



CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

Never Alone: God's Unending Mercies

By Elyse Ogbourne

Christ understands everything we go through because he lived it first. While it might be difficult to see small pieces of joy during chronic illness, God's mercies truly are unending.

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
His mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*
(Lamentations 3:22-23)

God's promise of new mercies every day does not mean that life will be better tomorrow than it is today. It means that God is with us in our battles.

The book of Lamentations was written in mourning over the destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremiah, the author of Lamentations, wrote about his afflictions and the afflictions of those living in Jerusalem: scarce food, Israelites being killed with swords, and Jeremiah himself feeling alone without anyone to hear his prayers. Through all of these trials, the Lord showed himself to be faithful. He was with Jeremiah and the Israelites in everything they experienced.

It can be hard to rejoice in the middle of our own trials: when you find out that a treatment isn't working, when there seems to be no relief from the pain, or during a setback when you thought your body was finally making progress. Even in the midst of pain, isolation, and sorrow, the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us -- He is faithful for both you and me. He understands everything we go through because Christ walked through it himself. He did not only take on our sin while he was on the cross, but he felt the pain of life and the isolation from God.

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NEVER ALONE: GOD'S MERCIES IN CHRONIC ILLNESS

About six months after I was diagnosed with my chronic illness, I struggled to see God's mercy. It was difficult to find good things in the world when I was consistently at an 8/10 pain level with barely enough energy for school and Bible study, let alone a social life. I struggled to see God's mercies in my life when I felt so isolated and discouraged.

I started challenging myself to find five good things in every day -- these could be any good thing from my day: The sun was out. I received an 'A' on a school assignment. I hot tubbed with a fellow spoonie and experienced temporary relief. Slowly, I started to take joy in the small things that brightened my day. I started noticing things that pointed back to God; even on heartbreaking days, I could see God's mercy in my life. I was reminded every day that I am never alone—and neither are you.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

In what ways do you already see God's mercies as you go through your day?

Today, can you count five mercies, big or small?

CHALLENGE: Write down one good thing in your life every day for a week. How does your perspective change even if your situation doesn't?

Dear Heavenly Father, I feel surrounded by affliction. I know that you never leave me, but there are days when you feel so far away. Please remind me how you are here with me today and show me how your mercies are new every day. In your name, Amen

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