

The Lord is surely coming back in my life-time! I just turned sixty and realize that if I should die or the Lord would come for all of us, whatever I will do for Christ I had better do now! I do not have time to feel sorry for myself, or to lose a single day mired in self-pity over missing Connie, though I do miss her so much!

All who are close to the ministry of First Baptist Church of Milford Ohio (FBCM) likely know that my life's partner Connie went home to be with the Lord on September 6th of last year. I was asked to write a testimonial article about continuing the mission work after losing my mate. I am so blessed that I have not lost my mate; I know exactly where she is! The knowledge and hope (expectation) that she is with our Lord brings me such comfort and peace, and a sense of anxious anticipation. You see, in a little while I too can put off this house of clay and look full in His wonderful face! Having this peace helps keep me determined and motivated while I am still able. Letting up or doing less is just not an option.

I remember vividly the early morning hours of the day Connie passed away. The Lord woke me at 3:30 a.m. and as I went to her bed, the Lord woke her as well. Connie asked me if she was "going to die." I said, "Yes honey, you are." She looked up and joyfully said, "I'm going to see my Jesus!" Teasing her I asked, "Are you sure you're saved?" She said, "Oooh yes!" and after a brief pause, said "I love you so much." I told Connie that I loved her too and she said, "God is sooo good! Oh dear Jesus, I love you so much!" The whole time she was conscious she continually said, "God is so good!"

Connie's last hours were spent rejoicing in the Lord. All four of our children were there that day as was Connie's long-time friend, Glenda. Connie's sister and her family, her mom, dad and brother all came on that day too. We sang, prayed, read Scripture throughout the entire day until God called her home at 8:13 p.m. What a blessed day! I was so happy for Connie! I am so happy for Connie!!

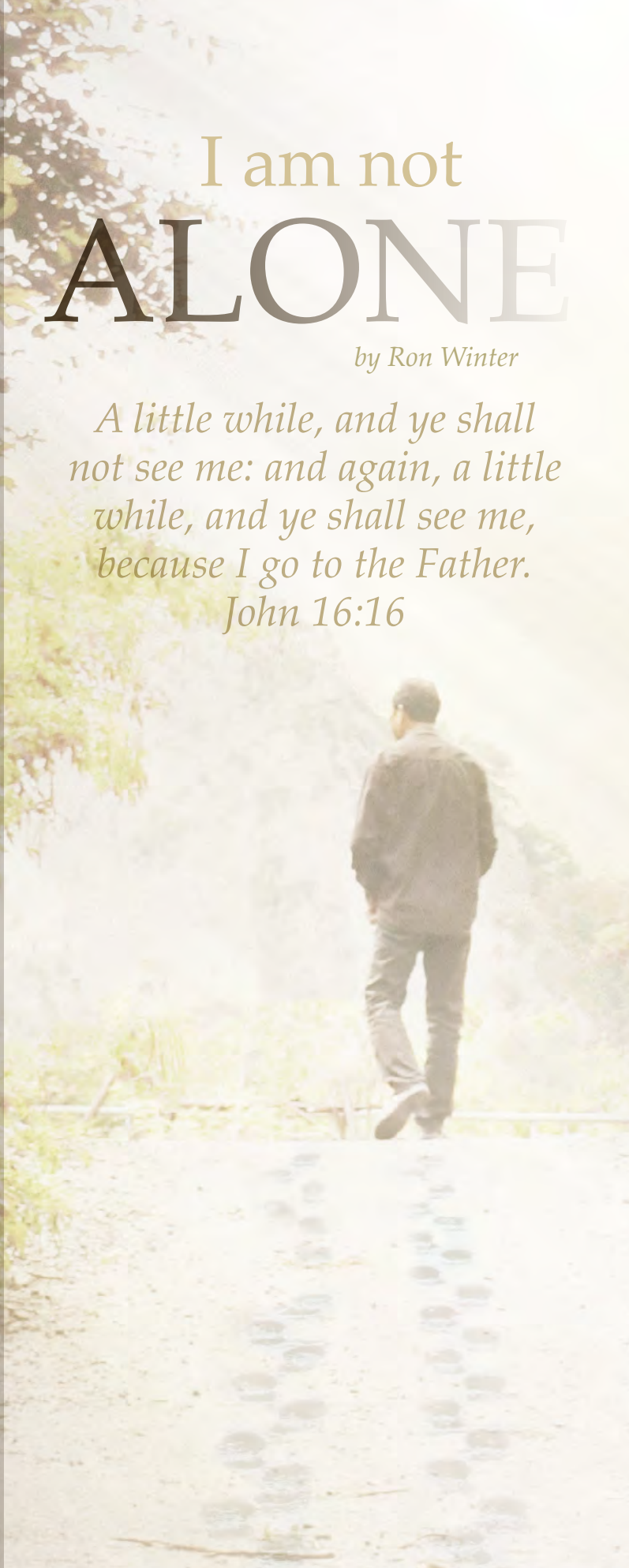
The morning after Connie went home to be with the Lord, I awoke very early and started praying, discussing and rehearsing with God events of the past days, months, and years. I began to weep and cried out to God "I miss Connie." It was at this moment that the Lord told me not to be selfish; He told me that it is not about me. God reminded me that Connie had cancer for eight years and He had taken her home. I was so overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude that I thanked God for taking her and asked Him to forgive me for being so self-centered. I asked God to help me carry on, to be a better dad and grandfather; to be a better brother and brother-in-law; to be a better missionary and pastor, and

# I am not ALONE

by Ron Winter

*A little while, and ye shall  
not see me: and again, a little  
while, and ye shall see me,  
because I go to the Father.*

*John 16:16*



more than anything, to be a better Christian. I miss being a good husband. I miss buying Connie flowers. I miss telling her that I love her, but I thank God every day for the thirty-six years He allowed me to have with her. She was here to raise our 4 kids. She was here to see all of her children saved. She was even here to see her ten grandchildren. Connie witnessed all of these children and families live their lives in gospel preaching churches. I thank God for His grace and the time Connie and I did have together.

When Connie was first diagnosed with "Prolymphocytic T-cell leukemia", I could hardly sleep. We did not know how we would ever pay for treatments. I begged God to heal Connie. While God chose to allow the cancer to remain, He gave us insurance even though Connie had already been diagnosed with the disease. The insurance paid bills amounting to \$240,000 dollars. God was showing Himself mighty through what we perceived as impossible. God showed me that Connie was His and that He would take care of everything. We learned to thank God for the illness, and for the opportunity to serve Him through it. Just the other day a woman who used to attend our church said she had prayed fervently that God would heal Connie. I thanked her and told her that Connie has no ailments now! Praise the Lord, He answered our prayers and showed His love for all of us, and especially for Connie!

Upon returning to the States for Connie's chemo treatments in 2010, a bone marrow biopsy revealed the cancer was still present. We were just waiting for Connie to become more ill with the expectation of additional chemo treatments. I did not want to be the one to ask her to leave the United States where her kids and grandbabies were, but I longed to return to Mexico. Connie longed to get back to the field too as one day she asked the doctor why we could not just return to Mexico. We had turned our previous work over to a Mexican pastor and needed to go to a new place. After much prayer, I felt the Lord would have us go to Camargo, Chihuahua, a city of 55,000, with no independent Baptist church. We soon planted the Bible Baptist Church in Camargo and God allowed me to have 4 years with Connie continuing in His work. The people there never knew Connie when she was well. She was known by the camp stool she took with her when knocking on doors. She sat on the stool when she became tired and unable to go to every door (Connie's partner would go while she rested on her stool). I finally had to tell her not to go door knocking. Connie was upset with me because she so very much desired to be an encouragement to the ladies.

While God is my guide, I must assert that any good Christian character, convictions, etc. that I ever possessed were greatly a result of Connie's influence in my life. I cannot imagine where I would have been without her. Now that she is in Heaven,

I see that I was relying on her too much and not being as responsible as I should have been.

Through Connie's illness and death, I believe I have a better focus on eternity. I believe I understand a little better what it is to be eternity minded. I tend to be somewhat fearful and apprehensive, worrying about things. I am coming to realize that as Jesus said to Pilate in John 19:11, "...Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above:..." I need to embrace my fears, "problems," and difficulties as opportunities that God has placed in my life to lift Him up and show His working power in my life. I better realize now that God is looking at the "big, eternal picture" and that He has chosen to use me and my situation to serve some purpose for the good of those He would have me minister to and for His glory.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

I am trying to teach our church in Mexico that God ALWAYS wants what is best for us, saved or lost, and that it is up to everyone to trust Him, because; "To every *thing* there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:..." Ecclesiastes 3:1-10

I sometimes think that God took Connie and left behind the person who was not producing fruit to full capacity. Perhaps He took away the weary (Connie) that has run her race and in doing so, cleanses, sanctifies, and equips those of us that are left to bear more fruit and to be better disciples (John 15:2,8). Connie sacrificed her family and a much deserved rest "back home" in the last 5 years of her earthly life as she faithfully served the Lord. Failing in God's work without my help meet is not an option no matter how difficult. Letting up or continuing with less urgency would be a black eye to Connie's legacy.

**CONNIE WINTER**

**October 24, 1958 –  
September 6, 2016**

