



CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

GLIMMERS AND GRATITUDE

By Lee Ann Zanon

GLIMMERS OF BEAUTY

Soft, golden light casts a broad fan of sun rays beneath ominous clouds. Wearing a heavy jacket and carrying an umbrella, I pause to relish the scene, mesmerized by its splendor. I never could have imagined such a sight.

It had been a hard week of pain, compounded by cold, rainy weather. Heading outside amid the gray was not appealing, but I sensed the Lord beckoning me toward fresh air and exercise. Little did I know I would encounter such a glorious surprise!

Marveling at what I had just witnessed, I recalled an anonymous quote focused on glimmers as opposed to triggers: *While triggers generate anxiety, sadness, and fear, glimmers elicit joy and gratitude.* The writer added that as we train our minds to notice beauty and goodness, we find them with increasing frequency.

Glimmers are momentary and subtle, easy to overlook if we're not paying attention. If I had not looked up during my walk, I would have missed a grand display of God's beauty in nature.

Scripture calls us to cultivate awareness of God's blessings, but the challenges of chronic illness, pain, and mental illness can overshadow our ability to do so. Weariness born of suffering easily skews my thinking toward comparison and complaint. Longing for the physical and mental capacities of previous life seasons blinds me to goodness in the present moment.

THE SCHOOL OF GRATITUDE

Lately, however, I've been learning fresh lessons in the school of gratitude. A wise Christian counselor has encouraged me to engage my senses more intentionally as I process the world around me.

For example, rather than mindlessly drinking my morning coffee, I savor its aroma and appreciate the warm mug in my hands. I observe my grandchildren with heightened interest when we're together, delighting in each one's sweet voice. These simple *glimmers* prompt expressions of thanks and remind me to smile!

Exploring Scripture expands my perspective on praise on a deeper level. Recognizing the Lord's character and kindness reveals never-ending glimpses of hope and countless reasons for gratitude.

Featuring 22 Bible texts from both the Old and New Testaments, Discovering Gratitude (a free printable from Chronic Joy) offers helpful guidance. Reading one text per day and reflecting on each one on the accompanying graphic inspires us both now and for the future. One verse listed is James 1:17: *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

Recognizing God as the source of every blessing sparks thankfulness for who He is and what He has done. The author of the printable writes, "Fixing our eyes on Jesus reminds us of His gracious, compassionate love and unending faithfulness."

I invite you to join me in watching for *glimmers* and expressing gratitude. There is so much to be gained and nothing to lose!

PRAYER

O Lord, please renew our vision. Teach us to readily see and give thanks for Your lavish gifts, big or small, in whatever form You give them. Thank You for Your steadfast kindness and care. We love You. In Jesus' name, amen.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How often do you express thankfulness throughout the day?
- What hinders practicing gratitude in your life?
- Where in Scripture can you find encouragement to move forward today?