

Jim Garlow: My Reason to Fight

When **Jim Garlow** found out his wife had more than 100 tumors, he sat at home alone and wept. As he looked around the house, everything reminded him of Carol.

How can I stand? How can I live life? How can I make it? Garlow asked himself. "I resolved that whatever happens, nothing impugns the love of God. If anything tragic happens to my wife it is not because God willed it. Because of the rebellion and the cumulative impact of sin, the world is filled with heartache, pain, sickness, disease and death."

Garlow, senior pastor of **Skyline Church** in La Mesa, Calif., has been fighting for his marriage since Carol was diagnosed with cancer in 2007. Carol's diagnosis came just weeks before a group of pastors gathered at Skyline to organize a historic battle for traditional marriage via Proposition 8.

"My wife has advanced cancer and I am fighting for her life, but my nation also has advanced cancer and we are fighting for its life," says Garlow. "My wife has had aggressive treatments to save her life. We need some radical surgery, radiation, chemo and alternative treatments to save our nation."

In the book of Hosea, Scripture offers a strong metaphor as Hosea's marriage to Gomer parallels God's marriage to Israel. Garlow can relate to Hosea's feelings as he stood in the middle watching the drama unfold and the pain it brought.

"Based on careful prognosis, both my nation and my wife don't have very much time," Garlow says. "We are fiercely committed to seeing a miraculous intervention for my wife and my nation."

Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian

Leadership Conference, calls Garlow a hero. Rodriguez fought alongside Garlow in the **Prop 8** battle. Garlow stood for righteousness at a critical time in American history, Rodriguez says—a time when many would have questioned God, given up the political battle and fought for their wife instead.

“Could he have fought for Prop 8 with such tenacity and fortitude, with such strength and such faith, without having to simultaneously confront the realities at home with his wife?” Rodriguez asks. “I think Jim saw his wife battling cancer and decided if she can be that tough, he could do it. I firmly believe that Carol was his inspiration.”

Five years later, Carol should be in heaven. Abdominal cancer kills about 80 percent of its victims within five years of the diagnosis. Nevertheless, she’s still fighting the good fight of faith. There have been many victories along the way. But in September the Garlows got more bad news. The cancer markers are rising, despite the chemo. Carol has been experiencing sharp pains in her intestines, which could be signs of the cancer spreading.

Garlow describes a recent scare in which Carol did not have the strength to even walk from the bedroom to the kitchen to get her meds. He was concerned that she had reached a “new low.” Thankfully, she awoke the next morning and had regained her strength.

“I will not follow the advice of Job’s wife—curse God and die,” Garlow says. “God loves me and He loves Carol. That doesn’t mean I don’t get scared sometimes. It doesn’t mean I don’t battle fear at times. I walk in spite of the black cloud hanging over me. There are good days and bad days.”

Cindy Jacobs, co-founder of Generals International, is among those believing with the Garlows for a miracle. She says Garlow—who is now chairman of Renewing American Leadership,

leading its mission to preserve America's Judeo-Christian heritage by defending and promoting the faith, family, freedom and free enterprise—has been prepared for such a time as this.

“All of the trials and the **spiritual warfare** could not turn Jim from God. He has come out of the fire as pure gold,” says Jacobs. “Jim can say to a generation, ‘Follow me as I follow Christ.’”