

When we are ill

an article by Doug Schoen

Does God know I am here?

Yes, absolutely!

Illness can be challenging. Whether you're here through pre-planning or by emergency, you may be quite uncomfortable, emotionally-fragile, frustrated or fearful. The Holy Spirit will help you find calm in the midst of this uncertainty. These days can become opportunities to review the wonder of life and the depth of your relationship with the Life-Giver and Healer, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember:

- You are fearfully and wonderfully made.

“You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it.” (*Psalm 139:13-14)

- But times of pain can be overwhelming.

“Night pierces my bones; my gnawing pains never rest. ... I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.” (Job 3:17, 26) “My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body.” (Psalm 38:7)

- Ask the Lord for healing. Also ask for patience and strength in the healing process.

“Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to You, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.” (Psalm 61:1-2)

“Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure ...” (Psalm 16:9)

“Satan’s main strategy with God’s people has always been to whisper, “Don’t call, don’t ask, don’t depend on God to do great things.” (Jim Cymbala)

Do you wonder, “How long must this go on?”

“O LORD, how long will You forget me? Forever? How long will You look the other way? How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day?” (*Psalm 13:1-2)

- Even when pain seems relentless, God is with you.

“But now, this is what the LORD says—He who created you ... He who formed you: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior ... you are precious and honored in My sight ... I love you” (Isaiah 43:1-4)

“God does not treasure galaxies. He treasures people, especially redeemed people, rescued from sin at the price of blood. Once it dawns on you that you are infinitely precious to God, your own outlook on life will change. You will feel different about yourself, will hold your head higher without ceasing to be humble. You will find it easier to enter God’s presence.” (John White)

- The Lord is working in your body. Though His intervention may seem slow or unrecognizable, it is certain and totally dependable.

“Praise the LORD, I tell myself; with my whole heart, I will praise His holy name. Praise the LORD, I tell myself, and never forget the good things He does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He ransoms me from death and surrounds me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle’s!” (*Psalm 103:1-5)

- Our heavenly Father acts according to His inscrutably perfect timetable, faultless wisdom and exquisite love. Anticipate a sense of peace which only the Holy Spirit can bring to you in this situation.

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. If you do this, you will experience God’s peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” (*Philippians 4:6-7)

“You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You.” (Isaiah 26:3)

“As one can be a sick person with a body that works well, so one can be a healthy person with a body that is a wreck, even a mass of pain. The secret is to accept one’s lack of physical well-being as being from God, to offer it back to Him to make what He can of it for His own praise, and to ask Him to keep you sweet, steady and patient as you live with it. ... So while bodily wellness is important, wellness of soul is more important. Personal health has more to do with one’s mindset than with the way one’s limbs and organs are functioning at any particular time.” (J. I. Packer)

While I am incapacitated, what can I do with my time?

- Thank God for this opportunity to be still. Thank Him for time to think about life and relationships.
- Read Scripture (in short segments).

“Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

“God is seeking people who will lay hold of the living power in His Word, who with childlike trust will expect His mightiness.” (Jack Hayford)

- Pray... for whomever or whatever the Lord brings to mind.

Especially...

Thank God for family and friends who are “keeping things going” at home (perhaps unexpectedly), and who will assist during your recuperation.

“Suffering is not good in itself. What is good in any painful experience is, for the sufferer, his submission to the will of God, and, for the spectators, the compassion aroused and the acts of mercy to which it leads.” (C. S. Lewis)

Thank Him for this medical facility where you are being skillfully cared for.

Thank the Lord for each person who is compassionately attending to you.

Thank Him for visitors who love you enough to come.

“A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.” (Proverbs 15:30)

- Take great confidence in God’s plan for your life. Thank Him for what lies ahead.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

“Whenever anyone asks my theology of healing, I tell them very simply, “We do the praying and God does the healing—in His own time, in His own way, according to His own will.” (Ray Pritchard)

- In the future, use your experience to help others.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

“Am I glad these bad things happened to me? No. But I do realize they have helped make me the person I am today. I can be a true friend to others. I can offer a safe place for other people going through tough times.” (Philip Yancey)

[Most Bible quotations are from the New International Version. Scripture marked by * is from the New Living Translation.]

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