



## CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

### BE PREPARED FOR HARD DAYS

By Kara Plett

A mom's handbag is truly amazing. Anything and everything you could ever need for a day at the zoo or an afternoon at the park lies within. A child falls in a puddle, and there is a fresh pair of socks; a little one is hungry, and out comes a snack; the sun is shining brightly, and a bottle of sunscreen appears. Moms are prepared for any trouble that might arise in a day.

Be prepared. I have been thinking about this in relation to hard days with chronic illness. We know hard days are going to happen. We don't have to be surprised when trouble comes our way—the Bible tells us it will:

*I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.* (John 16:33)

Looking back on my life, I can see troublesome thought patterns or repetitive lies from the enemy that have steered me away from my hope. I tend to fall into the "comparison game," measuring my life against others around me. I might be tempted to focus on how someone else with a chronic illness is having more success with medication, or I may feel frustration when I dwell on what I used to be able to do, or I could believe the enemy's lie that I have no purpose.

#### SEARCH HIS WORD

Since I know my thought patterns and tendencies, it is wise for me to have a plan to address them. God's Word is one of the most effective tools that prepares me for trouble. Let me share some scriptures that have helped me grasp His perspective instead of the inaccurate ideas the enemy wants me to have.

- *But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.* (John 14:26) When I seek Him, the Holy Spirit reminds me of what God thinks about me.

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- *... and do not give the devil a foothold.* (Ephesians 4:27) Giving the devil a foothold is exactly what I do when I allow my thoughts to linger in a dark place or believe lies from the enemy. Instead, I can fill my mind with:
- *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things* (Philippians 4:8). Thinking about such things inevitably pushes other thoughts from my mind and changes the trajectory of my thinking.
- *How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings* (Psalm 36:7). God can use His words to remind me how much He loves me and that I can find refuge in Him each day.

These are treasured scriptures that God has used time and again to prepare my heart and mind for future troubles. I have written them down and keep them close at hand.

#### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BE PREPARED?

Take some time today to think about potential hard days ahead and what thoughts might enter your mind. Then, sit with God and His word and ask Him to show you some scriptures you can lean on in those upcoming days. Write them down somewhere readily available. Then, when hard days come and troublesome thoughts want to take up residence in your mind, grab the scriptures and pray through them. Meditate on the words. Allow them to guide your conversation with the Lord and leave no room in your mind for the lies of the evil one.

Chronic Joy has compiled scriptures that could be helpful to you in your times of need. To be prepared for tough days, check out the printables *13 Verses to Lean Into* and *16 Verses to Ignite Hope*.

#### PRAYER

Father, thank You for Your Word, which reminds us to be prepared for trouble and counsels us during hard days. Please nudge us towards scriptures that will be helpful in the days ahead so that we can stand against the lies the enemy wants us to believe. Thank You that in You, we can stand with confidence. In Jesus' name, amen.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- When you look back over your life, can you see recurring lies or troubles you may encounter again?
- What verses from Scripture give you the confidence on hard days? Write out (or memorize) these words of hope.

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