



CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

GRATITUDE THROUGH PRAYER

By Pamela Piquette

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers. (Philemon 1:4)

GRATITUDE CAN BE CHALLENGING

Gratitude can be a challenging concept when chronic illness is our constant companion. Being with family and friends is a gift, but it is also a drain on already low-energy reserves. Inevitably, I will be more unwell or in a flare during or immediately after gatherings and celebrations, causing me to sit on the sidelines of these events. Yet while I may not participate in traditional, expected, or even hoped-for ways, I am offered a different gift: the Holy Spirit's prompting to pray for those I love and for those who are harder for me to love. I can show gratitude through prayer as I remember each person.

As I prayed through and about Philemon 1:4 — “I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers.” — I thought about Paul (who wrote this verse), about his life and ministry as a person with a thorn which many think was some form of chronic illness. Paul changed the world when his lens was altered by his physical limitations. God not only used Paul's illness and grew his prayer life, but He did so much more in, with, and through Paul's weakness, for in weakness, it is God's strength that shines through.

The thing that struck me most powerfully is not that you and I are invited to pray, but that Jesus speaks the words of Philemon 1:4 over each of us. Stop for a moment. Slowly read this verse again, hearing Jesus speak these words over **you**:

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers.

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Whatever excitement, sadness, joy, or challenge we face, Jesus is right there with us (*Emmanuel – God with us*), experiencing everything with us, giving thanks to the Father for us, and interceding on our behalf. That is **hope**, Friends, and true encouragement. Jesus cares for every single detail of our lives. We can show Him our gratitude through prayer as we remember the hope we have in Him.

Let the word gratitude remind you that Jesus is grateful for **you** and is always interceding on your behalf.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- What comes to mind when you consider that Jesus is always thanking God for *you*?
- Who are you grateful for? How might you express your gratitude, not only in prayer, but in tangible ways?
- What change(s) or feelings do you experience when you thank God as you remember others in your prayers?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus,

Emmanuel, God with us, what an amazing gift You are! Teach us to be grateful for You and for those around us. We want to experience the gift of You in each moment. Help us to be fully present. Help us when we are not well enough to be part of gatherings and celebrations, and when we are, for there is a cost for both. Remind us to be thankful for the opportunity to pray for those around us, and to know that You are in prayer for us.

Be of special comfort to those in our community who are homebound, hospitalized, or too sick to be able to join in gatherings with friends and family. Amen.

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