

The Nature of Cancer

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A series of articles for Christians with Cancer

In God's original creation, order and peace reigned. God's creation included living things—both earthly and spiritual—that were bestowed with free will. This free will allowed them to follow, worship and serve God without being coerced or having no choice but to do so. However, this free will could also manifest rebellion which caused (and still causes) separation from God and challenge of his sovereignty.

This rebellion happened first on the spiritual level with Lucifer and other angels who followed his lead.¹

This rebellion later happened on the human level with the fall of Adam and Eve.²

This rebellion also appears to happen on the microbiological level as some cells display a will to forsake their God-designed functioning and begin to act in ways foreign to their purpose.

This is the nature of cancer: Rebellious cells wage war against the body's mechanisms that are designed by God to produce healthy functioning resulting in well-being.³

In cancer, this rebellion is manifested in seven hallmarks—or common activities—that have been identified by cancer researchers. Each hallmark is a unique “battlefield” where cellular rebellion co-opts normal body processes to produce harmful effects.

Left to themselves, these rebellious cells will consume and destroy their host—and themselves—in the process. This is the ultimate consequence of rebellion: destruction, not only of self but of others as well. The solution to rebellion? Repentance and obedience.⁴

God always provides a means for rebellion to be countered. However, if the rebellious remains unrepentant, it must be destroyed. This is, for example, the purpose of the process known as apoptosis in the body—where cells that lose their normal functioning are “wired” to self-destruct.⁵ We see this in many Old Testament events that form Israel's history.⁶ If the rebellious does repent but does not comply with complete obedience, then discipline follows to produce godly behavior.⁷

While most readers are no doubt familiar with these processes and events on the human level, applying terms like “rebellion,” “obedience,” “destruction” and “discipline” to microbiological processes still seems very foreign. Yet, in many ways, what goes on in our bodies at the microbiological level is very amenable to description with these terms. Ralph Winter observes that the anthropomorphisms used by scientists to describe the activity of cancer is one indication that cancer is more than just the result of random processes.⁸

Let me digress for a moment and make something clear. There have been some who say that cancer is the result of personal sin. They believe that people with cancer can only be healed if they repent and believe. Please hear me—this is not what I am saying. What I am saying is this: We live in a world where there is a thief (who is Satan) who comes to steal, kill and destroy.⁹ It is not unreasonable to believe that this happens in not only in the visible realm but also in the microbiological realm. While I agree that sin can (and does) lead to grave problems, I believe that cancer is warfare that happens on the microbiological level, independent of the level of sin, repentance or non-repentance in our lives. Granted, there are behaviors in our lives that can make us more vulnerable to cancer, and these are documented and discussed by many authors.¹⁰

When we find ourselves beset with cancer, we are victims of a battle going on at the microbiological level that we have most likely been totally unaware was being waged. Most often, we come to the battle late, at a disadvantage because we don't know the enemy (other than the "C" word), how to wage battle (other than what the doctors tell us to do), or how to emerge victorious (other than hoping that the medical regimens will work).

However, no matter how late we come to the battle, there is much we can do from a spiritual perspective to wage war against the rebellion going on at the microbiological level in our body. It is a matter of learning what the battlefield looks like and learning what the

weapons are that will be effective on the battlefield.

Why not just leave the battle to the medical practitioners? Certainly there is much they can do to help, but their weapons are most often not targeted, and where they are targeted, the enemy is very adept at moving to evade destruction.¹¹ In short, the medical approach still has many shortcomings when it comes to fighting rebellious cancer cells. Anna Deavere Smith says, "Cancer therapy is like beating the dog with a stick to get rid of his fleas."¹²

But can a spiritual approach have any physical effect? Look at ancient Israel. Their approach to battle was always spiritual first, then physical. And what kind of a result did they have? Physical. They physically overcame the enemy by following a spiritual approach to warfare. Jesus always spoke in warfare terminology when He referred to Satan, who He called "the one who can destroy both soul and body,"¹³ referring to both spiritual and physical destruction. The only way you can combat an enemy who fights from a physical and spiritual dimension is with a physical and spiritual approach.

This is why the approach presented in The Cancer Cure Experiment is complementary to medical treatment. The spiritual view provides an avenue toward healing that works alongside the medical approach. In fact, the spiritual view targets the same hallmarks your medical treatment is targeting, but from a different, unexpected approach. Sun-Tzu, the Chinese general who authored *The Art of War*, says "...in battle one

engages with the orthodox and gains victory through the unorthodox. The one who excels at sending forth the unorthodox is as inexhaustible as Heaven...”¹⁴

What makes the spiritual view unorthodox? Its approach counters common sense: it sees battles differently than the medical approach and is as “inexhaustible as Heaven”—meaning there are no destructive side-effects with the spiritual view. Stanford Cancer Institute associate director Branimir Sitic said, “Maybe half of all patients with common cancers are resistant and don’t benefit from the treatment. But they all get toxic side effects.”¹⁵ Others have noted that prayer has no harmful side effects, as do continued chemo and radiation treatments.¹⁶

So what is the spiritual view? See Figure 1 below. This figure shows the hallmarks of cancer in the outer circle, the medical approaches used to combat each hallmark around the middle circle, and the spiritual views necessary to overcome each hallmark, or stronghold, of cancer in the center of the circle.

Boice writes, “If you are a Christian, you are a soldier in God’s army and are engaged in a war where many enemy strongholds need to be conquered.”¹⁷ That is exactly the case with cancer. Each stronghold must be conquered so that cancer no longer has any ability to survive in your body. We will discuss the spiritual view of each stronghold—and overcoming each stronghold—in detail in separate articles.



Figure 1 The Spiritual Views of the Seven Hallmarks of Cancer

Notes:

¹Ezekiel 28:11-17 and Isaiah 14:12-17

²Genesis 3

³See *One Renegade Cell*, Robert A. Weinberg, Basic Books, 1999.

⁴For example, see Jeremiah 26:13.

⁵*Genome*, Matt Ridley, Harper Perennial, 2006, p. 233.

⁶For example, see Joshua 6:20-21.

⁷For example, see Revelation 3:19.

⁸*Theologizing the Microbiological World, Implications for Mission in The Story of Our Planet: Origins, Evil, and Mission*, Ralph D. Winter, http://www.ralphwinter.org/images/documents/w1200_10_origins_evil_n_mis.pdf.

⁹John 10:10a.

¹⁰For example, see *Anticancer*, David Servan-Schreiber, Viking Adult, 2009.

¹¹*Principles of Cancer Therapy: Oncogene and Non-Oncogene Addiction*, J. Luo, N. L. Solimini, and S. J. Elledge, Dell, pp. 823-837.

¹²*Let Me Down Easy*, Anna Deavere Smith, quoted in *The Emperor of All Maladies*, S. Mukherjee, Scribner, 2010.

¹³Matthew 10:28b

¹⁴*The Art of War*, Sun-Tzu, Barnes & Noble, 1994.

¹⁵*Game Change: On the Verge of a Revolution*, Krista Conger, Stanford Medicine, Fall 2011.

¹⁶*Praying to Heal Cancer*, Frances MacNutt, 2002. Retrieved July 16, 2010 from Christian Healing Ministries: <http://www.christianhealingmin.org>.

¹⁷*Joshua*, J. M. Boice, Baker Books, 1989.