

## Introduction

Warm greetings to each of you embarking on this journey through the pages of *Walking with God Through Cancer: A 40-Day Devotional*. I welcome you to this devotional sanctuary with a heart filled with hope, faith, and a deep desire to extend grace.

The title, *Walking with God Through Cancer: A 40-Day Devotional*, encapsulates what I wish to share with you: what we discover when we walk daily with God, particularly through the tumultuous cancer journey. As someone intimately acquainted with the challenges of stage 4 cancer and second cancer, I extend my hand to you, fellow traveler, with the assurance that God's grace is not a distant concept but rather a tangible, transformative force that can carry us through life's roughest seas. This devotional is not just a collection of words, but a labor of love, faith, and vulnerability. It is an invitation to walk together, to find comfort in shared reflections, and to discover the threads of God's grace, love, presence, comfort, and peace woven through each of our stories.

Before we dive into the heart of these reflections, allow me to share a glimpse of my journey, an ongoing testament to His sustaining grace. In the summer of 2019, my life took an unexpected turn when I received a stage 4 cancer diagnosis. Amid the initial shock and the following whirlwind of emotions, I grappled with fear, uncertainty, and a profound sense of vulnerability. But in this storm, I heard God's fresh whispers of grace.

Then, in 2024, my oncologist told me I had B-cell lymphoma. This means I'm now, today, fighting two different cancers with two different types of treatment. But again, despite my fears, I have heard God's voice. God has demonstrated His grace to me in unexpected moments—during sleepless nights, through the unwavering support of loved ones, and in the courage He's given me to face each day with renewed hope. The more I studied the Bible and prayed, the more apparent it became that grace isn't the absence of obstacles on the path, but the sturdy walking stick that steadies me within its tumult. This devotional is an offering from these sacred, personal encounters with God's open arms of love, grace, and peace.

As you turn these pages, envision them as a haven where faith meets the reality of the cancer journey. Each reflection is a stepping stone, a gentle guide beckoning you to find grace in your storm. I cannot offer easy answers or quick fixes, but I can accompany you on the

path of discovery and illuminate the way with the light of faith and resilience.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE DEVOTIONAL**

The devotional is a pilgrimage—a journey of 40 reflections, each pertaining to the unique challenges, questions, and emotions accompanying the cancer journey. The path is not linear but a weaving narrative, mirroring the ebb and flow of life with cancer.

### *Days 1–5: Discovering the Anchor of Grace*

Our voyage begins with exploring the anchor that grounds us—God’s grace. Discover how His grace stabilizes us in the face of uncertainty and fear.

### *Days 6–10: Seasons of Change*

The journey unfolds with reflections on navigating the unknown waters of diagnosis, treatment, and the myriad emotions that arise. Find encouragement in the assurance that you are not alone.

### *Days 11–15: Seeing Strength in Vulnerability*

Vulnerability is not a weakness, but a source of strength. Explore how vulnerability opens the door to healing and a more fulfilling connection with the Lord.

***Days 16–20: Embracing Moments of Joy***

Within the storm, pockets of joy are waiting to be embraced. Delve into reflections that invite you to savor and celebrate moments of grace-filled joy.

***Days 21–25: Finding Purpose in the Journey***

Explore the profound question of purpose during illness. Uncover how this journey, despite its challenges, holds the potential for God's plans and purposes to be realized.

***Days 26–30: Celebrating Small Victories***

Focus on acknowledging and celebrating even the smallest triumphs. Seeking out others' inspirational stories of overcoming challenges can enable the recognition of your own victories.

***Day 31–35: Trusting in God's Timing***

Reflect on the significance of patience, trusting in God's timing and finding hope amid waiting as you lean on God's promises of renewed strength.

***Day 36–40: Welcoming Endurance and Hope***

Be encouraged to build character and hope through the cancer journey with reflections on the importance of hope as we strive to navigate the complex nature of this disease.

### *Closing Thoughts: Moving Forward*

Be reminded and heartened through a summary of key lessons and insights gained from our time together.

As you embark on this journey, remember that you are not merely a reader; you are a fellow pilgrim. May these reflections be a balm to your soul, a source of inspiration, and a testament to the enduring grace accompanying you on your unique path.

As you read these pages, I ask you to commit to journaling as part of your daily devotional time. Keeping track of your thoughts will help you pour out your heart to the Lord and hear from Him. This exercise will enable you to revisit and review God's plan, purpose, and presence in your life, even amid chaos and uncertainty.

When the storms of life overwhelm, we may join with the words of the psalmist: "Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings" (Psalm 61:4 ESV). May this devotional be a sanctuary, a refuge, as you navigate the path that's before you.

With love, grace, and unwavering hope,

*Wayne Hastings*



## PART ONE

# *Discovering the Anchor of Grace*

*Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious  
God. There we will receive his mercy, and we  
will find grace to help us when we need it most.*

**HEBREWS 4:16 NLT**



## *Grace Through Faith*

The word *grace* is beautiful. It's an expression of God's character and His interaction with us. The Hebrew Bible uses the word *chesed*, which means "grace, mercy, steadfast love, compassion."<sup>1</sup>

The New Testament holds several beautiful instances in which we witness God's *chesed*. In one noteworthy example in John 5, Jesus finds a man lying beside a healing pool, waiting for his chance for healing. The pool is called *Beit Chesed* in Hebrew, or *Bethzatha* in Aramaic, meaning "House of Loving-Kindness or Grace." Moved by compassion, Jesus heals the man instantly, demonstrating God's grace in action. This scene is a powerful reminder of God's limitless love and mercy toward us.

Later in the book of John, we find another instance of Jesus's kindness and compassion. In John 21, the disciples return to their old fishing profession, perhaps out

of perplexity and anxiety over what had happened just a few days before. However, despite their efforts, they catch no fish. (Interestingly, the Hebrew word for fish is *dag*, which shares the same root as the Hebrew word for fear and anxiety.) This illustration reminds us that our efforts may result in empty nets when we operate from a place of fear. Jesus stands on the shore, but the disciples do not recognize Him:

Then Jesus said to them, “Children, have you any food?” They answered Him, “No.” And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So, they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish (John 21:5-6).

In Jewish thought, the left side is the side of severity and strict judgment. We can learn from this interaction that our nets will be empty when we live in a place of criticism and severity. But conversely in Judaism, the right side is the side of *chesed*, meaning God’s loving-kindness, benevolence, and covenantal love. Nets fortified with love and *chesed*, God’s grace, are abundantly supplied and enduring.

These two stories have relevance for those of us who are struggling with cancer or know someone who is. First, the man lying at the pool was just waiting for the next miracle. The man wanted Jesus to see things *his* way. Instead, Jesus told him to get up and walk, then told him to move on and live his life. Today, we face significant challenges as we endure this disease, but are we ready to accept God's *chesed*? Sure, choosing to rely on His power can be difficult; but God's presence, loving-kindness, and grace must be our focus. We may stumble, but we must keep our eyes on His *chesed* for us.

The disciples were living out of fear and anxiety—the left side of the boat. Jesus turned their focus to the right side—the side of His grace and full nets. This helps us understand that despite this disease, we can live with abundance because of God's grace. He loves us and wants our best. We can't outrun His grace. It transforms us from self-centered people into God-focused followers.

### **A CLOSING THOUGHT**

David wrote in Psalm 86:15, "But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and

filled with unfailing love and faithfulness” (NLT). Pastor David Platt said while teaching on this psalm,

Based on who God had revealed himself to be through his words, David had not given up hope.<sup>2</sup>

David, despite difficult circumstances, didn't give up hope. Why? He believed in and clung to God's grace and loving-kindness.

## REFLECTION

Take a moment and read Psalm 86, focusing mainly on verses 10-16.

- Under challenging circumstances, where did David turn?
- How would you describe David's attitude toward God's grace (*chesed*)?
- How would you describe your feelings about God's grace?
- Have you chosen to receive His grace to help you navigate the many challenges of this disease?

- How has any assistance you've received helped you to feel God's grace?

Now read Exodus 34:6-7. In your journal, make a list of the 13 qualities of God's mercy.

- What do these qualities tell you about God?
- How can these qualities help you better understand who God is and relate to His posture of grace and kindness?