



DEVOTIONS FOR THE CAREGIVER

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written by an occupational therapy student

Preface

Caring for a loved one can be rewarding in many ways. But sometimes taking care of others is hard, and your diligence can often go unnoticed. Caregiving can leave you feeling worn out- mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. If you are in need of some spiritual refreshment, you've come to the right place. In the following pages, you'll find verses, quotes, and prayers to guide you through 30 days of devoted quiet time. On day seven of each week, you will have the opportunity to take part in some thoughtful meditation. At the beginning of this devotional are some tips to guide you through this. After each chapter will be a moment to reflect on the week and an opportunity to write out some thoughts. There will also be references to songs here if you desire further meditation. I hope you find spiritual refreshment as you read each through each week.

*Special thanks to Leanne Blackmore
and Shirley Marshall.*

Meditation and Deep Breathing Tips

At different points during this devotional, you will be given a chance to take part in some relaxation, meditation, and deep breathing. Below are some tips to aid you in this.

Relaxation and Meditation

Find a peaceful spot where you can go every day that is personal to you and free from distractions. Turn on some soft or relaxing music if desired. Practice clearing your mind by letting thoughts come into your conscience, but let them float on through. If it helps, picture a place that's relaxing to you, and go there in your mind.

Deep Breathing

If possible, sit or lie down for your breathing. Close your eyes and focus on your breath.

1. Inhale through your nose for 4 counts, pushing out your belly
2. Hold for 6 counts
3. Exhale slowly through your mouth for 7 counts. Be sure to empty your lungs completely.
4. Repeat this 4-5 times. Slowly open your eyes.

You can do this multiple times a day to help decrease stress and anxiety.

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Encouragment Encourflower

DAYS 1-7

Encouragment

Day 1

Verses

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7

“In the day that I called, you answered me. You encouraged me with strength in my soul.”

Psalms 138:3

Thoughts

Let the first verse bring you peace in that you can bring all concerns and requests to God. He is called Wonderful Counselor, and this is for a good reason. Don't feel that you can't express your frustration, fears, or anger to God. Be encouraged that He wants to hear all your concerns and petitions.

The second verse reminds me that God is always faithful. This is so encouraging. No matter what your situation, he will bring you through it. This includes your harder days as a caregiver and the easier ones. As you walk through your journey as a caregiver, be encouraged that God is always near and ready to hear your thoughts and concerns.

Day 2

Verses

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 9:6

“This also comes from the Lord of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom.”

Isaiah 28:29

Thoughts

The Lord has many names, even more mentioned than what's above. One name that sticks out in the first verse is “Wonderful Counselor”. When I think of these words, I think of that friend who I can always go to with my thoughts and concerns. In this friend, I find wisdom, thoughtful advice, and an understanding heart. Our Lord is the most amazing Counselor. He is the friend you can confide in whether it is through prayer, meditation, scripture, etc. Yesterday we looked at some verses that reminded us that He is always present. Today, meditate on what it means for God to be your personal “Wonderful Counselor”. Tomorrow, we will practice using “Wonderful Counselor” in a prayer.

Day 3

As I mentioned yesterday, God has so many meaningful names. When you pray, it may help to be encouraged by using some of these names in your prayer. Reciting His names will remind you of who He really is. Today is an opportunity to journal and practice using the Lord's names in prayer. In the space below, you can write a prayer using the Lord's names. Reciting them will make them easier to remember when you call upon Him. They will also bring you encouragement as a reminder of all that He is. Here are just some of the Lord's names-

Mighty One, Deliver, Prince of Peace, Holy One, Redeemer, Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, Lord of All, Alpha & Omega, Good Shepherd, The Way The Truth The Life

Day 4

Verses

“So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.”

Galatians 6:9

“God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them.”

Hebrews 6:10

Thoughts

While being a caregiver can certainly be tiring, it is never overlooked by God. Today I simply encourage you to keep going. Know that God is not unjust. He sees the work you’re doing and will sustain you. If you desire, choose one of these verses and write it down for memorization. Place it in a commonly seen area like your car or a mirror for encouragement.

Day 5

Today I encourage you to journal about what God has done for you. Think of times where He has given you strength, when you thought you couldn't go any further. We often forget how far God has brought us in the midst of a trial. Remembering his goodness will give you encouragement for what He can and will do in your future. Feel free to use the space below to write your thoughts.

Day 6

Quote

“Life is a marathon, not a sprint”

Verse

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Matthew 6:34

Thoughts

Isn't it amazing that our days are divided and that each morning is new? I encourage you to be refreshed by this quote and scripture, because we don't have to get everything done in one day or even one week or month. Take each day one day at a time, and celebrate each day as a victory; because it is. Today, remind yourself of how far you've come.

Day 7

Today I am providing simply a photograph and verse from scripture. Feel free to meditate on this if needed. If you would like to do some deep breathing, please feel welcome to. You are always welcome to refer back to the meditation and deep breathing tips at the beginning of the book.



God is not unjust;
He will not forget your work and
the love you have shown Him as
you have helped His people and
continue to help them.

Hebrews 6:10

Days 1-7 Reflection

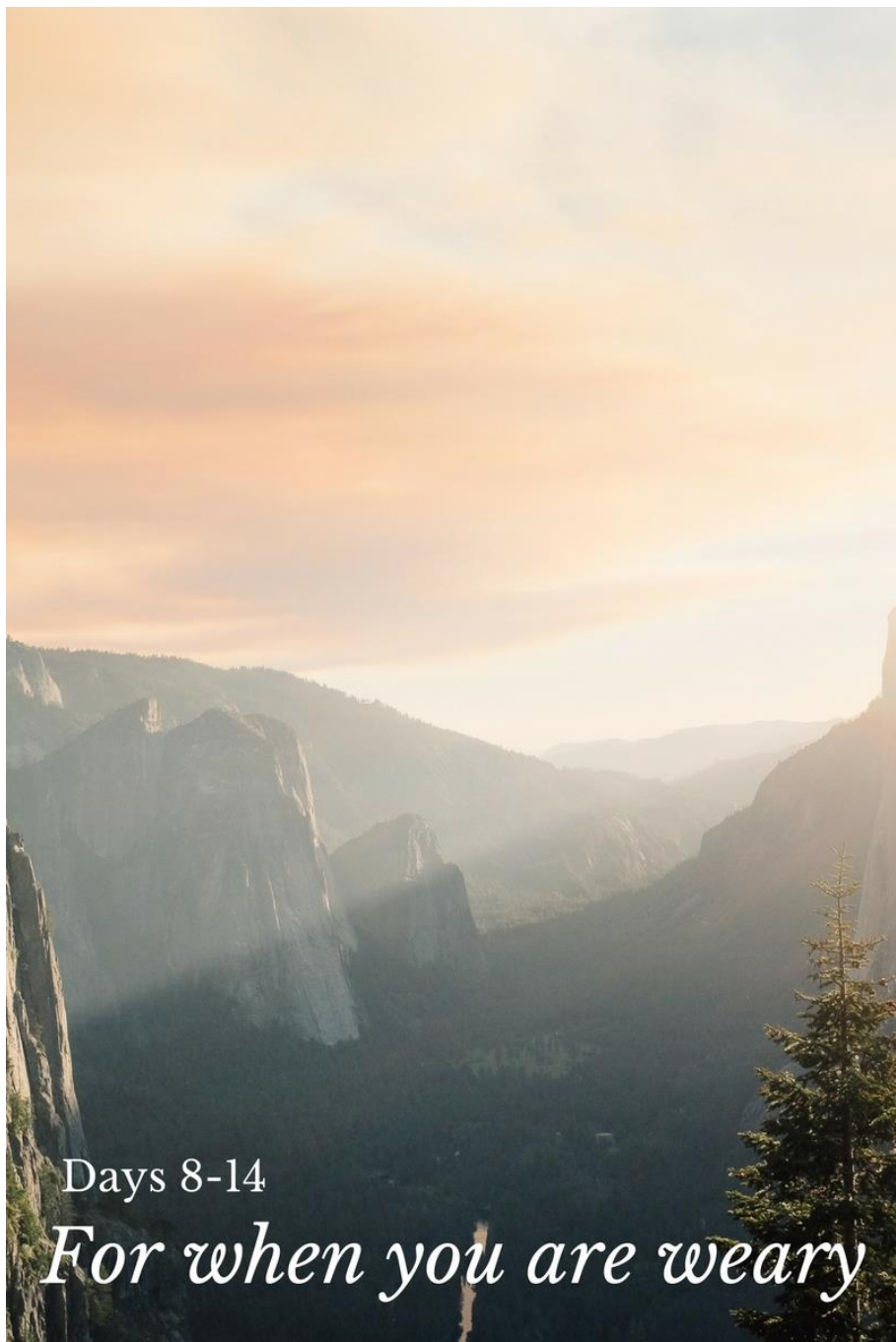
Songs for further meditation-

Overcomer- Mandisa

I Am Not Alone- Kari Jobe

Reflection

This week was all about encouragement. I hope you felt encouraged in new ways and renewed old ways. We all need encouragement from time to time. Based on this week's readings and prayers (in the space below) write a note for a caregiver in need of encouragement. This can be as simple as one sentence or it can be a paragraph. You can share this with a caregiver you know or use it as encouragement for yourself in the future.



Days 8-14

For when you are weary

Day 8

Caregiver burnout is seen in a person as exhaustion- physically, mentally, and emotionally. If you're feeling burnt-out and exhausted, I encourage you to recognize this and do something to pamper yourself. This might include getting a massage, reading your favorite book, buying some fresh flowers, or going for a hike. Find something relaxing and personal to you, and take an opportunity to do that this week. Your body and mind will thank you.

Below, you'll find a psalm. It can be used as a prayer for when you are weary or for when you simply can't find the right words to say. I hope that you are encouraged throughout this week and that you take time for yourself, because you deserve it.

Psalm 119:28

My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.

Day 9

Verse

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30

Thoughts

This verse can often be confusing to some. What is God’s yoke? How can it help me? A yoke is essentially a balance beam used to tie two oxen together so that the work is displaced evenly between the two. This way, one animal won’t have to carry too heavy of a load. In this same way, God wants *us* to take on His yoke. This is meant to take the stress of carrying our heavy burdens easier. It is meant to make our load lighter and more bearable.

When you feel overwhelmed by the weight of being a caregiver, let God carry the weight. His strength is enough for you- it will sustain you.

“Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.” Psalm 105:4

Day 10

Yesterday I talked about learning to lean on God and giving him your burdens. Today I urge you to also lean on your family and loved ones who support you. God places people in our lives for support and love, and he wants us to walk through life with them. Remember to stay connected to those who love and support you when you're struggling. The bond of a family will help you endure.

Ecclesiastes 4:12

“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

Day 11

Verses

“My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Exodus 33:14

“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”

Psalm 4:8

Thoughts

To be your best, it's important to get adequate rest and sleep. This will make you better-off overall and better prepared to take on your role as a caregiver. Remember to rest not only your body, but also your mind. Take time out of each day to relax and meditate if desired. You work hard, you deserve it.

Tip: Track your sleep for a week by writing down the amount of hours you're getting a night. You may find that you're getting less than you think.

“...he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.” Proverbs 11:25

Day 12

Verses

“He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.”

Isaiah 40:29

“The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.”

Psalms 29:11

Thoughts

What is so evident in these verses to me is that God gives strength. These verses don't include stipulations like “You must bring your best self” or “You must be care free when you come to me”. God simply requires that you come, asking for strength and mercy. This is so encouraging. We don't have to get our life together before we come to God. We bring our day and our struggles and allow Him to put it all together.

As a caregiver, don't rely entirely on your own strength. If you only rely on your strength, you may find yourself running on empty often. Trust in the One with overflowing strength, peace, and courage.

Day 13

Because I am encouraging you to rest this week, today I want you to do just this. You can either take a nap or lie down in meditation for 15-30 minutes. Refer to the relaxation and meditation tips at the beginning of the book if needed. Find a quiet space and let your mind unwind. Below, you can write some calming and/or energizing words that you can use to meditate on. You can also think of these words when you are feeling weary or worn out.

Day 14

Today, take time to meditate on this quote and picture below. Let your mind unwind and your body relax.



“I will lie down and sleep in
peace, for you alone, O Lord,
make me dwell in safety.”

Psalm 4:8

Days 8-14

Songs for further meditation-

Lord, I Need You - Chris Tomlin

Everyone Needs a Little- Kari Jobe

I Will Rest - City Harbor

Reflection

This week was all about when you are weary and tired. You may reach different points of exhaustion in your walk as a caregiver, but I hope you've found help throughout this week for when you are weary. Below, write some activities that you can do when you become overwhelmed and worn out. These should be personal to you. They can be quick like deep breathing or a longer activity like taking a nap or long walk.



DAYS 15-21

Joy that Sustains

Day 15

Quote

“Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see”

-Mark Twain

Thoughts

Know that your work is not done in vain and it never goes unnoticed. While the person you are caring for may not be able to verbally or physically display their thankfulness, know that they are. From time to time, remember to remind yourself of the good you're doing.

Day 16

Verse

“Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10

Thoughts

Sometimes I can get upset with little setbacks in my day. It seems that someday, when I'm a little more stressed, it doesn't take much for a small setback to take away my joy. Be refreshed that the joy of the Lord is not contingent upon happy circumstances or bad days. His joy can be called on in any circumstance.

Day 17

Verse

“He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy.”

Job 8:21

Thoughts

Laughter is such a wonderful thing, and has been shown to have numerous health benefits. Even fake laughter can make your day brighter and your mind happier. If willing, try smiling or laughing intentionally a couple times today. It may be difficult at first, but I think you'll find that it comes easier and more natural overtime.

Day 18

Verse

“Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.”

Psalm 84:10-12

Thoughts

To usher in joy today, imagine what it might be like to be in God’s house. What does that look like for you? Just knowing that we have this to look forward to already makes my perspective on life brighter. Jot down some words or descriptions below of what you believe God’s house might look like. Feel free to draw as well if you’d like.

Day 19

Today you will simply pray the beginning of Psalm 86 and ask the Lord to bring you joy.

Psalm 86:1-4

A prayer of David.

1 Hear me, Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.

2 Guard my life, for I am faithful to you;
save your servant who trusts in you.

You are my God;

3 have mercy on me, Lord,
for I call to you all day long.

4 Bring joy to your servant, Lord,
for I put my trust in you.

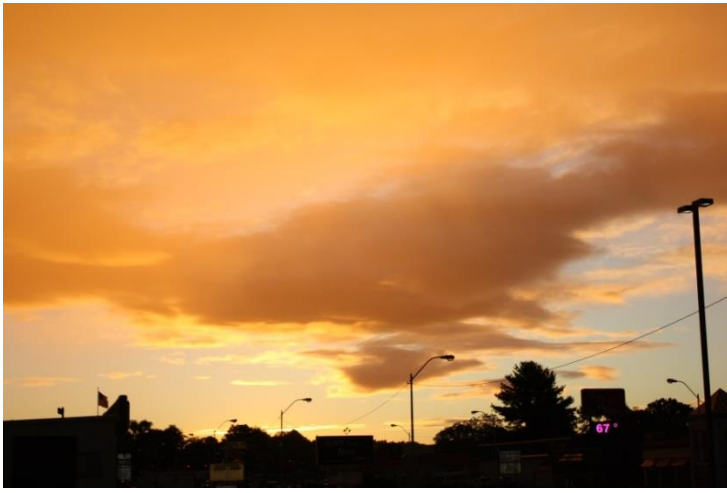
Day 20

Yesterday, we prayed part of Psalm 86 and asked God to give us joy. Today, write a prayer or a sentence or two of worship thanking God for a joy that sustains.

Day 21

The end of this week brings another chance to practice some meditation and deep breathing. Reflect upon your week and allow yourself to take a break from your role as a caregiver. If you need to refer back to the deep breathing and meditation tips, feel free to do so. It may take practice and time to fully allow your body to relax and unwind.

As you meditate, you're welcome to use the picture below to bring yourself to a place of peace and comfort.



Bring joy to your servant,
Lord, for I put my trust in you.
Psalm 86:4

Days 15-21


Songs for further meditation-

Better is One Day - Chris Tomlin

We Are Blessed - All Sons and Daughters

Reflection

Write down below a list of things that bring you joy. Along with this, write down things that you are thankful for. Remembering these things will remind you where your joy comes from and who you have to be thankful for it.

A vertical poster featuring a night sky with the Milky Way galaxy. A bright meteor streaks across the sky from the upper left towards the center. The text 'DAYS 22-28' is in the lower left, and 'The Future' is in a large white script font at the bottom. The bottom edge shows a dark silhouette of a horizon.

DAYS 22-28

The Future

Day 22

I like to say that taking care of yourself both mentally and physically is help for the now and prevention for the future. Just like this, God provides you with peace for the now and joy in the future.

As you continue your journey as a caregiver, remind yourself of what God has done for you in the past. This will only be a small bit of the wonderful things He has in store for your future.

Day 23

This world is not our home. We hear this so often referred to when people are in their last days, but what does it mean for you? Read this verse below.

“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

This world is in fact not our home, but the wonderful fact is that God has overcome the world. If you believe and trust in Him, your forever home will be amazing and unlike anything you could possibly imagine. So, take heart that on your bad days (and your good), the Lord has overcome the world. You have so much to look forward to.

Day 24

Verse

“But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

Isaiah 40:31

Thoughts

It's so easy to get caught up in our day to day struggles and forget about what lies ahead. As a caregiver, you can definitely be so busy that you may not be able to see ahead. In other words, the fog around you is hindering you from seeing the beautiful view. The future holds wonderful things for those who fight the good fight. In your quiet time today, imagine what it might look or feel like to ride on wings like eagles or to run and not be weary. It is certainly a renewed strength that we have to look forward to.

Day 25

Verse

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

2 Timothy 4:7

Thoughts

One key word in this verse is “kept”. It’s a small part with big meaning. Here it means “to guard” or “to attend carefully to”. Our faith is one that we should hold near and dear to our heart, especially when we go through tough times. I mention it here to remind you to guard your faith in the future. It will help you endure the harder days and nights. We must carefully hold on to it.

Day 26

Verse

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11

Thoughts

This is one of my favorite verses in the Bible. It reminds me that my circumstance is just one chapter in God’s plan for my story. It tells me that no matter what I am going through now, that my future includes hope. This is so important for us to hold on to. This being said, many people memorize this verse but don’t know the two verses that comes after. Jeremiah 29:12 & 13-

“Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart”

It is so important to read both of these together. God has a future and hope for us *and* He also will forever listen to us. He wants us to know that He is both here for us now and ahead of us in the future.

Day 27

Verse

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

Hebrews 11:1

Thoughts

Yesterday I discussed how God has a plan for our future. Today we see that faith is putting stock in that plan. While we can't see the days that lie ahead, we must be faithful in our loving Father who holds those days.

“I don't know what my future holds, but I do know who holds my future.”

-Tim Tebow

Day 28

Use the picture and scripture below to meditate on the future. If it helps, choose specific words to meditate on like “hopeful” or “bright”.



I lift up my eyes to the
mountains—where does my
help come from? My help
comes from the LORD, the
Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 121:2

Days 22-28

A song for further meditation-

Because He Lives (Amen) - Matt Maher

Reflection

I hope after this past week that you have a fresh and renewed hope for what lies ahead. Because this week was all about the future, write down below some things you have to look forward to in the next weeks, months, or years. Also, write out some things you'd *like* to do in the next couple months or year. Give yourself some dates you'd like to get things done by. This will give yourself something new and exciting to look forward to when you're having a rough day or week. These can be big or small- it's your list.

Day 29

Today you'll be making a collage. You can write out verses and/or quotes from the past 28 days that you desire to remember. You can also glue on pictures from magazines or your own personal pictures. This will be a good page to come back to if you need a little extra help or encouragement. If you have come across other verses from scripture or encouraging quotes, feel free to add those as well.

Day 30

As I have watched caregivers over the years and throughout my life, I have learned many things. One important lesson I have learned from caregivers is how to love wholeheartedly. I leave you on Day 30 with one of God's greatest commandments, because I believe caregivers show it best. Thank you for teaching me and others how to love in the most tangible way.

“The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.”

Mark 12:31

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

1 Corinthians 13:4-7