

# Overcoming the Seven Hallmarks of Cancer

By Richard W. Moulton, M.S., M.Div., D.Min.

*A series of articles for Christians with Cancer*

---

The seven hallmarks of cancer have been identified by cancer researchers as the common activities that must occur in our biological and genetic processes for cancer to exist. These hallmarks are also then the very places where cancer development and sustainment can be stopped.

The hallmarks of cancer, identified by Hanahan and Weinberg<sup>1</sup> along with Mantovani<sup>2</sup>, are (see Figure 1):

1. Self-sufficiency in growth signals
2. Insensitivity to growth inhibitors
3. Inflammatory microenvironment
4. Tissue invasion and metastasis
5. Evasion of apoptosis
6. Sustained angiogenesis
7. Limitless replicative potential

Medical science recognizes the benefits of overcoming these hallmarks and provides medical means to attempt to do so: "...each of these hallmarks presents a therapeutic opportunity. To believe otherwise would be to assume that a feature is both biologically crucial, yet therapeutically unimportant, an unlikely paradox."<sup>3</sup> However, the medicines and treatments designed to attack these hallmarks are

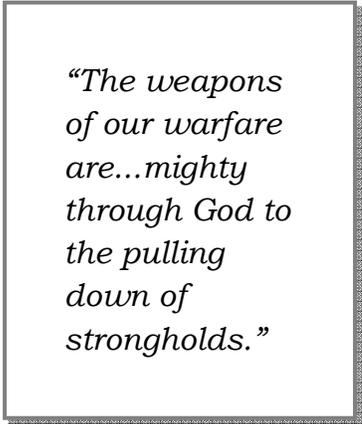
not always successful. In fact, they have very little success against some of the hallmarks, Tissue Invasion and Metastasis, for example.

What medical researchers call *hallmarks* are, in reality, strongholds. They are the processes that allow cancer to begin and continue to grow in our body. These strongholds need to be overcome, or pulled down. Christians have at their disposal

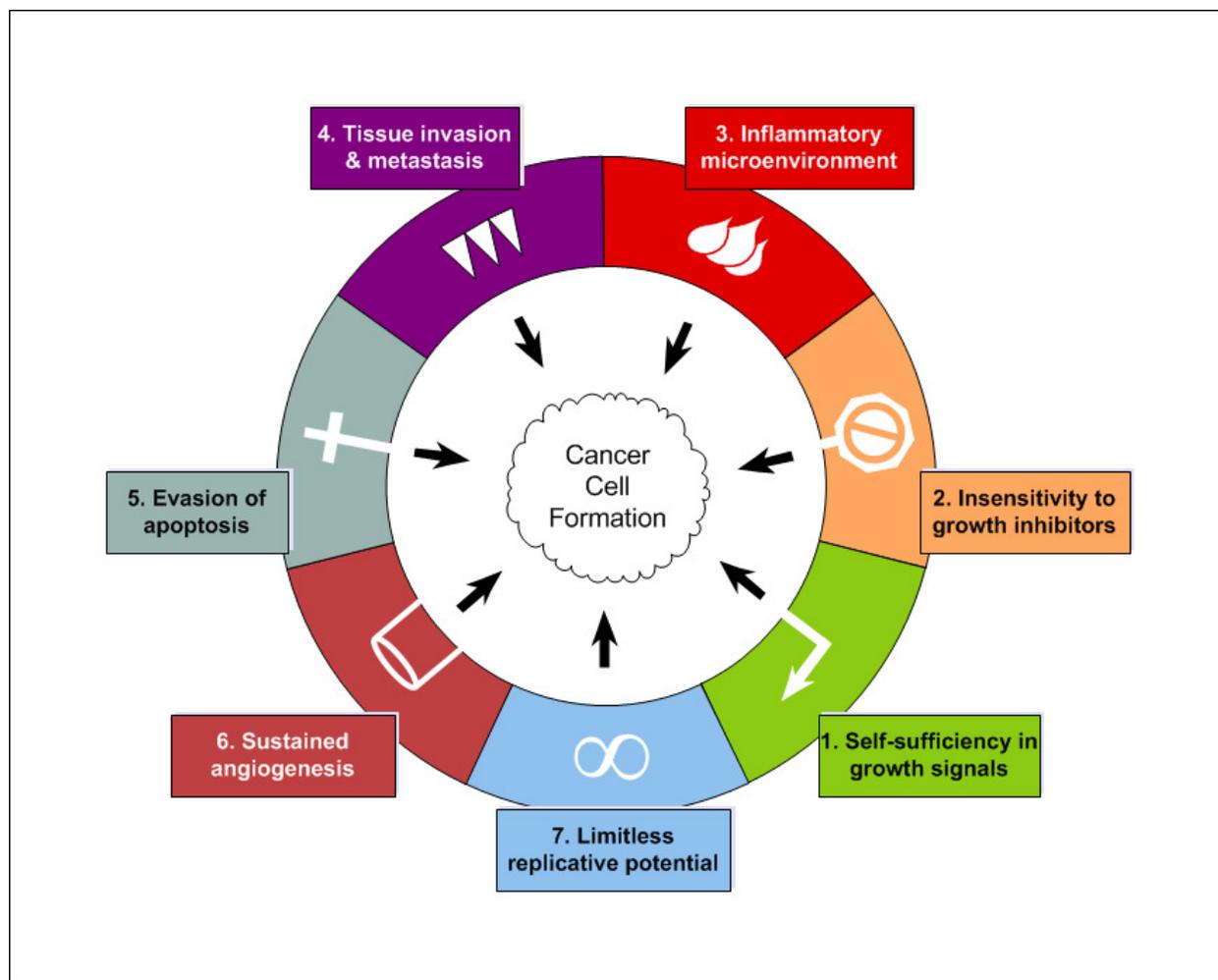
weapons to do just that. According to the Word of God, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God

to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4, KJV).

We need to understand both the strongholds and the weapons of our warfare so that the strongholds can be pulled down and our cells can return to their normal functioning.



*"The weapons of our warfare are...mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."*



**Figure 1 The Seven Hallmarks of Cancer**

The medical approach to overcome each hallmark seeks to “set things right.” Where a hallmark produces too little, the medical approach seeks to produce more; where a hallmark creates too much, the medical approach seeks to curb excess; where there are no limits, the medical approach seeks to re-impose limits. This approach makes common sense and also makes for good medicine. See Figure 2 for the medical approaches to each hallmark.

However, for the Christian believer, God has provided additional weaponry. It is

a trademark of God that he “does not see as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). God sees counteracting the hallmarks from a different perspective, and that perspective—the heart of the issue—is what we will seek.

Seeing each hallmark from a godly perspective enables us to approach each stronghold in a different way from the medical approach. When combined, the medical approach and spiritual view provide powerful weapons for healing.



Figure 2 The Medical Approaches to the Hallmarks of Cancer

Why does there need to be a spiritual view of cancer in addition to the medical approach? Simply put, the medical approach does not deal with the complete picture of what is going on in the body. While medicine sees problems through the eyes of science, the spiritual view sees the problem of cancer as having an underlying malevolence that science does not—and cannot—see.

Ralph Winter, who possessed a keen spiritual insight into many areas of our lives and our culture said, “Has our

scientific orientation to nature blinded us to the evil intelligence therein? Do we tend to discount NT [New Testament] passages about Satan just because we now know of many intermediate factors in evil? Is it unlikely that we can seriously fight disease at its origin if we continue to be fuzzy about whether it is of God or Satan?”<sup>4</sup>

Science cannot explain the “motive” behind cancer. Scientists’ best guess is that it occurs because of a breakdown or mis-operation of genetic processes.

What science does not explain is the “driven-ness” of cancer to take over and destroy the human body. Cancer must be more than the result of random processes for it to yield such a consistent result. The fact that cancer cells change in very short periods of time to evade medication being administered shows that cancer cannot be an “evolutionary accident.” It can only be the result of a relentless pursuit to commandeer body processes in order to control the human organism. It is no coincidence that the Bible tells us that “the thief [Satan] comes only to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10a). This is not a passage about “spiritual” death—it refers to physical death.

*“The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy; I came that they might have life...”*

Jesus goes on to finish his sentence to say, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10b). It is only the spiritual view that recognizes the real foe behind cancer, and it is only the spiritual view that can do something about the one who comes to steal, kill and destroy: defeat the thief and give a full life.

So our spiritual view is to equip us to deal not only with the physical cancer we have in our body, but also with the force that causes that cancer to come into being and has a vested interest in

seeing that cancer not only remain, but grow in its dominion over us.

Can a spiritual view help us? More than you may at first realize. But you may say, “I have been praying and asking for the medicine to work and for God to heal me.” Those are all good and necessary things, but they need to be augmented with clear views, or pictures, in our mind of how cancer operates and how the spiritual view can overcome, and pull down, every stronghold.

Why are having the correct pictures in our mind so important? Because pictures in our minds have the power to heal or destroy. First, when you received your cancer diagnosis, the physician “painted a picture” of what you could expect. Jeanne Achterberg says, “We maintain that every physician utilizes some form of imagery in communicating with patients; that it is the process involved in building a ‘will to live’; that it is the expectation transmitted to the patient regarding the ability to return to health.”<sup>5</sup> That picture was from one person’s point of view, but it probably became your picture.

But there are other pictures—pictures that will tear you down, and pictures that will build you up. Jeanne Achterberg discovered that the pictures a cancer patient has in his or her mind are predictive of their response to cancer and its treatment: “In a separate study with the technique [to capture the patient’s mental picture of the cancer and its treatment effects], it was

found that psychological measures, especially the imagery dimensions, predicted disease progress much more accurately than blood chemistries.”<sup>6</sup>

This is a remarkable finding! The patient’s mental pictures were more accurate in determining their prognosis than was their blood chemistry.

*Patients’ mental pictures were more accurate in determining their prognosis than was their blood chemistry.*

Certainly this indicates that having the types of images in our minds that see cancer strongholds being pulled down can have positive effects.

So, is this approach to overcome the hallmarks of cancer all about pictures? No, only partly so. Pictures are important; positive pictures are more important; godly pictures are more important still. But most important is this: A willingness to walk in faith, putting our health and indeed, our lives, in the hands of the Great Physician, and becoming a prayer warrior.

There are four types of prayer that are the spiritual weapons we will use for overcoming the evil one, and for pulling down his strongholds.

The four types of prayer are:

- Prayer that sees
- Prayer that soars
- Prayer that strengthens
- Prayer that sustains

Each type of prayer produces a significant effect in overcoming cancer’s effects. We will discuss each of these types of prayer in detail in future articles.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Hanahan, Douglas and Weinberg, Robert. The Hallmarks of Cancer. Cell, Volume 100, Issue 1, January 7, 2000, pp. 57-70.

<sup>2</sup> Mantovani, Alberto. Cancer-related Inflammation: The Seventh Hallmark of Cancer. Retrieved July 17, 2010, from Sociedad Paraguaya de Oncologia Medica:

[http://www.spom.com.py/Content/Manuscripts/C23\\_S72\\_M118.pdf](http://www.spom.com.py/Content/Manuscripts/C23_S72_M118.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Sledge Jr., G. W. and Miller, K. D. Exploiting the Hallmarks of Cancer: The Future Conquest of Breast Cancer, European Journal of Cancer, August, 2003, pp. 1668-75.

<sup>4</sup> Winter, Ralph. A Growing Awareness about Disease.

[http://library.wciu.edu/ebooks/Winter\\_Ralph/Frontiers\\_in\\_Mission.pdf](http://library.wciu.edu/ebooks/Winter_Ralph/Frontiers_in_Mission.pdf), p. 176.

<sup>5</sup> Achterberg, Jeanne. Imagery of Cancer. Institute for Personality and Ability Testing. 1978, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 5.