



CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

EXPLORING STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS: A LOOK AT 2 CORINTHIANS 12:10

By Elyse Simon

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
(2 Corinthians 12:10)

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

This is the verse that helped me through my chronic illness. Seriously. There have been times in the past that I felt betrayed by the Lord. It took a trip through counseling to fully realize how abandoned I felt. Even though I didn't know how hurt I was, because of this verse, I realized that I was trying to stand on my own two feet. I didn't tell my family how hurt I was, my friends how much help I needed, or God how distant He felt.

I reached my breaking point at camp about nine months after my initial diagnosis. During worship, I had to sit all alone with my knees to my chest in a cold, damp room two doors down from the main conference room because the vibrations of the band were so strong. They brought tears to my eyes if I got any closer. The camp was supposed to bring about a spiritual high. In my head, I associated going to camp as the closest I could feel to God. Instead, I never felt further from Him. I had run from Him years before because of another hurt, but in my head, I had always known I was the one to leave the relationship. Now, I felt like I was fighting tooth and nail to stay close to Him while He had abandoned me.

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GOD GIVES STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

This was the furthest I had ever felt from the Lord – but it led to a new understanding of His goodness. Because of this isolation, I realized that I truly felt alone; I felt that no one understood me, so I had to stand on my own two feet to make it through each day. Because of that cold, damp room, I learned that instead of trying to hold the weight of my world on my shoulders, I needed to lean in — to collapse into the arms of my heavenly Father. I wasn't made to walk through chronic illness on my own. Neither are you. He is there—with His arms open wide—waiting to catch you.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- Do you feel betrayed by God? This week, I encourage you to take some time to talk with Him about what you are really feeling. You could go on a walk, journal, or do another activity with your time and energy focused on praying and being honest with God. Note your thoughts below.
- Are you afraid showing God your true emotions will make you a bad Christian? He already knows exactly what you are going through and wants to have a relationship with you in which you are honest about how you feel.
- What is one way you can fall into the Lord's arms this week?

PRAYER

Lord, help me to fall into Your open arms. I can't do this anymore. I am hurt and I need Your help. Help me to lean on You and not my own

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