

An aerial photograph of a deep canyon with a winding river and a road. The canyon walls are steep and rocky, with some green vegetation. The sky is bright and hazy.

*From Zion
to a
City of Hope*

A Journey of Faith

In-Depth Summary

Henry B. Dotson, III



Vanessa Foster-Dotson

1. Book Summary

1.1. Book Synopsis

Status Quo

Henry Dotson is self-employed and lives with his wife **Vanessa Foster-Dotson** in Pasadena, California. He has close relationships with many family members and friends. He is like an uncle to his deceased college classmate **Valenda**'s four children – **Jezreel**, and her three brothers.

Initiating Incident

Jezreel asks Henry to help her move her belongings from Los Angeles to Costa Mesa along with her brothers. During the move, Henry severely pulls muscles in his lower back.

Developments

Vanessa insists Henry go see their family doctor after two weeks of suffering.

Their family doctor is unavailable, so he is treated by **Dr. Mahmoud**, new to the medical practice and unknown to Henry and Vanessa. She immediately confirms Henry's pulled muscles, but orders more tests because she believes something else is also wrong with him.

After two weeks of tests with no diagnosis, Henry and Vanessa go see Dr. Mahmoud and press for a diagnosis.

Dr. Mahmoud reluctantly gives a partial diagnosis of Multiple Myeloma, a form of bone cancer, but says Henry needs to be seen by an oncologist to get a full diagnosis. Dr. Mahmoud refers Henry to City of Hope, a premier cancer treatment center in nearby Duarte, California.

City of Hope has no available oncologists to take Henry on as a patient. **Margaret**, Henry's colleague, and mentor recommends he go to the Cancer Treatment Centers of America's (CTCA) Chicago center for treatment. Margaret is a cancer patient receiving treatment at CTCA Chicago.

Henry believes God has spoken to him through Margaret to go to CTCA, so he and Vanessa make what becomes a very difficult trip to Chicago due to Henry's continuing declining health.

During the ride to CTCA, Henry realizes for the first time that CTCA Chicago is actually located in Zion, Illinois. The Biblical significance of Zion is not lost on Henry and he believes he has come to the place where God will heal him – on either side of eternity.

Crisis

On July 16, 2015, the admitting oncologist at CTCA confirms Henry has Multiple Myeloma and informs him that he is very, very sick. Ninety percent of Henry's marrow is cancerous. His kidneys have failed, and he is anemic. He is only days away from death due to kidney failure. The oncologist says it is a miracle Henry was able to survive the life-threatening flight to Chicago.

Henry does not have much time to process what he has been told. He is admitted immediately and placed on strong chemotherapy medication which renders him mentally incapacitated within two hours of his diagnosis. Simultaneously he is treated for kidney failure. His doctors believe his chances of survival are very low and he may be on dialysis for the rest of his life.

Vanessa is shocked and unprepared as she is thrust into the role of caregiver for Henry, 2000 miles away from home with no family or friends nearby for support. Not only must Vanessa care for Henry, but she must also act as his Power of Attorney for Healthcare, be the point of contact for Henry's numerous family and friends, and figure out how she can continue to work to provide family income and maintain the family's health insurance.

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Resolution

Vanessa decides to trust in God to handle her work situation and focuses on being Henry's caregiver. She decides to create a secret Facebook group requiring her invitation to join to keep friends and family informed. She begins to learn about Multiple Myeloma and treatment options and makes healthcare decisions on Henry's behalf.

After two days Henry regains some of his mental faculties but is still unable to make healthcare decisions. After a week Henry's kidneys start functioning and he will not have to go on dialysis. The immediate crisis is over.

Henry remains in treatment at CTCA for 33 days until he is cleared by his doctors to return to California for further treatment at City of Hope. He has responded well to chemotherapy but his survival is still in question. He has also survived two lethal infections he contracted while in the hospital.

Upon arrival at City of Hope to become a new patient, a residual amount of one of the lethal infections is discovered and Henry has to be hospitalized for two weeks.

Free from infections, Henry's health continues to improve. By November 2015, cancer in his marrow has been reduced to five percent. On February 25, 2016, Henry receives a Stem Cell Transplant at City of Hope, and cancer in his marrow is reduced to three percent.

In May 2016, Henry undergoes back surgery that could kill him or leave him permanently paralyzed to replace one of his vertebrae that was irreparably damaged as a result of Multiple Myeloma. The surgery was highly successful along with his recovery.

Henry resumes chemotherapy after surgery and continues to improve. By November 2016, the doctors cannot find a trace of Multiple Myeloma in Henry's marrow down to parts per million.

Throughout the journey, Henry relies heavily on his faith and puts his trust in God.

Vanessa consistently posts entries on the Facebook Group page, sharing information on Henry's progress along with her thoughts and feelings. Her employer works with her and she is able to maintain a mutually acceptable work-life balance.

1.2. Main Characters

Henry

Henry was born and raised in Los Angeles, California as the middle child by both parents along with his two siblings. He received all his education in Southern California. He has degrees in electrical engineering and mechanical engineering from Cal Poly, Pomona, and is a registered Professional Electrical Engineer. Henry has over 35 years of professional experience which includes 17 and a half years at The Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and eight and a half years at Southern California Edison (SCE). Currently, he is a consultant to the electric utility industry.

Henry had been married to Vanessa for over 16 years at the time of his diagnosis and has two adult children from his previous marriage.

Henry has been a Christian since the age of seven and is active at church. He and Vanessa have participated in and led several mission trips to South Africa and Ghana.

Henry is an extrovert and has many close short-term and long-term relationships with family and friends on both the East and West Coasts.

Vanessa

Vanessa was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where she spent the first nine years of her life as an only child with her parents. At that time, her family moved to Franklinville, New Jersey where her sister was born. After

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graduating from high school, she earned a degree in Computer Science from Virginia Tech and a Master's degree in Telecommunications Management from Claremont College in California. Vanessa has worked in the computer technology field her entire career for companies that include Northrup, The Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), and International Business Machines (IBM). Currently, she is a technical sales consultant for IBM.

Vanessa has been a Christian since the 1990s. She describes her life as one spared from any major drama or traumatic experiences until Henry's diagnosis. She considers herself blessed not to have gone through what many others she knows have gone through.

Vanessa is an introvert with a few close friends and almost all of her family living on the East Coast. She is task-oriented and very committed to family and close friends.

Facebook Prayer Team

The Facebook Prayer Team consists of members of the secret Facebook Group that became part of the journey by remaining engaged in prayer for Henry and Vanessa and posting comments on the Facebook page. They are friends, family, and acquaintances of Henry and Vanessa.

The team members are very supportive and share their feelings in their comments.

God

Throughout the story God is present. His faithfulness, mercy, grace, and love permeate the story through His Word, actions, conversations with Henry, and the prayers and praise lifted up to Him by Henry, Vanessa, and the Facebook Prayer Team.

1.3. Key Secondary Characters

Valenda Henry's college classmate and mother of Jezreel.

Jezreel Henry's play niece; daughter of Valenda.

Margaret Henry's professional mentor, colleague, and friend.

Ira Henry's older brother.

Cris Ira's wife.

Setfany Henry's niece (Ira and Cris' daughter)

Pat Henry's younger sister.

Bart Henry's son.

Charity Bart's wife.

Talia Henry's daughter.

Beryl Henry's cousin.

Kathy Henry's cousin.

Norman Henry's college roommate and best friend.

Ruth Norman's wife.

Cecily Henry's college classmate.

Jim Henry's colleague and friend.

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Lois	Henry and Vanessa's Life Group Co-Leader and Michael's wife.
Michael	Henry and Vanessa's Life Group Co-Leader and Lois' husband.
Jeff	Henry and Vanessa's church friend and Charale's husband.
Charale	Henry and Vanessa's church friend and Jeff's wife.
Dr. Mahmoud	Henry's family doctor.

1.4. Secondary Story Lines

Henry's Life Story

Significant relevant events of Henry's life are told ranging from early life experiences, his divorce, other healthcare experiences, Bart's final Rites of Passage ceremony, a mission trip experience, and parts of his parents' lives.

Henry and Vanessa's Life Story

The story of how Henry and Vanessa met until the time when Henry proposed to Vanessa is included.

Henry and Valenda's Story

The story of how Henry and Valenda met up to her passing is included.

Bart and Charity's Story

The story of how Bart and Charity's relationship grew and ultimately led to their wedding is included.

1.5. Henry's Worldview

Henry states in his Preface that he has a Biblical worldview that drives everything that he does and is the lens through which he views the world and tells his story. He goes on to say further in the book that a worldview simply explains how one "views" the world. It is based on what one believes to be true about the world. Henry's worldview is based on his belief that the Bible is true.

1.6. Messages

- Our lives are a journey of faith.
- All things work for good to those who love God and are called according to His purposes.

— Romans 8:28

1.7. Objectives

- Encourage readers to have faith in God in their journeys.
- Inform readers about cancer, cancer treatments, and how to support someone with cancer.
- Exhort readers to seek help from friends and professionals when they are faced with a crisis.

1.8. Narrative Style

Story Points of View

Henry's journey is told by Henry both from the first-person point of view as the cancer patient relating his experiences, and from the narrator's perspective, sharing the thoughts going through Henry's mind and telling the background (secondary) stories that gives Henry depth of character.

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Vanessa's perspective on the journey is told by Vanessa in her own words through her Facebook posts. She tells the story from the second-person point of view as the eye witness to what is happening to Henry and what he shares with her. She also gives her character depth by sharing what she is feeling and thinking throughout the journey.

The Facebook Prayer Team's perspective on the journey is told in their own words through their comments to Vanessa's Facebook posts. Their story is told from the third-person point of view as hearers of Henry's journey through Vanessa's eyewitness. They provide their support through their prayers and words of encouragement, and also share how they are being impacted by the journey.

The book includes answers to questions Henry asked of all the secondary characters with the exceptions of Valenda and Dr. Mahmoud. They share their thoughts and feelings during the journey at different points in time that were significant to them. They also share their thoughts in retrospect.

Story Chronology

The main storyline is Vanessa's account told through her Facebook posts and the Facebook Prayer Team's comments shared in chronological order from July 2015 through November 2016.

Henry adds his account leading up to the diagnosis, his account during the journey coinciding with Vanessa's posts, and his perspective as he looks back in hindsight.

The answers to the questions Henry asked of the other characters appear throughout the main storyline in the appropriate chronological point in time.

Storytelling shifts between different moments in time to cover each of the secondary storylines. The time shifts are interleaved with the main storyline and are triggered by Henry's recounting of his life events. Each time shift is indicated by a subheading, a location, and a timestamp.

References

There are over 100 scripture references and over 100 quotations located throughout the book.

2. Providential Beginnings Summary

Providential Beginnings is the part of the book that covers the events leading up to Henry's diagnosis at CTCA.

2.1. Preliminary Diagnosis

The story begins with Henry and Vanessa meeting with Dr. Mahmoud to find out what she thinks his diagnosis is. After hearing the preliminary diagnosis, Henry processes what he has heard and asks what needs to be done to get a complete diagnosis. Dr. Mahmoud says Henry needs to be seen by an oncologist to get an accurate diagnosis and she will make a referral to City of Hope.

2.2. Crushing Blows

A time shift takes place in the storytelling where Henry describes all of the life circumstances God has orchestrated before the preliminary diagnosis in the distant past to prepare him for this moment in his life. Henry describes four "Crushing Blows" that occurred in the past. The first two occurred in his parents' lives and resulted in their marriage, and how they reared Henry and his siblings. The third was Henry's divorce.

The fourth Crushing Blow was the death of Henry's college classmate Valenda. Henry discusses their close relationship. He talks about how they met, her bone cancer diagnosis, her marriage, and the birth of her children. He talks about how they supported each other through their divorces, and how they spent time together as single

parents rearing their children, resulting in her children referring to him as “Uncle Henry.” He talks about how her death galvanized his relationship with her children.

2.3. The Move

The second time shift takes place in the storytelling to the recent past where Henry describes the events leading up to and including the Initiating Incident that led to the preliminary diagnosis by Dr. Mahmoud. Henry introduces the reader to Jezreel, Valenda's daughter. He describes the circumstances that motivate her to ask him to help move her belongings from Los Angeles to Costa Mesa.

While driving to help Jezreel, Henry informs the reader that the day of the move is his father's birthday. Another time shift in the storytelling occurs as Henry reminisces about his father's final months and the mission trip he and Vanessa led in the days following his funeral. The purpose of this passage is to show how God used Henry's father's passing and his obedience to go on the mission trip, to fulfill God's purpose for him to deliver the eulogy of a young teenager in a remote village in Africa.

The story returns to the day of the move and describes how Henry sustains the injury to his lower back. The story continues to describe what occurs in the two weeks leading up to the preliminary diagnosis (see **Developments** in Section 1.1 of the book synopsis). A description of the symptoms of Multiple Myeloma is also included.

2.4. Following the Shepherd's Voice

Henry introduces the reader to Margaret and how their relationship evolved. He describes how she advised him to go to CTCA Chicago for his cancer treatment. He believes Jesus is speaking to him through Margaret.

2.5. Breaking the News

Henry introduces the reader to all of the secondary characters he informs of his partial cancer diagnosis and the upcoming trip to CTCA. The introductions include answers to some of the questions they were asked about the journey.

Henry goes into detail about his relationship with Norman, his college roommate, and best friend. He describes how they met and became roommates, how their deep friendship evolved, and how Norman supported Henry through his divorce.

2.6. Trip to CTCA

Henry describes the trip from his home in Pasadena California to the hotel in Prairie, Wisconsin, where he and Vanessa spent the night before going to CTCA. During the description of the trip to LAX, a time shift takes place in the story and Henry describes his birth on the Harbor Freeway.

Henry describes the trip from LAX to the hotel as a very difficult one as his health declined rapidly. He believes the enemy is attacking him so he will not reach CTCA. He spends a fitful night waiting for his appointment at CTCA the next day.

Henry then describes the bus ride to CTCA and his coming to the realization that he had come to Zion to receive his healing. The biblical significance of the city's name is not lost on him.

3. Zion Summary

Zion is the part of the book that covers the events that take place in Zion, Illinois.

3.1. Diagnosis Confirmation and Triage

Henry starts this part by describing the registration process at CTCA and receiving confirmation of his cancer diagnosis. Henry is told by the admitting oncologist ninety percent of his marrow is cancerous. His kidneys have failed, and he is anemic. He is only days away from death due to kidney failure.

In less than an hour, Henry is admitted and the doctors begin to triage his symptoms in order to save his life. Henry is administered a very strong combination of chemotherapy medications and a large volume of saline solution intravenously. A sample of his bone marrow is extracted from his pelvis for testing.

After the description of this rapid response to his condition, Henry notes as the narrator that he did not remember any of the procedures ever taking place, but Vanessa does.

3.2. Henry and Vanessa's Life Story – How They Meet

Henry uses the one-sentence accreditation of Vanessa's account of what took place during his triage to formally introduce Vanessa in the story with the start of the secondary storyline of Henry and Vanessa's life story. A time shift in the storytelling takes place back to when and how they met up to the time they were working together at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

3.3. Vanessa and Henry's Response to Diagnosis and Triage

The storytelling returns to the main storyline the day after Henry's diagnosis. Vanessa is starting to get organized. She begins working out the logistics of a longer stay away from home, doing more research on Multiple Myeloma, and sending a short message to Henry's brother Ira informing him of the diagnosis and a link to information on Henry's doctor.

Henry describes the delirium he is experiencing as a side effect of the chemotherapy medication he is receiving. This is followed by a medical description of his mental condition and a description of the medication he is receiving.

Henry then describes what is being done to treat his kidney failure. After five days of treatment, Henry's doctor enthusiastically informs him that his kidneys are starting to function again and he will not have to go on dialysis due to his Multiple Myeloma. This is followed by an explanation of the relationship between Multiple Myeloma and kidney failure.

A description of the tests Henry is taking is provided along with his test results.

The next phase of Henry's treatment plan begins now that he has survived his life-threatening symptoms. A description of the new chemotherapy medications is provided.

3.4. Creation of Secret Facebook Group

The story returns to Vanessa and how she determines the best way to keep family and friends updated on Henry's condition while still serving as his caregiver and helpmate. Vanessa's problem-solving and decision-making process is described in detail which results in her creating the "secret" Facebook Group as her means of communication.

The first post on the Facebook Prayer Team page along with selected comments are provided in the manuscript. This format of Vanessa's post followed by selected comments is how Vanessa's account of the journey told, and the Facebook Prayer Team's perspective of the journey is shared.

3.5. Henry and Vanessa's Life Story – Vanessa's Support Through Henry's Divorce

Henry uses the description of how Vanessa applied her gifts and talents of organization to look after him in this situation as a segue to return to the secondary storyline of Henry and Vanessa's life story. A time shift in the storytelling takes place back to when Henry was dealing with the crushing blow of his divorce.

Henry describes how his sharing with Vanessa that his wife wanted a divorce was the beginning of a change in their relationship. He describes how the relationship changed from a good friendship to one where Vanessa was his confidant and a key member of his support system throughout his entire divorce process.

3.6. Foundation of the Journey Narrative

The storytelling returns to the main storyline where Henry describes the response to Vanessa's first Facebook Prayer Team post. Throughout the journey, over 200 people from different states, countries, and continents either become members of the Secret Facebook Group or receive emails on Henry's status because they do not have Facebook accounts. This group of people comes to be known simply as, "The Prayer Team," and those with Facebook accounts are known as "The Facebook Prayer Team."

From this point forward, Henry precedes each of Vanessa's Facebook posts with his account of the events covered in her post resulting in a diary-style form of storytelling for the journey comprised of Henry and Vanessa's accounts and the Facebook Prayer Team's perspective on the journey. Henry and Vanessa also include their thoughts and feelings about the journey, and some of the comments reflect how the journey is impacting team members.

3.7. Visits From Home

Henry has taken a step back from the brink of death, but his survival is still very much in question. The doctors advise Vanessa to contact their children and ask them to come to visit Henry because it may be the last time they get to see him alive.

The visits from family and friends while Henry is in Zion are covered at this point in the story. Henry receives visits from:

- Margaret
- Bart
- Talia
- Jeff
- Charale

Henry and Vanessa give their account of the children's visit. The perspectives of Henry's visitors on his condition and thoughts are shared through answers they provided to questions Henry asked them in preparation for the writing of this book.

3.8. GoFundMe Account

At the suggestion of a friend, Vanessa considers creating a GoFundMe account to help underwrite some of Henry's medical expenses. Henry is not comfortable with the idea. He does not want people to think that the real purpose of the Prayer Team is to raise money to pay for his expenses. He feels as though their prayers are sufficient.

After more time to think about it, Henry agrees to the creation of the account. He comes to the conclusion that having others contribute towards your financial needs being met may be part of God's way of allowing others to be blessed by being a blessing. He came to understand that from his point of view it is counterintuitive, but in God's economy, the books balance.

3.9. Hospital Ministry

Henry is encouraged by his visitors as he continues the battle for his life against Multiple Myeloma. He shows slow but steady progress for a few days. He prays and asks God what more He wants him to do. Henry receives his answer in his spirit when he awakens the next morning: "Be faithful."

Henry becomes intentional about engaging in conversation with everyone that comes into his room. He asks open-ended questions about work, where they live, and then family. Invariably, when the conversation turns to family, each person shares something with him that is concerning them.

Henry recognizes the opportunity and lets God speak through him to the person. He then prays for the person and asks them to pray for him. Henry believes this is part of what it means for him to "Be Faithful."

After a few days, Henry begins to weaken. He spoke a blessing over the children before they returned to their respective homes. Their answers to questions about this point in the journey are provided, along with answers from some of the others questioned that saw pictures of Henry at the time.

3.10. The Enemy Attacks Again

Henry is diagnosed with having contracted two lethal infections that must be dealt with immediately. His doctors prescribe strong antibiotics and Henry continues the fight. Henry believes that this is also part of what it means for him to "Be Faithful."

Bart and Talia's answers to questions about their thoughts of their visits when they returned home are provided at this point in the story, along with the introduction of Bart's future wife, Charity, and her answers.

3.11. Night Nurse

A few days later amid his battle, Henry describes an incident that takes place in the middle of the night. He comes under spiritual attack in addition to the physical attack on his body. Henry recognizes the spiritual attack and recounts a similar attack he encountered on a mission trip.

A time shift occurs in the storytelling and Henry describes how he prayed for God to fight the battle while on the mission trip because the spiritual battle was not his to fight. He describes how God dispatched his legion of angels and won the battle.

The storytelling returns to the main storyline where Henry calls for assistance from the night nurse on duty. Henry had met her for the first time when she started her shift that evening. She comes into the room and when Henry asks her to pray with him, she lays hands on him and begins speaking in tongues! Henry's body shakes and he can feel something being drawn out of his body as she prays. His body shakes for 10 to 20 seconds and then comes to rest.

At that moment, the nurse stops praying and removes her hands from his body. She says to him, "Mr. Dotson, you will be alright." With that, she walks out of the room and closes the door. Henry never sees her again. Henry believes he was visited by an angel.

3.12. Discharge and Return Home

Three days later, Henry is discharged from the hospital and becomes an outpatient in Zion. After one week of steady, continued improvement, Henry and Vanessa leave Zion and headed back home to California.

As the flight lands, Henry needs to relieve himself and is unable to get to the restroom in time. He soils his pants but is not embarrassed or even concerned. The most important thing to him is that he is back in California.

Henry's brother Ira drives Henry home in his car and Vanessa drives home in the car they drove to the airport. Ira's answers to questions about what he thought and felt about seeing Henry for the first time since being diagnosed are included at this point in the story.

Once home and out of his wet clothes, Henry is moved to tears as he thinks about all God has done for him.

4. Middle Passage Summary

Middle Passage is the part of the book that covers Henry's emotional and spiritual transition from receiving care in Zion to receiving care at City of Hope.

In this part, the story continues with a discussion on what a Middle Passage means in the context of the story. Henry says this Middle Passage is about the emotional and spiritual journey from Zion, a known place where he was at peace and felt well taken care of, to City of Hope, an unknown place.

4.1. Check-In at City of Hope

Three days after returning from Zion, Henry goes to City of Hope to be registered as a patient. He makes mental notes of what he sees and is continually comparing it to CTCA. He knows it is different from CTCA but is comforted in knowing that CTCA is still in charge of his case and City of Hope is following CTCA's treatment plan. He is also comforted in knowing that his City of Hope doctor is a colleague of his CTCA doctor and that they are working on a book about Bone Marrow Transplants together.

4.2. One Last Assault

Henry is examined by his City of Hope doctor and blood and urine samples are taken as part of the normal process. His results show he has a slight fever and residual infection from one of the lethal bacteria he contracted at CTCA. Henry has to be admitted to City of Hope to be treated for the bacteria. He has a two-week hospital stay and is placed on an antibiotics regimen that will extend beyond his hospital stay.

During his hospital stay, Henry undergoes a Trans Esophageal Echocardiogram (TEE) to see if the infection has affected his heart. It is the worst procedure Henry endures during his entire cancer journey. The results come back negative and Henry gives thanks to God.

4.3. Radiation Treatments

Henry begins to receive radiation treatments as part of his battle with Multiple Myeloma. It is difficult for him to get on and off of the radiation table because of his back pain. Henry is visited by his neurologist to discuss the condition of his back.

Henry will ultimately have to undergo back surgery to replace a crushed vertebra that was a side-effect of his Multiple Myeloma. In the meantime, the doctor prescribes a rigid back brace to be worn until the surgery.

Henry is discharged from the hospital with antibiotics and radiation treatments being administered to him as an outpatient. He is finally staying at home for the first time since being diagnosed at CTCA.

Vanessa needs help getting Henry back and forth to City of Hope for his radiation treatments. She is back working from home and does not have the time to take him.

Jim is introduced at this point as one of the secondary characters that have provided answers to the questionnaire Henry sent out in preparation for writing the book. Jim is Henry's colleague and former manager at Southern California Edison. Jim volunteers to take him for his radiation treatments.

Jim's answers to questions regarding his thoughts and feelings about Henry's condition and taking him to receive his radiation treatments are provided here.

Henry begins to receive at-home health services for physical therapy and personal assistance. Henry's condition continues to improve.

4.4. The Cancer Support Community

Henry and Vanessa attend a cancer support group meeting at the suggestion of counselors at City of Hope. Henry immediately realizes how important it is for him to receive this type of support once he experiences it. He and Vanessa begin to attend meetings regularly at the Cancer Support Community Pasadena.

4.5. Physical Therapy

Henry begins physical therapy at a facility recommended by Jim in Pasadena. Henry's physical therapist turns out to be a Christian. Henry works out while wearing the back brace with gym equipment.

Henry puts in a lot of consistent hard work during physical therapy and his physical condition continues to improve. Henry continues to have a very effective response to the chemotherapy treatments. By October, the Multiple Myeloma in his marrow is down to under 10 percent.

4.6. Birthday Celebration

In October, Henry celebrates his birthday with his siblings. Their birthdays are also in October. This is the first time all three of them have celebrated their birthdays together since Henry was three years old. It is a birthday to remember.

Pat, Ira, and Cris' answers to questions regarding their thoughts and feelings about the celebration are provided here.

4.7. Henry and Vanessa's Life Story – Henry Decides to Marry Vanessa

Henry uses his description of the significance of this event as a segue to return to the secondary storyline of Henry and Vanessa's life story. A time shift in the storytelling takes place back to Henry's 40th birthday party which was planned by Vanessa.

Henry describes the planning of the surprise party and how the events of the party played out. At the party, Henry hears from God that Vanessa is the person He has brought to him to be his wife. At that moment he decides he is going to marry Vanessa.

4.8. Stem Cell Transplant Decision

The storytelling returns to the main storyline in November 2015 where Henry's oncologist informs both Vanessa and him that he is eligible for a Stem Cell Transplant. His oncologist wants the procedure to take place at City of Hope in December. Henry and Vanessa were thinking it would take place at CTCA in the first quarter of 2016.

If the procedure takes place at City of Hope, it would mean Henry would no longer be a patient at CTCA. This is very concerning for Henry and Vanessa. They have always considered CTCA the ones managing Henry's care and City of Hope being the institution carrying out CTCA's treatment plan.

Henry feels this decision is a test of his faith. This is what he spoke about at the beginning of the Middle Passage part of the book. He and Vanessa pray for guidance from God.

The answer to their pray comes from Cancer Support Community Pasadena (CSCP). Henry and Vanessa mention the big decision they need to make to the director. The director informs them that CSCP has a service called **Open to Options** which helps cancer patients and their families prepare to make major healthcare decisions by formulating questions that need to be answered by their healthcare providers before making the decision.

Henry and Vanessa go through the process with the director immediately and identify the questions they need to ask their oncologist at City of Hope. They ask the questions at their next meeting and decide to have City of Hope perform the Stem Cell Transplant.

Henry feels as though the issue is settled in his spirit and he has completed his Middle Passage.

5. A City of Hope

A City of Hope is the part of the book that covers the events that take place after Henry and Vanessa decide to transfer his care from CTCA Chicago to City of Hope until a little after the first anniversary of his cancer diagnosis.

5.1. Thanksgiving 2015

The story continues with the celebration of Thanksgiving 2015. Henry and Vanessa are thankful for the remarkable progress he has made in a relatively short period of time. Henry's Multiple Myeloma has gone down from 90 percent of his marrow being cancerous to five percent in five months.

5.2. Stem Cell Collection and Transplant

Henry begins the process of collecting his stem cells to be used in the Stem Cell Transplant in early December 2015. The process normally takes a week. Henry has difficulty collecting stem cells and the process is not completed until February 10, 2016.

Henry receives his Stem Cell Transplant on February 25, 2016. He is discharged from the hospital on March 11, 2016. He receives his test results on April 28, 2016. The tests show his Multiple Myeloma has gone down to only three percent of his marrow.

5.3. Battlefield of the Mind

One of the biggest challenges Henry is facing is a battle within his mind. There is a great temptation to go out and do the things he used to do before his illness because he is feeling much better. There is a strong desire to "get back to normal."

Henry realizes the heart of his desire is to get back the things that he has lost. He has lost the person he used to be seemingly overnight. In tangible ways, he has lost much of his independence and the ability to work. In intangible ways, he has lost time due to hospitalization and rehabilitation, and he has lost the type of future he had envisioned for himself and Vanessa.

He realizes that he has suffered several losses and must go through the grieving process in order to move forward in a healthy manner. Henry looks to God to be his comforter in his time of mourning what he has lost.

God meets Henry at his point of need and he does not yield to the temptation of over-extending himself for the brief pleasure of acting and feeling like his old self again. He would also not feel guilty for not doing something productive since he feels so much better. The price is too great. He would have a major setback in his recovery and certainly regret it.

Henry focuses instead on appreciating how precious life is, and being grateful for the things he does have. He is thankful for what he has gained through the journey up to this point and the miracles God has performed in his

body. He also realizes and accepts the fact that resting is a form of self-care and that is the best thing he can do for himself.

Henry learns the way to win the battle in his mind is to first realize it is a daily battle that he must prepare himself for every day. He puts on the full armor of God before he goes into battle, and maintains a positive attitude.

5.4. Back Surgery

Henry stays consistent with his physical therapy in preparation for back surgery to replace his crushed T7 vertebra. His health continues to improve, and his neurologist continues to encourage him to become as fit as possible because the surgery will be very demanding.

Answers to questions posed to Henry's support team about the surgery are presented here in the storytelling.

The surgery has a lot of risk factors that must be taken seriously. The possibility of partial or full paralysis is real along with the possibility of death. Henry remains positive and gives it all to God. He also makes a pre-op prayer request to the Prayer Team.

The outcome of the six-hour surgery is the best possible scenario Henry's surgeon could hope for. There is no damage to his central nervous system and the replacement vertebra was installed without incident.

Henry's recovery is much faster than expected. Henry was to spend a week in the hospital recovering from the surgery and then spend two weeks in an acute rehab facility where he would get back on his feet and walk every day. Henry is discharged from the hospital after only three days and does not have to go to an acute rehab facility. He is free to go home straight from the hospital.

5.5. Here Comes the Bride

Instead of going home to rest, Henry, Vanessa, and their daughter Talia make a two-hour drive to Santa Barbara, California to witness his niece Stefany's wedding on the same day of his discharge. His niece is overcome when she sees him as she is being escorted down the aisle, and has to be held upright by his brother. Stefany provides her perspective on her lifelong relationship with Henry and her perspective on her wedding day. Henry, Vanessa, and Talia stay through most of the reception and leave in time to miss Los Angeles commuter traffic on the way home.

5.6. Clinical Trial

After fully recovering from surgery, Henry is placed in a clinical trial with a new chemotherapy regime. He does not have to receive his chemotherapy medication intravenously, which is much less intrusive to his weekly routine. He continues to work hard in physical therapy and responds very well to the new medication.

5.7. Happy Anniversary

The City of Hope part of the story concludes with acknowledgments to the one-year anniversaries of Henry's cancer diagnosis and return to California. Henry comments that City of Hope has lived up to its name, motto, and credo. It is indeed a place of hope; the staff is concerned about the spiritual health of their patients, and it is a place of medical miracles.

6. Dawn of a New Day Summary

Dawn of a New Day is the part of the book that covers the period when there is significant evidence that Henry's cancer is moving towards remission until his cancer is undetectable and he is considering what is left to be done.

6.1. Dotson Celebration

The story continues in this part of the book with the planning and holding of a celebration in honor of Henry at the home of one of his college classmates. This is the first time many of his friends have seen him in person since his diagnosis over a year ago. It is a wonderful event. Henry is humbled and deeply moved.

Henry makes a speech to the group, expressing his gratitude and appreciation for all their prayers and financial support.

6.2. Henry's Neglect

In his excitement to see friends, Henry leaves Vanessa unattended for a good part of the celebration. Vanessa does not know most of the guests, and she feels abandoned. She does not want to bring up her negative feelings, but this has been a recurring issue with Henry.

On the way home, Vanessa tells Henry how she feels. Henry feels genuine remorse and is ashamed of his self-centeredness. He asks for her forgiveness and she graciously forgives him. Henry rededicates himself to living up to his wedding vows.

6.3. Remission

In late September 2016, Henry's oncologist informs him that he is officially in remission! His lab results came back with no indication of Multiple Myeloma! This is a major victory, but the battle is not over.

Although he is in remission, residual Multiple Myeloma cells are still in his body. He will continue to take a reduced amount of chemotherapy in a maintenance mode for quite some time.

6.4. Rites of Passage

Henry and Vanessa are blessed to be able to attend the wedding of their son Bart to Charity in Arizona in late October 2016. Henry conducts a Rites of Passage Ceremony for Bart to acknowledge his final step into authentic manhood by taking a wife. At the ceremony in front of Henry's brother Ira and friends that have participated in the previous Rites of Passage Ceremonies for Bart, Henry gives his formal Father's Blessing to Bart.

6.5. Henry and Vanessa's Life Story – A Father's Blessing

Henry uses his description of the Rites of Passage Ceremony as a segue to return to the secondary storyline of Henry and Vanessa's life story. A time shift in the storytelling takes place back to when Henry asks Vanessa's father for his blessing before he asks her to marry him. The time is early November 1997, a few days after Henry's 40th birthday party when he decided he was going to marry Vanessa.

Henry describes the phone call to Vanessa's father. After her father gives his blessing, Vanessa's mother joins the conversation and the three of them discuss when and where Henry will propose. Henry decides to propose on Christmas Day at Vanessa's parents' house in New Jersey in front of Vanessa's immediate and extended family.

6.6. A Family Celebration

The storytelling returns to the main story where Henry, Vanessa, and his sister Pat are attending his brother Ira's 60th birthday celebration. Answers to questions posed by Henry to Ira, Pat, and Ira's wife Cris about the celebration are inserted here in the story.

6.7. Under the Microscope and Restoration

The story moves forward to the point where Henry is informing the Facebook Prayer Team that he has taken a test to determine how much residual Multiple Myeloma remains in his body. He asks them to fast and pray for the miracle of no evidence of the disease being found by the test.

The miracle does occur and Henry tells the Facebook Prayer Team that their prayers have been answered when he receives the test results. In his message to the team, Henry shares that he feels the journey has come to an end and he does not plan to make any more posts to the Facebook Page. He thanks them for their prayers and support throughout the journey. He encourages each team member to strike out on their separate journeys and to form their own prayer teams to pray for others.

Comments received by Prayer Team members on Henry's post are included along with answers to questions Henry asked of his support team about their thoughts and feelings when they learned of the results of the test.

6.8. Thanksgiving 2016

The main story concludes with the description of Henry and Vanessa's 2016 Thanksgiving celebration. The description includes the conversation Henry and Vanessa had with Jezreel. At this point, the story includes all of Jezreel's answers to the questions Henry asked her about the journey. Her entire perspective on the journey is shared. The story then shows Vanessa's Happy Thanksgiving post and the comments she received on the Facebook Prayer Team page. It also includes Bart's wife Charity's answer to the question, "How did you feel about the Thanksgiving 2016 celebration in terms of my health condition?"

6.9. What's Left

This part of the book ends with Henry's description of what's left to do medically as the narrator of the story. It includes his need to have annual bone marrow biopsies as long as he is on the clinical trial; maintenance-level chemotherapy; and his need to get childhood vaccinations two years after the Stem Cell Transplant.

Henry is looking forward to returning to work in about six months, including domestic and international travel.

7. Epilogue Summary

The epilogue is the part of the book that covers what has transpired since Henry's cancer was undetectable in November 2016. These events include:

- The writing of this book;
- Reduction in time spent with the Cancer Community;
- Return to work;
- God's miraculous healing of another cancer-related life-threatening health challenge;
- The passing of Vanessa's mother;
- The passing of Vanessa's best friend;
- The passing of Vanessa's aunts
- The passing of two of Henry's friends;
- The birth of Henry and Vanessa's three grandchildren;
- Henry's 60th Birthday celebration;
- Henry and Vanessa's 20th wedding anniversary;
- The fifth anniversary of Henry's Stem Cell Transplant;
- The continuation of the Facebook Prayer Team.

7.1. One More Life-Saving Miracle

Henry describes when he is hospitalized in Arizona because he contracts both a viral and bacterial infection while visiting Bart's family for Christmas in 2017. Henry becomes deathly ill, and the doctors are preparing to put him on life support should his condition worsen.

Vanessa reaches out to the Facebook Prayer Team and God miraculously saves Henry for a second time. Henry makes two more posts on the Facebook page to thank the Prayer Team once again for their prayers and to confess that he was at fault for getting sick by not following his doctor's orders about seeking care at the first sign of attack.

Henry uses the opportunity to tell the team that this miracle is an example of God being faithful even when we are the cause of our suffering.

7.2. Henry and Vanessa's Life Story – Marriage Proposal and Wedding

Henry briefly describes his and Vanessa's 20th wedding anniversary and uses his description as a segue to return to finish the secondary storyline of Henry and Vanessa's life story. A time shift in the storytelling takes place back to when Henry proposes to Vanessa on Christmas Day at Vanessa's parents' house in New Jersey in front of Vanessa's immediate and extended family.

Henry describes the events that took place on Christmas Day 2017 and brings this second storyline to its end by informing the readers that he and Vanessa were married on September 4, 1998.

7.3. Final Epilogue Summaries

The storytelling returns to Henry telling the readers about him celebrating the fifth anniversary of his Stem Cell Transplant and what has become of the Facebook Prayer Team. He exhorts the team to "Be Not Discouraged" when prayers are not answered the way they would like them to be.

8. A Journey of Faith Summary

A Journey of Faith is the part of the book where Henry looks at his cancer journey in hindsight and looks forward to the future. This part is organized into three subsections: Looking Back, In Retrospect, and Moving Forward.

8.1. Looking Back

In the subsection Looking Back, Henry discusses his observations of the journey in each part of the book from Providential Beginnings through Dawn of a New Day with the benefit of hindsight. His observations include:

- Beginnings are not always easily recognized as such, especially when they are not planned;
- The obstacles of his past became the gateways that lead to new beginnings;
- New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings;
- God navigated the circumstances of his life, but he had to listen, trust, and follow God's voice;
- God moved miraculously to heal him in Zion;
- He discovered faith is not merely a journey for the feet but is a journey for the heart;
- He learned to trust the journey even when he did not understand it;
- Healing is not possible in loneliness, we heal in community;
- His hope for a better new day is what helped to keep a positive attitude.

8.2. In Retrospect

In the subsection In Retrospect, Henry discusses the lessons he learned from the journey. These lessons include:

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- Seek help from others;
- Do not be afraid to help;
- God is in control;
- What Mustard Seed Faith does;
- Follow by faith;
- Stay in line with God's Will;
- It's not about me.

8.3. The New Normal

In the subsection Moving Forward, Henry discusses what the “New Normal” means to him and how his life will be moving from a life of personal success in accomplishing most of his major goals to a life of significance.

He tells the readers that the New Normal is what God is calling him to step into.

9. Appendices Summary

There are four appendices in the book – About Zion, About CTCA Chicago, About City of Hope, and About Cancer Support Community Pasadena. Each one discusses the origins of each respective entity and how they operate at the time of the writing of the book.