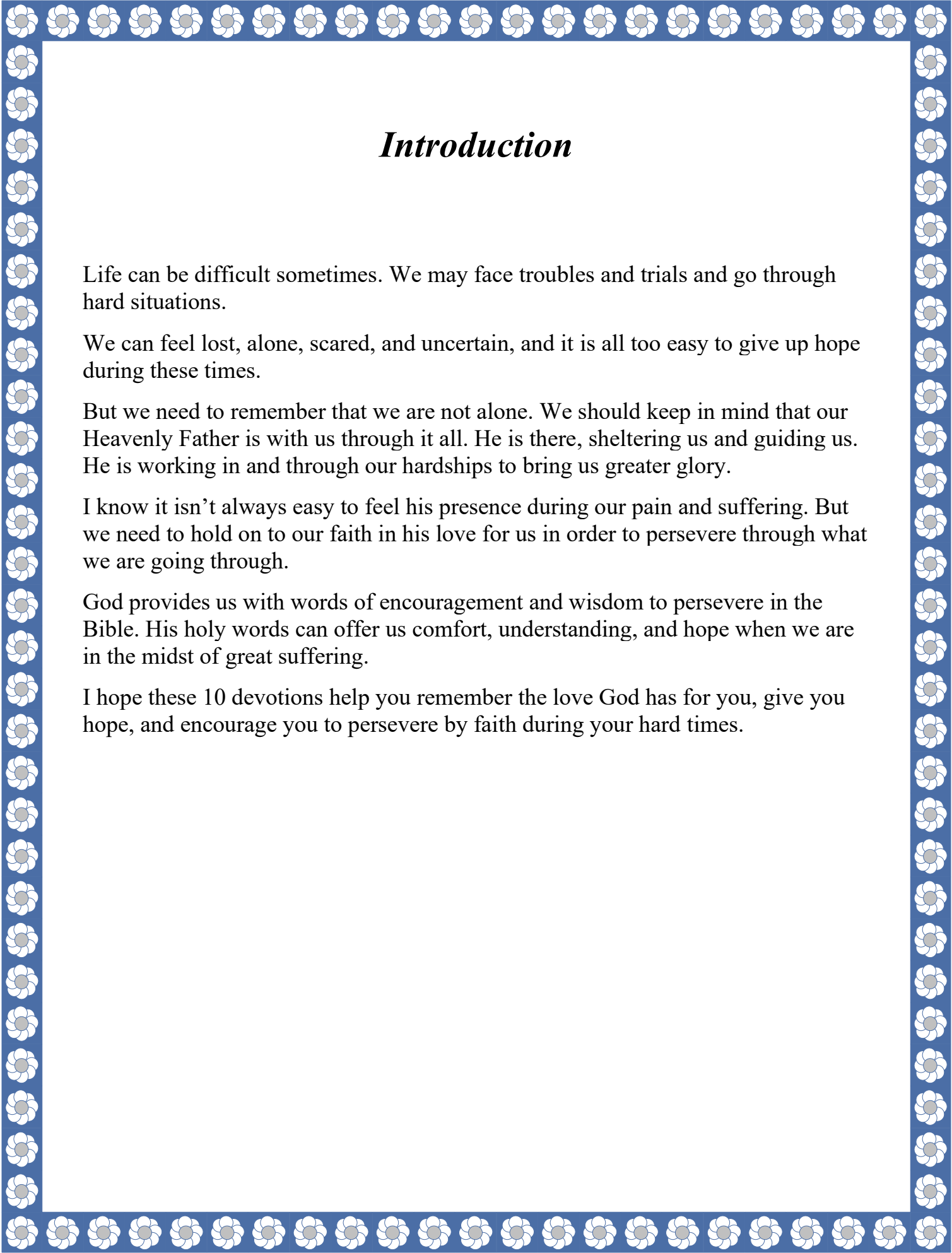


10 DAY DEVOTIONAL

PERSEVERING BY
FAITH:

10 DEVOTIONS
TO GIVE HOPE DURING
HARD TIMES

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Introduction

Life can be difficult sometimes. We may face troubles and trials and go through hard situations.

We can feel lost, alone, scared, and uncertain, and it is all too easy to give up hope during these times.

But we need to remember that we are not alone. We should keep in mind that our Heavenly Father is with us through it all. He is there, sheltering us and guiding us. He is working in and through our hardships to bring us greater glory.

I know it isn't always easy to feel his presence during our pain and suffering. But we need to hold on to our faith in his love for us in order to persevere through what we are going through.

God provides us with words of encouragement and wisdom to persevere in the Bible. His holy words can offer us comfort, understanding, and hope when we are in the midst of great suffering.

I hope these 10 devotions help you remember the love God has for you, give you hope, and encourage you to persevere by faith during your hard times.

1

³ We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. ⁴ And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.

Romans 5:3–4 (NLT)

When I read the first part of this scripture passage, my knee-jerk reaction is often, “Really, Lord? How can I rejoice that I’ve run into this problem? Do you know what is happening?”

Of course, the answer to that is... **Yes, he knows what is happening.**

He knows everything that happens to me, and he knows everything that happens to you. He is right there with us through every problem, trial, and tribulation. Big or small, he knows them all. And he has a purpose for each one.

These verses assure us he is developing and strengthening us to become his godly children and righteous heirs of salvation.

When we face problems and trials, it isn’t always easy to hold on to this truth and trust in God’s divine plan. But we must trust in his love for us and rejoice that he wants to mold and shape us for his divine purpose.

Lord, I don’t always understand why I have to deal with the things that I do. But I’m trying to trust in you. I know you love me and are there for me through it all. Please, help me endure and develop the strength of character you desire for me. I trust in your plans and hope in your salvation. Amen.

2

¹⁰ In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. ¹¹ All power to him forever! Amen.

1 Peter 5:10–11 (NLT)

“Please, God, this can’t last forever.”

Have you ever been going through trials and troubles and just wondered how much longer you would have to endure?

These verses offer hope that God has an endpoint in mind for every suffering and that, once it ends, you will be restored, strengthened, and placed on a firm foundation.

I know Peter says this comes “after you have suffered a little while,” and we would all wish we didn’t have to suffer anything for any amount of time. But we must trust that God, in his infinite wisdom and “in his kindness,” knows what is happening and has a purpose for it.

While on this earth, we are in a battle with the devil, who “prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour” (v. 8). The devil is looking to deprive us of our eternal glory, while God wants to prepare us for it.

It is in that “little while” of suffering that God can mold and shape us and prepare us for eternal glory. But we must hold on to him and not give in to the devil’s despair. We must remember that “all power” belongs to God forever. He will bring us through.

Lord, I wish I didn’t have to suffer through this trial. But I trust that you have a purpose for it and that you will see me through. I don’t know how long it will last, but I pray for your strength and for restoration. I believe in your power and rest in your will. Please prepare me for eternal glory. Amen.

3

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,*

1 Peter 1:3-4 (ESV)

The phrase ***While I breathe, I hope*** is a motto many institutions and individuals (most notably the state of South Carolina) have used throughout history.

The motto is meant to encourage those who may be struggling by letting them know that no matter what they are going through, as long as they have breath, there is hope for the better.

Peter's words echo the same sentiment, but they let us know who our hope is in and give us an understanding of what the reward of our hope will be.

He says that God's great mercy in sacrificing his Son for us gives us living, breathing hope for an eternal home in heaven. Peter explains that it will not be an ordinary home but a home "that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading."

I don't know about you, but in a world that seems to be forever changing and filled with corruption, I need to cling to the ***living hope of Christ Jesus***. I need to remember that no matter the circumstances, if I keep believing in and living for him, then I will receive the greatest inheritance.

Lord, as I struggle here below, help me continue hoping in you. Help my heart to focus on the joy I will have in eternity with you and not the sorrow I'm going through right now. Amen.

4

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Psalm 23:4 (KJV)

Have you ever felt that you were going through the valley of despair?

You felt surrounded by the unknown, and you could not see your way out.

I know I have felt this way many times in my life. There were times when I was consumed with worry and fear, not understanding why something was happening or how I was going to get through it.

Although God doesn't promise that we will never experience these times of despair, he promises that he will be there with us.

The Lord is our Shepherd. (Psalm 23:1; John 10:1-18) He guides us and protects us. With him, we are "safe and secure from all alarms". The peace we can receive from knowing that he is always there surpasses all.

As long as we follow our Shepherd's voice, we will be alright. Life here on earth may get rocky, but if we keep our eyes on the Shepherd, we will reach the glory land where "all is love and peace and joy".

Lord, I come to you at this time for guidance and protection. I don't fully understand why this is happening, but I trust you. I know you care for me as a shepherd does his sheep. I trust that you will guide me through this dark valley into the land of promise. Amen.

5

³³ *“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*

John 16:33 (ESV)

These are the last words that Jesus said to the disciples in the upper room before he went to the Garden of Gethsemane.

He warned them about the difficulties they would face. He didn't say they might face them, but that they would face tribulation. However, he didn't want them to fear. He wanted them to live in peace, knowing that no matter what happened to them in the world, he had overcome the world. He reminded them that no matter what the devil tried to do to hinder them, they needed to remember that God was the ultimate victor.

Jesus' words have just as much meaning to us today. We will face many trials while we are in this world—times of sorrow, struggle, pain, and persecution. But we can't give in to despair.

We must remember that Jesus conquered all when he shed his life's blood on the cross for us. As long as we remain in Christ, we will overcome the world and all its tribulations.

Lord, when I am going through trials and troubles, it is easy to forget that you are the conqueror. Help me remember that no matter what I may face, I can make it through as long as I cling to you. Fill me with the peace of knowing that with you, I can overcome all. Amen.

6

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Romans 8:31–34 (ESV)

I absolutely love verse 31, which proclaims, “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

Many times in life, we may feel that circumstances or people are trying to bring us down and ruin us. We may feel alone and powerless.

But we are not alone, and we are not powerless.

We can rest assured that God is for us. After all, he gave his Son so that we might have everlasting life. The Son is now with the Father, interceding on our behalf. We also have the guidance of the Holy Spirit within us.

With God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit on our side, fighting for us and within us, nothing else has the power to destroy us. We may have to do battle, but we are on the winning team.

Knowing that fills me with a sense of strength and purpose of will. It makes me feel invincible, although I may face insurmountable odds.

Lord, when I feel that everything is coming against me, help me remember that I am not on my own. Give me your strength to overcome and endure. Amen.

¹⁶ That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are renewed every day.¹⁷ For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! ¹⁸ So we do not look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (NLT)

Did you know that your physical body is dying every day?

Whether or not we realize it (and if you are like me, your aches and pains let you know it), each day that we live here on earth, our physical bodies are getting closer and closer to their death.

I know that sounds depressing, but in these Scripture verses, Paul gives us hope.

He proclaims that even as our physical bodies may decay every day, our spirits (our souls) can be renewed. Even though we face present troubles, they are small and temporary when compared to the vast glory they produce that will last for eternity.

He says the way we gain this renewal of spirit and vast glory is to focus not on the troubles we are facing and feeling right now, but to fix our minds on the eternal glory of God.

We focus not on the temporary pain and sorrow, but on the eternal hope and joy.

Lord, in my present troubles, it is all too easy to focus on what I feel and see and let it bring despair and decay to my soul. Help me remember that although I may not see you or feel your presence, you are there, and if I focus on you and your eternal glory, I can make it through this temporary trial. Help me remember that your eternal glory far outweighs anything I may have to endure today. Amen.

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:2–4 (ESV)

Why Lord?

Have you ever asked this question when going through troubles and trials? I know I have.

It is human nature to want to understand the purpose of what is happening to us. It is also spiritually sound to want to understand what God may want to reveal to you about your life and the transformation he is making.

While God may have “specific” reasons and desired outcomes for each trial each person may face, James proclaims in these verses that all trials faced by the Christian have an ultimate purpose.

He says God’s ultimate goal is to refine your faith so that you will develop a steadfastness that will lead you to be “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing”. He uses trials to refine your faith so that you will reach his greatest desire for you — Christlikeness.

Just like a piece of gold can’t become a beautiful piece of jewelry, or iron ore can’t become a strong beam of steel without going through fire, we can’t reach our full measure of spiritual maturity without going through troubles and trials.

God wants us to be “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” So, we should try to “count it all joy” when we face “trials of various kinds” because it means God is working out his greatest desire for us.

Lord, I don’t want to face this trial I am going through. But I’m going to try to consider it a joy that you are working to refine my life so that it’s perfect for you. Help me develop steadfastness so I can become more Christ-like. Amen.

9

⁸ *If I go up to heaven, you are there;
if I go down to the grave, are there.*
⁹ *If I ride the wings of the morning,
if I dwell by the farthest oceans,*
¹⁰ *even there your hand will guide me,
and your strength will support me.*

Psalm 139:8–10 (NLT)

“Where are you, God?”

I am sure you have asked this question when going through difficult times.

Amid pain and suffering, it is all too easy to feel that you are alone and that God has somehow abandoned you. I know I have felt that way many times. Scripture says Jesus felt the same way on the cross (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34).

But just as God didn’t abandon Jesus, he doesn’t abandon us in our time of need.

As Psalm 139 states, it doesn’t matter where we go or what we are going through. **God is with us.** Whether we are experiencing the highest of highs or the lowest of lows, his guiding hand is always there, supporting us and giving us the strength to go forward.

He knows us, loves us, and wants his best for us.

So, no matter how low your circumstances may seem, cling to the knowledge that your Heavenly Father is there with you.

Lord, when times get difficult, and I struggle to feel your presence, please help me remember you are with me. Help me remember your love for me, and remind me that you are there to guide and strengthen me. Amen.

10

¹² Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12 (NIV)

To become a champion runner, you must persevere through numerous hours of training that can leave your muscles aching and your body exhausted.

But, if you persevere through the training, you have a greater chance of winning the race and claiming your prize.

The hours of training strengthen your muscles and condition your body to be able to endure the rigors of the race so you can reach the finish line.

So, it is also when we persevere under trials. We are strengthened and conditioned to better reach the ultimate goal of our lives — Christlikeness — and receive our award, the crown of life.

God promises the crown of life as a gift to those who love him. A gift to those who don't turn from him because of trials they may face.

He knows it may not be easy to continue persevering, but he is there with us, coaching and encouraging us as we run toward the finish line and into his open arms.

Lord, sometimes I feel like giving up, as this trial I face makes it hard to feel your love and hold on to your promises. Help me, Lord, to keep going and keep getting stronger so I can reach the finish line and obtain the crown of life you have waiting for me. Amen.

Keep Persevering by Faith

I know how difficult it can be to keep trusting God when life isn't changing the way we hoped it would. There are days when we feel strong in our faith and others when we're simply trying to hold on.

But through all of it, God is still there.

He knows what we're facing. He sees the things that hurt, the worries we carry, and the questions we don't have answers for. We may not understand what he is doing, but we can keep coming back to him, opening his Word, praying honestly, and remembering how he has been faithful before.

We don't have to figure out the rest of our lives today.

We can trust him with today.

And then tomorrow, by his grace, we can do it again.

So whatever you're facing, keep turning to God, keep holding on to the hope you have in Christ, and keep persevering by faith, one day at a time.

More Encouragement

If these devotions encouraged you, I'd love to have you join me as we continue learning to trust God and persevere by faith, one day at a time.

You can find more biblical encouragement, as well as stories of redemption, at tiffanytharpe.com, and follow along with me on social media.

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