

How Cancer Cured Me: Experiencing the Healing of Brokenness and Disease

David Gira

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Finding gospel-rich meaning in a tragic situation, How Cancer Cured Me is an insightful memoir by a pastor who faced a challenging diagnosis, from which he emerged as a stronger person.

Composed of linked reflections, David Gira's affirming memoir *How Cancer Cured Me* is about how a broken body can help to heal a sick soul.

A veteran pastor of twenty years, Gira knew the Bible and Christianity well. Still, it took the sudden onset of stage four lung cancer for him to truly understand his own faith. His book follows his battle with the disease from his diagnosis through treatment, remission, and recovery. Those struggles led to trouble in his church and a crisis of belief, but also resulted in new understandings of God's love and care. His eventual healing required forgiveness and compassion, both of which are used to speak about the power of Jesus to change people's lives for the better.

Engaging in its considerations of brokenness, or of the sense that all fall short in the eyes of God, Gira's book describes how his illness exposed that "There was much more brokenness than I had imagined." That brokenness extended to his relationships, identity, and trust in his church, which asked him to leave with the assumption that, following cancer, he was no longer up to the task of leading a parish.

Notes written during Gira's illness are used to organize the text, which is also divided according to themes like courage, grace, and trust; its earnest, sermonlike work draws arguments and observations from life and scripture alike. Regarding trust, for example, Gira refers to Corinthians and Paul's words about testing God's promises, finds Paul's claims to be true, and emerges with greater confidence in God. Frank treatments of the ramifications of Gira's workaholicism, anger, and need to forgive infuse the book's theological claims with humanity. The work is steady in expressing hope and in testifying that God always somehow sets things right; the darkness of Gira's struggles is less of a factor.

Gira's work is a sincere account of connecting to, and hearing, God and Jesus. He recalls feeling prompted to "get up and go" and to move on from worry and doubt. In one touching scene, Gira describes feeling "the presence of Jesus" while worrying about his daughter and her future, followed by Jesus's affirmation to him: "She's going to be just fine. You're a great dad." Such experiences combine with instances of spiritual wrestling, building toward authentic, approachable witnessing regarding God's promises and glory.

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