

❖VISION

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Jenny's left optic nerve quit and she was back seeing through blurry vision. While the failure was disappointing, it was also somewhat of a relief.

"We wouldn't have to make constant travel arrangements for treatment and doctor visits," Jenny says. "That was difficult for my husband, who was teaching at that time. I had done everything doctors told me to do, but I was back where I started."

Jenny's bad news didn't get better for a while. Over the next 20 years nothing could be done surgically to improve sight in her right eye. None of the doctors she saw during that time examined her left eye. In 2009, when she visited Johns Hopkins, they did a routine scan on both eyes and found melanoma in the left eye. The discovery took her and her husband to Mayo Clinic to have the cancerous eye removed.

"When people meet me, they're all but positive I can see in that eye, but I can't," Jenny says. "It's just a very good prosthesis."

About that same time, Jenny was developing glaucoma in her right eye. The cornea was drying out and breaking down. Doctors knew if they didn't come up with a resolution, Jenny would lose all hope of ever seeing with her right eye. The corneal doctor at Mayo Clinic discussed shunts for the glaucoma pressure and a Boston K-Prosthesis or artificial cornea.

"They told me they could put a Boston K-Pro in my eye, which would save the eye and give me some sight," Jenny says. "I had to go home and pray about it. I didn't want another artificial eye. I also didn't want to endure the anti-rejection treatment."

In the end, Jenny consented to the final surgery. The morning after surgery when the doctor removed her eye patch, she saw the yellow stripes on his tie.

"I had 20-30 vision which lasted about five years," Jenny says. "After that, doctors were able to replace the first implant and I had 20-30 vision again. As long as the optic nerve and retina in that eye remain healthy, doctors can repeat the implant about every five years."

Through all her experiences, Jenny never considered writing a book. However, she often shared her story with groups of women, using her experience to offer encouragement to others who seemed to be facing impossible situations.

"Never give up," she tells them. "Some women I've talked to have been so moved and asked me to write my story. The heart of my story is about how God worked in my life all those 33 years when my vision was taken away. I believe God used that time to bring me to the place He wanted me to be."

To develop her book, Jenny took her husband's journal and integrated her own memories into his writing. Her sister, Cathy helped her edit the final draft.

"While working on the editing of the book, we were at a family reunion in a wooded area. My sister took a picture of a road there that had a big curve in it," Jenny says. "She told me that was my story, a journey along a road that was anything but straight. That image is on the cover of my book."

Jenny self published her book and offers it when she speaks. She also has a website and books can be ordered through the site. Her hope is that what she learned throughout her ordeal gives others new hope and courage to finish their own journey, no matter how winding the path.

"It's my heart's desire to share how God worked in my life and how I gained faith through all of it. I never gave up hope that I'd regain my vision," Jenny says. "You can't ever give up."

More information about Jenny and her book is available at www.shewalkedbyfaith.com.

❖By Loretta Sorensen





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