

“I will never leave you or forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5 Deut. 31:6)

This year, the daughter of a friend of mine was diagnosed with **diabetes**. Jo had just turned fourteen, a former 'tween', now a teen, and heading to high school in the fall. **Ugh!**

The news seemed a **real interruption** to an already awkward time of life. While it did explain the **past year of symptoms (fatigue, thirst, nausea, weight loss, blue moods, just feeling generally lousy)**, it still came as **unwelcome news**.

Many things can change our lives forever. Many of those changes can be scarier than diabetes. But being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes is still life changing. Blood-sugar tests, diet plans, possibly insulin injections, or even an insulin pump may become parts of the daily routine for a juvenile with diabetes. Since **insulin** became available in 1921, **diabetes mellitus** has become **very treatable** with **medication, diet, and life style changes**.

But, when you are **barely 14, anxious** about starting high school, **wanting to fit in, anxious** about being different, **unsure** about yourself, **well**, it can seem just **TOO MUCH!**

Then something marvelous happened! Jo got invited to a **Diabetes Camp** for children and teens. There she met **other kids**. **Tall** ones, **short** ones, some with **freckles**, some without. **Shy** ones, **outgoing** ones, **wall flowers** and **pranksters**. All of them had **diabetes**. Some were from her home town. Some were going to start **the same high school** she was going to.

At the camp she met **adults** too. **Athletes, singers, moms and dads**. All had stories, all had diabetes, all had learned to live their lives and follow their dreams, in spite of the unwelcome diagnosis. There were doctors, and nurses, all who had, worked, taught, and volunteered with diabetes.

Jo had fun, she played, she learned about **food, sugars, digestion, insulin**, and the processes of **digestion** and **metabolism**. She met medical people and diabetics who had learned to listen to their own bodies through the years. Jo learned what is necessary to stay in good control of her own body. *She found a new energy and motivation to make the kind of disciplined lifestyle which will allow her to live a long and healthy life.*

But Jo learned **something else as well**. Something even **more important** than all those facts of her body and biology. **Jo learned she was not alone**.

“I will never leave you or forsake you.” *These are powerful words that God spoke to Israel through the mouth of Moses as he was leaving them in Joshua's hands.*

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”
Deuteronomy 31:6

These are also the words that the author of Hebrews urges the early Christians to remember.

What Jo learned at Diabetes Camp is very important for her life. She learned the **information** and **motivation** that a diabetic needs to live a healthy lifestyle. **And she learned she is not alone with her diabetes**.

Whether its **diabetes, surgery, stroke, losses** or a **hundred other** life changing events, all of us are **strengthened** when we **know and believe** that **we are not alone in our lives**.

There is One who never leaves us or forsakes us.

What do you think?

*May God make us Strong and Courageous,
Pastor Dan Leininger
Visitation Pastor*