



## **The God of all Comfort: Devotions of hope for those who chronically suffer**

By Judy Gann

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### **Strength for the Journey**

*Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

(Ps. 73:25, 26)

The mysterious illness sucked Marilyn's strength and vitality like a vacuum. Weakness infiltrated her body. Stripped of her usual good health, Marilyn no longer possessed the energy or the desire to fulfill the demands of her ministry. Discouragement and fear took root deep within her heart as Marilyn's life journey took an unwelcome turn.

Illness saps not only our physical strength, but also our spiritual and emotional energy. Depleted of all reserves, we become feeble in heart as well as body. Where can we find strength for the journey when our meager wells of energy have run dry?

Strength is not something we can manufacture, purchase, or ingest like a pill. It is a gift from God. His strength often comes wrapped in the packages of weakness and pain. It arrives when our own strength fails—when we've exhausted all other sources.

We tap into God's strength when we recognize our dependency on him. Sometimes God brings us to the end of our own puny strength so we will rely on his power. We can rest and relax in him, knowing that he is the one source of strength that never fails us.

God, in his wisdom, does not always supply physical strength for our journey. Instead he imparts the strength to persevere—to stand firm in the midst of difficult circumstances. This gift of endurance is the most potent strength of all.

The journey of chronic illness is long and treacherous. It demands every ounce of physical, emotional, and spiritual strength we can muster. At times our "flesh" and our "hearts" will fail. But as we draw on God's strength, he will meet our needs—every step of the journey.

*Lord, sometimes I feel so weak and my journey seems so long. Thank you for the gift of your strength that will never fail.*

*"You were wearied by all your ways, but you would not say, 'It is hopeless.' You found renewal of your strength, and so you did not faint." (Isa. 57:10)*

## Tents Are Temporary

*Now we know that if the early tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile, we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling. (2 Cor. 5:1, 2)*

Dark angry clouds churned beyond the reach of the towering redwood trees. As we drew close to the lake, raindrops splashed on the windshield of the car. Flashes of lightning lit up the sky. The first clap of thunder exploded in our ears, forcing us to return to our campsite along the river. Our swim would have to wait for another day.

Back at camp, we sought refuge inside our tent. The howling wind shook the tent as rain beat a brisk staccato against the canvas. Hailstones hammered on the tent, overpowering the noise of the wind and rain. Something wet struck my back. I glanced behind me just in time to see another golf ball-sized hailstone puncture the side of our tent. Soon the tent was peppered with holes. Water flooded the floor.

Still dressed in our bathing suits, we used bowls, pans, and a bucket in a futile attempt to bail water out of the tent. It was no use. Our tent was ruined.

Many times my body reminds me of that flimsy tent. Just when one symptom abates, another pelts my body. Weakness and pain tear the canvas of my feeble frame. This body was *not* made to last.

How I rejoice in God's promise that my physical body is temporary! One day I'll exchange this "perishable" earthly body for a heavenly "imperishable" one (1 Cor. 15:42-44)—a body designed for heaven and made to last forever.

The true nature of our heavenly bodies is one of God's special mysteries—a surprise awaiting us in heaven. But even in my finite mind I picture strong, healthy bodies. No aching joints. No need for endless hours of rest. We'll walk and run—free from the hindrances of disease.

Best of all, Christ will "transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (Phil. 3:21). Just imagine, we will bear of likeness of Christ. Our new forms will be perfectly fit for heaven.

Here on earth we groan as illness assaults our flawed tents. But one day, our pain will end. We will shed these frail bodies. Until then, remember—tents are only temporary.

*Lord, thank you for the promise that one day I will trade my imperfect body for a glorious heavenly one. Help me to be patient as I eagerly await my new home.*

"He [Paul] knew that death was simply taking down the tent and moving into glorious new quarters."  
Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bumps Are What You Climb On*

For more information on this book, and additional resources for those battling chronic illness,  
visit [www.JudyGann.com](http://www.JudyGann.com)