

A REFLECTION ON CHRONIC PAIN

# *When the Pain Doesn't Go Away*

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*For the one who has prayed for healing and is still hurting*

*Simplify to Glorify*

# How to Use This Guide

Whatever season you are in, you are welcome here. There is nothing to perform and nothing to fix. This is simply a quiet place to meet God where you are.

Read slowly. Take one day or one section at a time, or return to the part that matters most to you right now. There is no wrong way to use this.

# When the Answer Is Not Yes

You have prayed. Not casually, and not once. You have prayed the desperate middle-of-the-night prayers and the tired ones you could barely finish. You have had other people pray over you. And you are still waking up in a body that hurts.

I want to say the honest thing first, because I think you have heard enough of the other kind. This is hard. Living with pain that does not lift is one of the loneliest things a person can carry, partly because it is invisible, and partly because the world runs out of patience for it long before your body does.

Paul prayed for his own healing three times. Not a passing mention. Three separate, deliberate askings, from a man who had seen God heal other people. Here is what Paul wrote down about the answer he received.

*Concerning this I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."*

*2 Corinthians 12:8-9*

Notice what God did not say. He did not tell Paul he had asked wrong, and He did not tell Paul to go find more faith. He simply met Paul inside the thing that was not going away.

That matters more than it may seem. Because somewhere along the way, someone probably suggested that if you just believed a little harder, this would be over. That is not what happened to Paul. And it is not what is happening to you.

*My grace is sufficient for you.* Present tense. Not sufficient once the pain is gone, but sufficient here, in the body you are in today.

## CARRY THIS WITH YOU

*God did not answer Paul's prayer the way Paul asked. He answered it by staying.*

# Your Pain Is Not a Verdict on Your Faith

There is a quiet accusation that follows chronic pain around, and it is worth naming out loud so it loses some of its power. It sounds like this: *if I were closer to God, this would not still be happening.*

Sometimes we absorb it from a well-meaning friend. Sometimes no one has to say it, because we have already said it to ourselves at three in the morning. Either way, it is a lie, and it is a cruel one, because it takes something you did not choose and hands you the blame for it.

Scripture does not treat suffering as a spiritual grade. It treats it as a place where God draws near.

*The Lord is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

*Psalm 34:18*

Read who He is near to. Not the ones who recovered, and not the ones who kept a good attitude about it. The brokenhearted. The crushed. If that is where you are today, then you are not far from God. You are exactly where He has promised to be.

## What is being renewed, and what is not

Paul writes something else that is worth sitting with, and it is remarkably unsentimental about the body.

*Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer person is decaying, yet our inner person is being renewed day by day.*

*2 Corinthians 4:16*

Paul does not pretend the body is fine. The words are plain: it is wearing down. And in the same breath he says something is being renewed anyway, not instead of the pain but underneath it, while the hard thing continues.

You do not have to feel that renewal to be receiving it. Most days it will not feel like anything at all. It is happening the way roots grow, quietly and out of sight, in a season that looks from the outside like nothing but loss.

# Grace for a Body That Sets the Terms

Chronic pain does not only take comfort. It takes plans, and it cancels the things you wanted to be at. It makes you the person who has to say no again and then carry the guilt of it long after everyone else has moved on.

So let me say this gently and directly. Resting is not quitting, and pacing yourself is not a lack of discipline. Doing less on a bad day is stewardship of the body you actually have, not the one you wish you had.

*My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

*Psalm 73:26*

The psalmist does not argue with the failing. He grants it outright. *My flesh and my heart may fail.* And then comes the turn: *But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.* A failing body was never what he was standing on, and it is not what you are standing on either. God was your portion on your strongest day. God is your portion now.

And when the day has taken everything you had, the invitation does not change.

*Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

*Matthew 11:28*

He does not say come once you have managed your symptoms. He says come weary and burdened, exactly as the day left you.

## One small thing for today

You do not need a plan. You need one honest sentence. Tell God where it hurts today, without softening it and without adding an apology at the end. That is a real prayer, and it is enough.

### CARRY THIS WITH YOU

*You are not required to be well to be loved. You are loved in the body you are in today.*

# A Place to Be Honest

There are no right answers here, and nothing you write has to be tidy or hopeful. Write what is actually true today. If you only have the energy for one line, one line is enough.

**WHERE IT HURTS TODAY, IN MY OWN WORDS**

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**SOMETHING I HAVE STOPPED ASKING GOD FOR**

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**ONE THING I WILL LET MYSELF NOT DO THIS WEEK**

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**ONE SMALL MERCY I CAN NAME FROM TODAY**

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# Verses for the Hard Days

**Psalm 34:18**

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.

**2 Corinthians 12:9**

And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.”

**2 Corinthians 4:16**

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer person is decaying, yet our inner person is being renewed day by day.

**Psalm 73:26**

My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

**Matthew 11:28**

Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

**Lamentations 3:22-23**

The Lord’s acts of mercy indeed do not end, For His compassions do not fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

**Revelation 21:4**

and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.

# A Note Before You Go

However these pages found you, I am so glad they did. Please know that nothing on your worst day disqualifies you from being deeply loved by God.

If you would like to keep going, my journals, scripture cards, and devotionals are gentle companions for longer seasons of grief, caregiving, depression, and more. You can find them at [simplifytoglorify.com](http://simplifytoglorify.com).

With love and prayers,

*Carla*

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