

MOMENTS OF

JOY



90 DAYS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR

PARENTS OF CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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To my husband, Marcus, and our beautiful family, whose love and support have been my anchor through seasons of life. I love you! Thank you for always believing in me when I didn't believe in myself.

To all the parents, caregivers, and families raising children with special needs. This book is for you. May it remind you of your strength, your resilience, and the boundless love that fuels your journey.



P R E F A C E

Dear Friend,

When my son Maison was born, the doctors told us he had several heart defects. I prayed fervently, asking others to join me in believing for a miracle—a normal heart. But when he arrived, his heart wasn't healed the way I had hoped. I remember the questions that flooded my mind: *Have I not been praying hard enough? Did I fail in some way? Is this my fault?* Those questions only grew louder when he was later diagnosed with autism, a new complication that was compounded by the ignorance and judgment of the outside world.

In my heartbreak and confusion, God showed me something extraordinary: My son was *perfect* just as he was. He reminded me that my child was created in His image, fearfully and wonderfully. Slowly, God helped me overcome the negative thoughts, the doubts, and the voices that tried to steal my joy. He gave me the strength to choose joy—every single day.

He will do the same for you.

If you're the parent of a special-needs child, you may

be feeling uncertain, overwhelmed, or frustrated. I want you to know that you don't have to go through it alone. I understand because I've walked this road too, but more importantly, Jesus understands. He sees you, hears your prayers, and walks alongside you, even on the hardest days. I pray that when you feel weary, unsure, or discouraged, the words in this devotional will give you strength, hope, and a reminder of the joy God offers even in the most challenging seasons.

Tag me at @momentsofjoypodcast as you read and post thoughts from this book. I'd love to know what's on your heart. There's a whole community of parents like us who truly get it. You are not alone.

With love and hope,

CAMILLE

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

—1 *Thessalonians* 5:16–18

My son has been enjoying watching YouTube and learning about different fruits. One day while sitting on the couch, he said, “Watermelon, grapefruit, strawberry!” I turned and said, “Wow, Maison! You sure are speaking a lot today!” He jumped up in joy and ran over to me. He began to say the words *orange, grape, peach, kiwi, blueberry,* and *dragon fruit!* I was blown away, and we both smiled from ear to ear in total excitement. I could tell that his little heart was filled with joy at seeing how his words made me happy. I was so excited because Maison is non-verbal and doesn't speak much on his own.

As parents raising children with special needs, we live with a lot of uncertainty. There are moments when we have doubts about the future—what it will look like for our kids and how we'll navigate all the coming challenges. We have breakdowns at times because the pressure to advocate and always make the right decision can be so great. Don't make permanent homes of those uncertainties and doubts. Give yourself permission to celebrate. Let

yourself smile and feel those positive emotions. Every good thing—however small or big—is worth rejoicing in.

Scripture encourages us to rejoice, pray, and give thanks in all circumstances. This can be challenging, but it's in these moments of gratitude that we find strength. Every glimpse of goodness reflects God's hand at work in our lives and in the lives of our children. Hold on to these glimpses of joy as reminders of the incredible love and resilience that exist within your family.



AFFIRMATION:

I give myself permission to celebrate
every single little milestone.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.

—*John 15:16*

When we see other families walking an easier road, it's hard not to wonder if we were truly meant for this calling. *Why me?* we say to ourselves and ask in our more honest prayers.

But here's the truth: You were chosen. Not by chance, not by mistake, but intentionally chosen by God to love, nurture, and guide your child. He knew the challenges you would face, and He also knew the incredible strength, resilience, and love He placed within you to meet them.

God doesn't call the qualified; He qualifies the called. Every day that you show up, whether through small victories or hard-fought battles, you're bearing fruit that will last—fruit of love, patience, and faith. Your journey may not look like everyone else's, but it is uniquely purposeful and divinely appointed.

When the road feels heavy and doubt creeps in, remind yourself of this: God doesn't make mistakes. You were chosen to be your child's parent because no one else could do it better. Lean into the Father for wisdom,

strength, and joy, and trust that His plan for you and your family is unfolding in ways greater than you can imagine.

AFFIRMATION:

I am chosen, equipped, and loved by God.
He has called me to this journey, and with
His strength, I can do all things.

LORD, be gracious to us;
we long for you.
Be our strength every morning,
our salvation in time of distress.
—*Isaiah 33:2*

While I was pregnant with my youngest son, Maison, I already had four boys and a total of sixteen years of parenting experience. I thought I knew everything there was to know about being a mom and raising children.

That was until I gave birth to a child in a separate category. Parenting a child with special needs is very different from raising a typical one. There have been times I felt like I was in the twilight zone. Day after day, we go through the same routine, not knowing if things will ever change. We don't know if the expected milestones will ever be reached. With typical children, we can be certain there is an expiration date for certain behavior, but with special-needs ones, that's not necessarily the case.

I've learned I can't walk the journey of being a special-needs parent in my own strength. And, thankfully, I don't have to. I've realized I don't need to have it all figured out.

Friend, God wants us to lean on Him. Even in parent-

ing. Especially in parenting. And that's what I decided to do. This means recognizing in the hardest moments that He is present, guiding and sustaining us. I lean on Him when the weight of advocacy feels too heavy, when exhaustion sets in, or when I fear for my child's future. Leaning on God looks like whispered prayers in the night when I'm so exhausted, trusting that He hears and cares. It looks like recalling Scripture and holding on to its truths. Leaning on Him is remembering that it's okay that I don't have all the answers, because He does. We lean on God when we find comfort in His promises in the times we feel alone and when we hold on to faith in the times it seems nobody understands.

In our moments of weakness, we can experience His strength in profound ways. His power is made perfect in our weakness.



AFFIRMATION:

In my moments of weakness, I will not forget to lean on Christ. His grace is sufficient for me.