mind brought on by the stroke. On the seventh day, she began to be aroused and she completely removed all her life saving devices. She had some how worked her way out of the restraints and pulled every tube out of her body and thrown them out of her room into the hallway in front of her ICU room. Her stomach tube, IV, trach tube, all pulled out. Another good sign to me that she was fighting back. Praise GOD!!!!!! The ICU staff had to replace them but she slowly began her recovery and they found that she was completely paralyzed on her right side and had lost her ability to speak. They decided to return my wife to the local hospital on the 15th day after her stroke. We were returned by ambulance and things improved for three days. I was allowed to spend the first night with her in ICU as they were short handed and I was medically trained as an EMT. She was still not completely out of the coma but seemed to have improved otherwise and the doctor's felt that me being nearer to home would help overall. I was exhausted and went home the next morning. I visited her every chance allowed and waited patiently for any more signs of recovery. This went on for three days as they tried in vain in Waco and now here to wean her from the ventilator without success. I went home that night for another night of tearful fitful sleep, when around 2 a.m. I was called by the ER nurse that my wife had taken a turn for the worst and would have to be medevact by helicopter to Waco because her brain had begun to swell again and they couldn't get her to respond at all. I rushed to the hospital to see her and they told me that the helicopter was having difficulties of some kind and they might have to send her in a regular ambulance. They advised me since I couldn't go in either to meet her at the hospital in Waco. I knew that it was time for prayer even with the tears as I felt my wife was losing valuable time due to complicated circumstances. The trip was finally taken by helicopter and she arrived at the hospital in Waco 4 hours after I was contacted. The same ICU team took over her care and again thank God they knew what to do. The swelling was thankfully nothing more than that and they successfully treated her with an anti-inflammatory agent by IV. She spent another two weeks in ICU and steadily improved until we were again transferred back to Mexia and the local rehab unit for two months of intensive physical, occupational and speech therapy. She again amazed everyone with her remarkable recovery. To this day I feel that God is the reason for her recovery.

You see my wife at 4'8" is indeed a survivor. She had just recently lost most of her sight to diabetic retinopathy due to juvenile diabetes. She is now considered legally blind. She had also survived a bout with partial kidney failure within a year of the stroke when she almost died from the treatment with Prednisone meant to arrest her kidney failure. She was hospitalized with her entire body swollen to the point of my not being able to recognize who she was. She had gained 45 pounds in three weeks due to the cortisone treatment. Prior to this within the year she had faced death's door with a malignant skin cancer located on her tongue being removed from her tongue twice in five years. All this to say, God wasn't ready for my wife to leave this earth.

Things like this make me feel that my wife really is a miracle lady. The doctor's and ICU nurses who attended to her daily needs in Waco Providence Hospital

and in our local hospital began to call my wife the "Miracle Lady" due to her recovery from impossible odds. They knew nothing of her previous struggles!!!! I was told that because of the severity and placement of the basil ganglia bleed that she would never get out of bed, might not even wake up out of the coma she remained in for the first month of the post stroke ordeal. Then she did, and they said she would not leave the hospital and I would have to place her in a nursing home at 49 years old. I prayed fervently for God's guidance and intervention in my wife's circumstances. She slowly and miraculously regained movements in her legs after a surprise visit from our grandchildren. They left and 4 hours later, the night nurse called me to say my wife had moved her leg on her own. She still was without speech and my daughter came with the two grandchildren the next evening. My wife broke into a wide smile as she showed them she could move her right leg. She then spoke for the first time in three months after everyone had given up on her talking again.

She continues to this day to amaze the medical community and friends alike with her advancement in motor skills and speech. God has answered my prayers in a mighty way with my wife now at home walking, talking, seeing and enjoying her Grandchildren. She is now considered by most of those who know her in our small town as a true "Miracle Lady".

During these months of intensive inpatient and outpatient therapy, she was dealing with other medical issues such as a sore on her foot and failing eyesight. There was a most debilitating "sore" on the bottom of her "good" foot (a mosaic verruvia) that the doctor told us is very difficult to cure. I began to think what else Lord but remembered the poem "Footprints in the Sand" and take it to mean that the Lord was there early in our marriage is there now and will be there in the future. She endured surgery 6 months ago on her foot, weekly painful treatments and is now pain free with no signs of this malady evident to this day.

During this same span of time after being released from the hospital and still in outpatient therapy twice a week I took her to the eye doctor for laser treatment to merely arrest the bleeding in her eyes caused by the diabetic retinopathy. The doctor assured us that he could arrest the progression of the disease but was not hopeful in the least that any of her eyesight would be regained. After two months and laser treatment on both eyes, my wife has had a dramatic improvement that even the doctor is too baffled to explain. Again, I knew the answer!!!!!!!

My dear precious wife, who has taught pre-kindergarten for 25 years, is my gift from God and truly a miracle in my life.