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May 2018

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*Full of Life*

by VICTORIA YORK

# When Life Takes an Alternate Route

God is sovereign over the sudden changes.

**“T**HERE YOU are: life is going pretty well, you’re looking toward the future, when suddenly, there’s a crisis that changes all your plans, your outlook — everything.”

Martha was blindsided the day a team of cardiologists told her she had contracted acute heart failure. “There hadn’t been any outward signs,” she says. “I caught a virus that went into my heart. Every other body system was fine — no blockages or narrowing of the arteries, and all my numbers were in range.” Situations like Martha’s are rather uncommon. “My cardiologist classifies patients like me as ‘tender hearts,’” she explains, “generally healthy but subject to grief, anger, or stress,” which in turn makes them susceptible to cardiac problems.

If that weren’t enough, Martha faced a second crisis during her hospital stay. Too much sedation during her heart catheterization caused her

blood pressure and heart rate to plummet, opening up a vein at the incision and prompting excessive bleeding. “I was dying,” she says. The medical team resuscitated Martha and then worked for 15 hours to stabilize her blood pressure. There were differing opinions as to whether she would recover, and if so, to what extent.

Today, Martha has hypotensive short-term memory loss and sometimes struggles with confusion. In addition, her health problems forced her and her husband, who live in the Rocky Mountains, to move to a lower altitude. She also can no longer be left alone because of the possibility of a sudden drop in blood pressure.





## “The reason we get so worked up over things is because we think tragedy is coming; we don’t see the salvation coming.”

What’s it like to be thinking about slowing down and enjoying the grandchildren only to have your world come unglued? Martha explains that for her, “Life is totally different. I don’t have a retirement plan anymore; my husband doesn’t either. It’s almost like we’re starting over.”

Darron, a Texas resident, can relate. In his mid-50s, he became a newlywed all over again. He and wife, Tammy, both had backgrounds in ministry and a love for those

who are homeless, so they took in “as many as our small apartment would accommodate.” But in the fall of 2017 — on their third wedding anniversary — Darron was diagnosed with stage four pancreatic cancer. He was just 58.

“I’d finally met Tammy, but now I was on a time clock. I had planned a long life with her. I was in great shape for 58. I was set for longevity.”

Thankfully, Martha’s and Darron’s stories don’t end there, as both found reason to grow

spiritually and learn from their experiences. “This has been quite the refining fire,” says Martha, “because I had to admit that even though I’m a believer, if I’d truly trusted that the Father was going to take care of everything, things wouldn’t have caused me such grief or anger or worry. I had spent years watching tragedies play out in my head. If somebody was late getting home, I’d picture [him or her] in a car accident. Looking back on it now, I realize that the reason we get so worked up over things is because we think tragedy is coming; we don’t see the salvation coming. I’ve had the love for God; I haven’t had the trust.”

Darron shares that the “things of the world suddenly became least important in my world. Stuff ceased to matter anymore.” Though he has struggled with feeling despondent at times, he maintains, “I know where I’m going ... so now I can really buckle down and tweak the last nuts and bolts, as based on my faith. After all, God calls the shots. I shall go out with an expectant smile.”

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VICTORIA YORK is an author, editor, wife, and grandmother of five. Her book *365 Devotions for Living Joyfully* was released last year. She currently teaches a Bible study based on an upcoming book about her journey from chronic fear to God-centered fearlessness. Read more at [DoulosChronicles.com](http://DoulosChronicles.com).

