



I CAN'T DO IT

- KRISTY KERN

And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And when the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" And looking upon them Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Matthew 19:23-26

Since the time Adam left the first foot prints in the garden of Eden to Neil Armstrong's boot impression on the moon, to your very own steps washed away on the beaches of Cape May, it is still impossible for mankind to make their own way to the kingdom of heaven. Entering God's domain is only one of many places in our lives where the echoes of "I can't do it" stream through the winding caverns of our thoughts. "I can't do it" seems no different to me than "with men this is impossible". Kristy Kern has an experience record in the field of "I can't do it" on the resume of her life which would take pages to write.

Kristy has been confronted with one struggle on the heels of another since the days of kindergarten when she dreamed of being a nurse. She was told in her youth that she would never meet the qualifications for that career and perhaps she should consider the family's choice of past generations, "Just be a secretary". It seemed though, the more they pushed her away from nursing, the stronger the attraction to it; like the clarity and tract of magnetic imaging devices in a MRI, her heart could only take an exact read of the pictures from her dream to be a nurse.

She split her high school time between regular school and vocational training, where she earned her home health aid license. Following graduation, she worked five years in assistance living jobs as an aid; but she was struggling to keep ahead of her bills and post secondary classes, and then failing grades. It was during this that the loss of her grandfather reopened the sorrow she had hidden away years earlier, from when her mother had died. It was like a suture that never quite healed and the pain of mourning ripped opened the stitches of grief all over again. Kristy told me, "My nerves were bad, back then...I had a nervous break-down...my instructor could not understand...my boss could not understand...I never returned to work after Grandpa died...and I put school on hold.." "I can't do it, was all I kept hearing in my mind" she said.

Months passed by, it was 2005, and she struggled to find work again. Finally she was back in a home-care job but the schedule was a daily dilemma. Every time she got her week's schedule it was as if a dissolving aspirin was going down her dry throat. There was no consistency to her shifts. Then she tried school again and then was told she was being let go from her job, only to be transferred to Hospice-care. But it was there that she met her new patient, Bonnie Kickosola's mom, Patsy. Bonnie's sister, Patty, took a particular liking to Kristy and soon Kristy was a common visitor to Bonnie's home, where Patsy was being transported daily between home and health care.

In the fall of 2006, Kristy was accepted in the nursing program at Cumberland County Community College, even though she had been on a waiting list and had little hope of getting picked. This gave birth to her next "I can't do it". You see, she was juggling a lethal combination of traveling, hospice-care, work, caring for Patsy, and school, all the while on 3 to 5 hours sleep each day; if at all. She failed her first semester. "I can't do it" was like a tattoo burned on her heart. "In the nursing field," Kristy said, "if you fail two times, two semesters, you can't get back in." So Kristy decided to quit the hospice job but continued to care for Patsy. By the time summer rolled around, Kristy had decided she would try the nursing program again, now that her job load was eased.

New hope rose this time for Kristy because she was finally getting help with testing. She had always known of her academic retention handicap. It was overlooked when she was in grade school, it was ignored in high school, and it was misdiagnosed when she started college. With this new assistance, she began the nursing courses all over again in 2007.

Meanwhile, Patty and Bonnie were arranging a plan for Kristy to live at Bonnie's home full time to ease Kristy's schedule and cut down on some of the transportation time for her and Pasty. It was now the fall of 2008 when it came to fruition and this gave opportunity for Kristy to get the rest she needed, the study time she needed, and a job she could keep. While living at Bonnie's, she met people from Lighthouse Church and was soon attending. "I can't do it" was less frequent a visitor to her mind, though she hoped for the day it would stop taking a seat next to her.

Bonnie was very instrumental in helping Kristy with the transition. The impossible was looking more possible than it ever had. Like an intravenous drip in Kristy's arm, Bonnie would not leave Kristy discouraged and would review the lessons and tests with Kristy constantly. Bonnie even helped Kristy get on a healthy eating regimen and they often went jogging on the boardwalk together.

Kristy finished her nursing courses with passing grades this past spring, 2009. Now the nursing boards were the last "I can't do it" Kristy would wrestle, before becoming a licensed nurse. Academically, Kristy faced a kind of open-heart surgery. An instructor told her at one point, "Your scores are lower than what we're asking for ... how did you ever get into this program at all?" "Your GPA is low for this program." As if that wasn't difficult enough to heal from, Kristy now had to emotionally amputate the "I can't do it" threatening her ability to pass the state boards.

With Bonnie's persistence, the prayer support of friends, and Kristy's steadfast relationship with the Lord, her main focus was becoming the nurse she knew God wanted her to become. She said to me, "I knew the Lord had a plan for me...it was all about patience and trust in Him and in the plan He already had for me." So on August 20, 2009, Kristy checked her email from the state boards. "Passed", she said, was all she saw. It was one of the best six letter words to ever grace her screen! Like a much needed inoculation, her heart and mind now had the vaccine to fight against and future "I can't do it" viruses!

Just a little over a month has gone by and sitting here with Kristy, I see in her eyes the joy of God's careful tending to her life. He made what was impossible in her own weaknesses, possible in His own plan. Even when Wesley Manor, the first place she wanted to work as a registered nurse, said to her, "We can't find your license", the Lord made a way for her to still get the job. You see, 4 days before her anticipated start day, Kristy received a letter from the State confirming her legitimacy as a RN; even though it usually does not arrive until months after the actual RN license! "Here is your license number and expiration date..." it said. Kristy laughs, "Ya-know, typically the license always arrives first...four weeks or more after the boards...not everyone even gets this letter...I got it September 5th...my job started September 9th...without it I would have missed getting into the job."

The Lord's truth regarding salvation is clear, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." I guess Kristy was also right whenever she brought "I can't do it" to class. She had to understand, as we all must, that dependency on our own capabilities can not accomplish God's plan for our lives. However, with God's direction and infusion into our life, all things regarding His purpose for us, *are possible!* Kristy's nursing garment truly looks better on her than any "I can't do it" t-shirts she used to wear! Praise God for His "possible", when "I can't do it" !!

*Robin Hetherington writes for the Living Stones ministry. (Joshua 4:1-8)
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