



## CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

### LISTENING TO WHAT MATTERS MOST

By Lee Ann Zanon

#### THE GIFT OF NOISE-CANCELING EARBUDS

One element of my journey in the past six years has involved heightened sensitivity to sound. Due to repeated episodes of pain and anxiety triggered by crowd noise (at family gatherings, social events, church services, concerts, restaurants, and more), options for group connection have been extremely limited. I've missed many meaningful moments and have often felt isolated.

In the past few months, however, I've begun cautiously re-entering those areas of life through the gift of noise-canceling earbuds. These tiny devices are enabling me to reclaim realms of life once lost to chronic pain. Tapping a small button allows me to mute the surrounding noise and listen to what matters most.

For example, I can focus on the program to come at a performance venue by muting the overwhelming increasing din before the program. I can enjoy visiting with friends at our favorite coffee shop instead of worrying about the volume of conversations around me.

#### WHEN FEARS DROWN OUT PEACE

The Lord is leading me on a similar path in my walk with Him. When loud fears regarding health and loved ones threaten to drown out His voice of peace, I can mute them and focus on God's invitation into calm through His Word:

A favorite verse is John 14:27: *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

Another is Zephaniah 3:17: *The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.*

[chronic-joy.org/printables/devotionals](http://chronic-joy.org/printables/devotionals)



Yet, this process is far from easy. The roller coaster of chronic pain is unpredictable but certain, delivering repeated rounds of discouragement to body and soul. If only there were a noise-canceling button for spiritual hearing!

#### INTENTIONALLY LISTENING TO WHAT MATTERS MOST

God calls me to pay close attention to my thoughts and emotions, filtering them through the truth of Scripture. Although it is vital to acknowledge what I'm thinking and feeling, how I deal with those thoughts and emotions is even more important. God's Word offers solid instruction: *Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.* (2 Corinthians 10:5)

At first glance, that seems impossible; taking every thought captive in obedience to Christ is beyond my human ability. Only by turning to Jesus throughout the day (and night) can I recognize and refute ideas that contradict His Word. Reading, hearing, and speaking Scripture is vital in keeping our hearts attuned to what matters most.

Listening to worship music (whether contemporary songs or classic hymns) can also play a vital role. For example, the first phrase of *Be Still My Soul* (written in 1752) brings me profound comfort: "Be still my soul, the Lord is on thy side." What a beautiful reminder of Romans 8:31: *If God is for us, who can be against us!*

I hope you'll join me in reading *13 Verses to Lean Into* (a printable resource from Chronic Joy), which offers specific Scriptures and accompanying insights to help us intentionally listen to what matters most: the life-giving truth of God's Word.

#### PRAYER

Oh Lord, You understand our struggle to hear Your voice amid the noise around and within us. Thank You for the power of Your Word that can quiet our minds and hearts. Please let us focus more on what You say than what we see or feel. We praise You for Your help in the past. We trust You to guide us today. We believe You will direct our future. We love You. Amen.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What "noise" hinders you from listening to the Lord's words of love and provision?
- As you consider those words, what emotions come to mind?
- List some Scriptures that can bring peace to your mind and heart.

[chronic-joy.org/lets-pray](http://chronic-joy.org/lets-pray)

