

Essay from the bold pastor #227 - Cancer Climber -

Some people are truly astonishing. I caught a segment about the 41-year-old Sean Swarner on NBC. When he was thirteen, he was diagnosed Hodgekin's Lymphoma with a month left to live. He somehow survived through that, but at age sixteen, he caught yet another serious form of cancer, Askin's tumor, this time with just two weeks left. Depressed, he planted his face in his pillow, and cried aloud "why?". But again, he miraculously survived. Then his brother Jimmy said in an interview that he would have been more likely to win the lottery than to survive these cancers.

During his battle, he decides that one day when he has defeated cancer, he will climb to the top of Mount Everest. Keep in mind that he only has one lung. Yet ten years later, he made his will come true, becoming the only "Cancer Climber" (a cancer-surviving climber) to reach atop Mount Everest. After that, starting with Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro, he has successfully reached the highest peaks in each and every continent. He has founded the Cancer Climber Association, and shares words of encouragement and the lessons he's learned with other cancer patients.

He gives hope to cancer patients by inviting them to climb as well. He shares with them the lessons he has learned through battling cancer and climbing. Peter Campbell is one of those patients He climbed Mount Kilimanjaro with Sean. While battling cancer, he got a text from Sean one day, "Hey, you make it through this and I'll take you up to Mount Kilimanjaro." Sean taught Peter to look at his cancer as a mountain to be overcome.

The Bible says,

**" Because he himself suffered when he was tempted,
he is able to help those who are being tempted."**

Hebrews 2:18

You may be facing your own mountain right now. Perhaps a disease, bankruptcy, social isolation, broken relationships with family, or some other life crisis is making you feel crushed. But it will be okay. Jesus hit rock bottom when he was killed on the cross, yet he has resurrected. He carries our sins, and climbs alongside us in our journey up our respective mountains. And when we too reach the top of the mountain, we too ought to make it our life's work to help people who may carry similar burdens. That is the essence of the Gospel, and the true life of a believer.

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