



CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

5 MINUTES AT A TIME: A LETTER TO THE MAMAS

By Cindee Snider Re

TO THE MAMA:

- whose child is newly diagnosed,
- who is sleeping in her child's hospital room,
- who is learning to balance appointments, laundry, dinner, school, and medications,
- who is wondering how she will survive if this never gets better or easier this side of heaven,
- who is unable to comfort her child today ...

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

TO THE MAMA:

- whose marriage is crumbling under the weight of pain and illness,
- helping her teen navigate friendship and dating with illness,
- learning to manage food and medications at sleepovers, activities, or retreats,
- who knows the heroic effort it took for her child to suit up and stand on that court, field, rink, or track, giving it all they've got because they refuse to let down their team,
- who who is watching her young adult grow weaker, sicker, and thinner ...

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

TO THE MAMA:

- who is clinging to hope as her child battles an eating disorder, self-harm, or addiction to escape from the pain,
- who is buried under a mountain of medical debt,
- whose child will never drive, graduate, marry, or hold a job...

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.



WE CAN DO ANYTHING FIVE MINUTES AT A TIME

Our journeys may be different, but the emotions are the same: sadness, loneliness, confusion, anger, frustration, overwhelmingness, and loss ... *so much loss.*

For decades, I've clung to hope, leaning into Jesus, and reminding myself that these precious children are mine for a time, but God's forever. They were created on purpose for a purpose, and He loves them (and me) completely. My patience has grown as I've learned to respond kindly to well-meant but unhelpful advice. My compassion has deepened as I've cared for my sick children. We've all learned to navigate the medical world and speak its language. We've experienced profound loneliness and we've been wounded by others, but we've also grown stronger, kinder, and more resilient.

I have experienced marriage at the breaking point, but I've learned to pause and say, "Today, love wins," even when I don't feel it, even when I want to clam up or lash out. Most importantly, I've learned that I can do *anything* five minutes at a time. *Five minutes is a gift.* For five minutes, I can be present in the darkness. For five minutes, I can stare out the window, sob in the shower, or listen past the anger of my teen.

For five minutes at a time, we can thank God for a catnap or a kind cashier, savor the scent of clean laundry (or clean hair), flush a port or PICC line, listen to one more diagnosis or treatment plan, pray with or without words.

Weary Mamas, we can do anything five minutes at a time.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What has caused you the most pain in parenting a sick child?
- What unexpected joy have you discovered in darkness?
- What is the most important thing you've learned to do five minutes at a time?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, it is excruciating to watch our children suffer. How we long for You to take their pain (and ours). We pray for the courage to care for our children in ways we never dreamed possible. You *are* the God who heals, yet we know You won't heal everyone this side of eternity. Give us peace, Lord, and patience. Comfort our children, and teach us all to look for joy in the darkness. Help us to trust You in everything, Lord. Amen.

