



THE ONE YEAR<sup>®</sup>

BOOK *of* HOPE

DEVOTIONAL

DAILY BIBLICAL COMFORT FOR WHEN LIFE HURTS

NANCY GUTHRIE

THE ONE YEAR® BOOK OF HOPE DEVOTIONAL





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**NANCY GUTHRIE**

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*The One Year Book of Hope Devotional: Daily Biblical Comfort for When Life Hurts*

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*Comfort is the one thing you cannot get by looking for it.  
If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end:  
if you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth—  
only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin with and, in the end, despair.*

C. S. LEWIS, MERE CHRISTIANITY



## DEDICATION

With profound gratitude, I dedicate this book to three of the people who have faithfully taught me the Scriptures. You planted the seeds that have blossomed into this book.

*Dr. James Walters*, my Bible professor at John Brown University, my guide and companion in the fellowship of tears—  
You sent me on a search for the glory of God, a journey I'm still on, a destination I'm still longing for. You opened my eyes to the adventure of searching the Scriptures, the gain from wrestling with its implications, the joys and sorrows of an authentic life.

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Friends who know I've worked in publishing for many years assume that I understand grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and all those pesky details required for communicating well, and that I should therefore be of great help to Matt with his homework. My editors at Tyndale—Stephanie Voiland and Lisa Jackson—know better. Thanks for all the valuable input, careful editing, and gentle nudges to do better. And thank you to Jan Long Harris and Doug Knox for coming up with the idea for this book over lunch and asking me to do it. I am privileged to have you and the rest of the Tyndale team in my corner.

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## INTRODUCTION

My friend, I don't know what may be causing you pain—it might be a broken relationship, a difficult diagnosis, a devastating disappointment, a death. It may stem from a sudden loss that changed everything about your life in an instant, or an ongoing situation that is wearing on you like a steady drip. It may be something that happened long ago but is still leaving its achy fingerprints on your heart, or a steady series of lesser hurts that just don't seem to heal. I want you to know that I would never presume to say that I know how you feel. I don't. Nobody can. But I do know what it is like to hurt. And I know where to find comfort when there are no words for the pain. I know because I've been on that search too, looking for answers to my questions, hope for the future, and companionship for the journey. I can't say that I've found *all* the answers. But I can say that I've found some, and I've chosen to embrace the Source for the answers to all the questions that taunt us in the midst of tears and keep us awake in the night.

Would you join me in pursuing him throughout the coming year in the midst of our pain?

### *When Hurt Invaded My Life*

While you'll find snippets of my story throughout the devotions in this book, I want to share a bit of it with you before we begin our journey together. But honestly, I'm a bit hesitant to do so. I recognize that my pain is not especially unique or noteworthy. I'm well aware that many people have suffered in more significant and ongoing ways than I have. I share my background with you only so you will know that while I may not completely understand your suffering, I've tasted some myself—hopefully enough that you will see me as a worthy companion for the weeks and months ahead as we look for truth to comfort our pain together.

On the day that we had anticipated would be one of our most joyful experiences, hurt invaded my otherwise happy existence. That day in November 1998, my husband, David, and I, along with our son, Matt, welcomed our daughter, Hope, into this world. David saw the obstetrician and nurse exchange knowing glances shortly after Hope was born, but I was too oblivious to notice, too relieved to have had a successful birth, too overjoyed in holding my beautiful daughter that I had wanted for so long.

“She has club feet, but that is easily fixable,” the doctor said. “You're going to want to have the pediatrician look her over, but don't worry, it's not Down's or anything like that.”

That night our pediatrician came to our room with a list in his hand of all the “little things” wrong with Hope. She had club feet; she was lethargic and unresponsive; she had a large soft spot, extra skin on her neck, and a flat chin. She wouldn’t suck and wouldn’t hold her temperature. “When we see a number of small problems, they often add up to something bigger,” he said.

The next day a pediatric orthopedist put casts on both of Hope’s feet, and a geneticist examined her. He entered our room with another doctor, and with a grim look on his face, he shut the door. He explained that he suspected Hope had a rare metabolic disorder called Zellweger Syndrome—something we had never heard of—which meant that she was missing subcellular particles called peroxisomes that do the work of removing long-chain fatty acids from the cells. He explained that without peroxisomes, the long-chain fatty acids build up and become toxic, that there is no treatment and no cure, and that most children with the syndrome live less than six months.

He handed us two pages copied from a medical textbook that detailed in very medical language everything that is wrong in the body of a child with Zellweger Syndrome—including severe brain damage, the inability to see or hear, internal bleeding, and seizures. It described what these children’s lives and deaths are like and featured postmortem photos of babies with Zellweger. I couldn’t read it for about five days. It was too much reality for me, too overwhelming to take in.

After a week of learning to feed Hope with a tube we inserted down her throat, and after a battery of tests that seemed to reinforce the diagnosis of Zellweger Syndrome, we took Hope home. It wasn’t the homecoming I had anticipated. I knew I was bringing Hope home to die. And I was afraid of what it would be like for her—and for me.

Over the six months God gave us with Hope, we focused on keeping her comfortable and on enjoying her to the fullest. The reality was that her first day was her best and she was on a steady decline. She likely could not see or hear, and she developed seizures that were difficult to keep under control. But honestly, I tried not to despair as things got worse every day, because I didn’t know how much worse they were going to get and I knew I couldn’t afford to fall apart yet. And I didn’t want to spend her life grieving her death.

Hope slept in our room throughout her life. One night, David got up in the middle of the night to check on her and she was cold to the touch. “She’s gone,” he whispered to me. Though we had shed our share of tears during her life, and while I was hopeful that those tears would lighten my load of grief after her death, it didn’t seem to work that way. In the months that followed Hope’s death, I felt empty and disappointed, lonely and sad.

It seems to me that most losses aren’t just one loss, but a series of losses. For a while I grieved Hope’s death. Then I grieved her limited life. Then I grieved our loss of potential.

You see, to have a child with Zellweger requires that both parents be carriers of the recessive gene trait for the syndrome. So after we had Hope, David and I knew that we are both carriers and that any child of ours would have a 25 percent chance of having the fatal syndrome. Matt had hit those 75 percent healthy odds, but Hope had not. So we faced a

decision: Should we take the chance of having another child? We decided that we simply couldn't risk putting Matt and our family and friends through such a difficult ordeal again. So David had a vasectomy.

Evidently it didn't work.

A year and a half after Hope died, we discovered that I was pregnant. We were shocked, to put it mildly. But we weren't just shocked. We were afraid. We still felt battered by the last storm, and suddenly another one was headed in our direction.

We kept the news mostly to ourselves until we could get the results of prenatal testing. Then the day came when the doctor called with the test results—positive for Zellweger Syndrome. We then knew we would welcome a second child with Zellweger Syndrome into our family, that we would love and lose another child.

It was the same but different, if that makes sense. It was strange to spend nine months carrying a child we knew would have a short and difficult life, strange to figure out how to respond to the well-wishes and comments of people we didn't know, strange to plan for both life and death.

Gabriel was born on July 16, 2001. We thought he would be with us longer than Hope because he seemed a little bit stronger than Hope was. But in fact, he was with us a few days less. And once again, we were back to a family of three, feeling the loss.

In the days and weeks ahead, I'll share more of our experiences with Hope and Gabriel. It is only natural because it is the context in which so much of Scripture has come alive with meaning for me. And while I hope what I share helps you in your own journey, I want you to know that it is *your* pain I have had in the forefront of my mind as I have written these daily devotions. Of course, I can't know the specifics of every person who picks up this book, but in some sense, pain is pain—emotional, physical, or relational. And while my story takes up much of the ink in this book, it is your story that has prompted me to write, your loss that is heavy on my heart. My words here are wasted if your hurt does not find healing as you apply God's Word to your life.

### *Manna from Heaven*

I'll never forget standing in my kitchen with my sister-in-law, Caroline, after Hope's memorial service. "How do you do this?" I asked her, wondering how I would get through that day and keep facing the days to come. Caroline knew what it was like to bury someone she loved. Before my brother came into her life, she had dealt with the devastating loss of her first husband when he was killed in a car accident two weeks after they got married. Her answer to my desperate question was simple: "Manna."

She explained that just as the children of Israel were dependent on God to provide manna to sustain them every day while they wandered in the wilderness, I had to depend on God to give me the manna I needed every day to sustain me as I grieved my loss. After she left, I found a note from her taped to my mirror that read, "Don't forget the manna." I kept it there a very long time. (I'm still grateful for those wise words, Caroline.)

She was right. Manna is what I needed. Every day. I needed the nourishment that

comes from the hand of God, the words of truth that come from the mouth of God. In fact, I was desperate for it to soothe my emptiness and give me the strength to keep getting up in the morning. I discovered that nothing else really satisfies or soothes our suffering except the Word of God. Revenge, ritual, and retreat are all short-term solutions that bring no lasting comfort.

And the thing about the manna God provided to the Israelites was that they couldn't store it up. They needed a fresh supply every day—and so do we. Every day we need a fresh touch, a fresh word to nourish us and sustain us. Yesterday's manna, yesterday's insights may inform us, but every day we need something new to keep us moving forward toward healing.

## HOW TO USE *THE ONE YEAR BOOK OF HOPE DEVOTIONAL*

Processing pain and embracing its lessons are daily endeavors. Every day we need a little more light to illumine our darkness. That's what I want this book to be for you—a daily dose of truth and comfort.

Daily is a good thing. Just as you can't eat enough food in one meal to last all week, you need a spiritual meal each day if you want to walk through each day in a transforming awareness of God. This book is designed to feed your hurting soul a little bit every day and give you something to chew on throughout each day. I've picked fifty-two themes—one for each week of the coming year—that have been especially meaningful to me in my grief and questions. If you choose to use it this way, there are devotions for each day of the week, Monday through Friday, and a guide for reflection, meditation, and prayer for the weekend.

But you may decide you want to sit down with this book once a week or occasionally and read through a week's worth of devotions on a particular theme and then spend time in prayer and reflection about what you've read. That's fine too.

The goal is for you to use this book as a resource over the coming year for insight and healing. If you're like me, if you think you have to keep up with assignments, you are tempted to quit when you get behind rather than feel like a failure. That's why I haven't used days of the week or dates in the book. I don't want you to feel guilty when a day or a week goes by that you don't get to it. I just want to welcome you back when you can open it again and pick up where we left off.

Each day's devotion includes a "Digging Deeper" question that will take you into God's Word for yourself. I think you will find that the treasures hidden there are worth your extra effort and a few minutes of extra study.

At the end of each week, there are some questions for reflection as well as a guide to meditation and prayer. You may want to write out your answers to these questions in a journal or notebook, which will help you clarify your thoughts and determine your response to the truth you've read. The guide to meditation and prayer will help you focus on God's Word when it is hard to concentrate. It will help you pray when it's hard to find focus in prayer. You may have never developed a habit of private meditation and prayer before, and if so, spending the next year using this book as your guide will help you solidify this nourishing and restful practice in your life.

I've ordered the weeks in a way that I think makes sense for someone who is working

through loss, but you may choose to go in a different order, following the themes that seem to meet your most urgent need. Feel free to skip around if that is your preference, working your way through all fifty-two weeks.

Just as no one can tell you exactly what path your grief will take you on or give you a timetable for feeling better, no one can determine the pace at which you are able to ingest the truth that will bring healing. But I encourage you to give it a try on a regular basis, even when you “don’t feel like it” — perhaps especially when you don’t feel like it.

I hope your hunger to hear from God in the midst of your pain will keep you coming back to him every day through the pages of *The One Year Book of Hope*. And while my prayer is that my words may add to your understanding of the Scriptures and provide companionship to you, I know it is only God’s Word that satisfies and soothes. His Word is life. My words have nourishing power only as far as they capture and convey the truth of God’s Word. I will be truly satisfied if they instill in you a hunger to search out more of God’s Word for yourself.

I feel honored to be your companion during this tender time in your life, and I am eager to get started. There is so much I want to share with you in the days ahead that I believe will truly make a difference in your pain. There’s hope and comfort to be found. What a privilege to discover it together.

## WEEK 1



# BROKENHEARTED

Brokenhearted. Crushed in spirit. Does that describe the state of your soul? Are you wondering if you will ever feel good again, ever feel hope again? Are you desperate to find a salve to sooth the searing emotional or physical pain that has invaded your existence?

Your feelings may tell you that God is very far away from you right now. But the reality is that he is drawn to you. If you have invited God into your life, he is especially near to you now because you need him so desperately.

You may feel that no one wants to be around you. Deep down we know that it is not a lot of fun to be with someone who is sad. But God loves brokenhearted people. He doesn't avoid them. He is closer to you now than ever, waiting to talk with you, comfort you, and offer you hope and healing as you face the future.

### THIS WEEK'S PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION

*The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those who are crushed in spirit.*

—PSALM 34:18

## TELLING YOURSELF THE TRUTH

I WEEP WITH GRIEF; ENCOURAGE ME BY YOUR WORD. KEEP ME FROM LYING TO MYSELF;  
GIVE ME THE PRIVILEGE OF KNOWING YOUR LAW. I HAVE CHOSEN TO BE FAITHFUL;  
I HAVE DETERMINED TO LIVE BY YOUR LAWS. —PSALM 119:28-30



When we are hurting, it seems like everyone wants to fix us. And advice is often free-flowing. Well-meaning friends and family tell us what to do and how to feel, only adding to our confusion. And then there's the voice inside our own minds speaking to us too. Oh, the painful thoughts that go through our heads when the hurt is deep! *I will never be able to be happy again. My life is over. I will be alone forever. God must not love me. God must be punishing me. I am such a failure.*

The psalmist must have recognized this voice and realized it is a voice that cannot be trusted. "Keep me from lying to myself," he said. In the midst of personal pain, he was desperate to hear the truth and live by the truth. He knew that emotions lie to us and people mislead us, but God's Word speaks the truth we are desperate for, even as we weep with grief.

So how do we keep from lying to ourselves in the midst of pain? Instead of believing the voice inside us that says, "God must not care about me," we gaze upon the God we see throughout Scripture who lovingly cares for his own. Even when our feelings tell us, "I will never feel good again," we hold tightly to the truth that God "heals the broken-hearted, binding up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

Am I talking about denying real feelings by quoting quips and clichés? Not at all. Honestly, I resent it when someone seems to pat me on the head with a Bible verse in a way that seems to devalue my genuine hurt and dismiss my deep questions. I'm talking about confronting our very real fears, feelings, and thoughts with scriptural truth. I'm talking about digging deep in God's Word to figure out who he is and what his purposes are in the world and in our lives. Truth soothes our fears, changes our feelings, and shapes our thoughts. The truth is what we need most when the hurt is the deepest. Would you walk through the Scripture with me over the year ahead in search of truth to soothe your soul?

*My Source for what is true, I desperately need the encouragement that I know can only come from your Word. Open my eyes to the truths that can dispel the doubt and discouragement I feel from the lies I have listened to.*

### DIGGING DEEPER

Read as much of Psalm 119 as you have time for, noting the benefits of studying and knowing God's Word when you're hurting. What does the psalmist ask God for that you also want to ask of God?

# YOUR TEARS MATTER TO GOD

YOU KEEP TRACK OF ALL MY SORROWS. YOU HAVE COLLECTED ALL MY TEARS IN YOUR BOTTLE. YOU HAVE RECORDED EACH ONE IN YOUR BOOK. —PSALM 56:8



I remember going up to the cosmetics counter a few weeks after my daughter, Hope, died and asking if the mascara I was considering would run down my face when I cried. The salesperson assured me it wouldn't and then asked with a laugh in her voice, "Are you going to be crying?"

"Yes," I answered. "I am." And I have. I used to rarely cry, but now tears are always close to the surface, just waiting to be released. It is as if there is a broken place inside me where tears are stored. Letting them out has been the only way to release the pressure of the pain.

Along with relief, there is also the uncomfortable loss of control that is a companion to tears, isn't there? Some see tears not only as a loss of control but also as a lack of faith. It is as if the physical manifestation of tears gives evidence of a spiritual deficiency—that if our faith was big enough or deep enough or developed enough, we simply wouldn't be this sad. It is as if we think our grasp of spiritual realities can erase the hurts of being human. But when you've lost something or someone who is valuable to you, when you have been forced to let go of a dream or live within a nightmare—that is something to be sad about. So let yourself be sad.

And know that God does not discount or dismiss your tears. They are precious to him because you are precious to him. In fact, when God reveals glimpses of the culmination of human history—in a future that will fully reveal and be fully worthy of his glory—he includes, as a centerpiece, this promise in Isaiah 25:8: "The Sovereign LORD will wipe away all tears." Picture in your mind right now the Lord of the universe reaching down to gently and lovingly wipe away your tears. He doesn't ignore them or tell you that if you really had faith you wouldn't cry. He wipes them away. And Revelation 21:4 tells us that not only will he wipe away tears, he will remove all of the sorrow that caused them. God's plan for the future is to destroy forever the evil that has brought you so much pain and then to live forever with you in a place he has lovingly prepared where there will be no more tears.

*My Tear Collector, sometimes you seem so far away, it's hard for me to grasp that you are sad with me. Give me the faith to see you now beside me and to see a future in which your hand will wipe away my tears forever.*

## DIGGING DEEPER

Read Psalm 56. Make a list of what David determined to do despite his tears.

# GUARD YOUR HEART

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



Broken hearts are very vulnerable; they must be guarded carefully. When your heart has been broken, it can either become more soft and pliable to the work of God, or it can become hardened toward God and the things of God. And it is a strong temptation to harden our hearts toward God when he has disappointed us and when it feels like he has deserted us.

If your heart is broken, are you willing to allow this hurt to serve as a softening agent that makes you more aware of God, more alive to his purposes, more sensitive to his Spirit at work on you and in you? Or will you let your heart become hardened so that you no longer hear his word, accept his rebuke, experience his mercy?

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul explains how to keep our hearts from becoming hardened. “Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. If you do this . . . his peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” To nurture a soft heart, keep telling God what you need, even when you hardly know what to say or what to ask for or if he hears you. Thank him for who he is and what he has done, for all he has given you, and for the ways he is making himself known to you. Gratitude plows up the ground for God’s peace to grow. This is the kind of peace in the midst of pain that is foreign and unintelligible to the world, and can only come supernaturally. Peace is a gift of God, but we prepare ourselves to receive this gift as we pray about everything, cultivate gratitude, and refuse to surrender to worry.

You can emerge from your days of sorrow with a heart that has been softened to the Spirit of God—what a beautiful and profitable experience that will be! Or you can allow your heart to be hardened by bitterness and resentment toward God, and rejection of his peace and grace—what a dark place that will take you to . . . a place far away from the loving embrace of God. “They are far away from the life of God because they have shut their minds and hardened their hearts against him” (Ephesians 4:18).

*Heart Mender, take this broken heart of mine and make it soft and sensitive to your Spirit. I want to stay close to you and soft toward you.*

## DIGGING DEEPER

Read Hebrews 3. What led to the Israelites’ hearts being hardened? What were the consequences? From verses 12-15, what do you need to do or refrain from doing to avoid hardness of heart?

## BITTER BEYOND WORDS

HE SHOT HIS ARROWS DEEP INTO MY HEART. THE THOUGHT OF MY SUFFERING AND HOPELESSNESS IS BITTER BEYOND WORDS. I WILL NEVER FORGET THIS AWFUL TIME, AS I GRIEVE OVER MY LOSS. YET I STILL DARE TO HOPE WHEN I REMEMBER THIS: THE UNFAILING LOVE OF THE LORD NEVER ENDS! BY HIS MERCIES WE HAVE BEEN KEPT FROM COMPLETE DESTRUCTION. —LAMENTATIONS 3:13, 19-22



Sometimes I feel guilty about my grief. Not because I think there is something wrong or unspiritual about recognizing my loss and valuing my loss. I feel guilty because sometimes I think my grief is more about me than about Hope or Gabriel. I feel sad not just when I think about them and their difficult, limited lives, but when the mental snapshots remind me of the pain *I* felt, the fear *I* felt, the disappointment that swallowed *me*.

I remember when it first hit me. The depth of the cry bordering on a scream bubbled inside and then burst out of me. It scared me, and I know it scared David. I think that is when he first wondered if he'd ever get his wife back, or if she was gone forever, lost to sorrow.

I am well aware that so many have suffered in much more significant ways than I have, but there is no real comparison of pain. It all just hurts. And with the author of Lamentations, I would say, “the thought of my suffering is bitter beyond words.” And I echo his words: “I will never forget this awful time.”

But I would also echo the ray of light that peeks out of his next phrase: “Yet I still dare to hope.” The memory of hope is as vivid as the memory of pain. What could have made him dare to hope? What could possibly give *you* the courage and confidence to have hope in the midst of your bitter suffering? Remembering the love of God. Rehearsing his past faithfulness to you. Choosing to think about the sufficiency and eternity of God's love. It may seem daring to make room in your mind for what you know is true about God, and honestly, it is difficult when it feels as if he has shot his arrows deep into your heart. But the truth of God's love transforms our thoughts and our feelings when we choose to remember and choose to believe.

*Lord, how the hurt lingers, making it hard to remember that your love is unfailing and eternal. Remind me of your love—my only source of hope for the future. Make the reality of your faithfulness more vivid than my pain.*

### DIGGING DEEPER

Read Lamentations 3. What phrases can you relate to in verses 1-20? What does the writer choose to do and to believe in verses 21-66 that generates hope?

## BUT I AM TRUSTING

I AM DYING FROM GRIEF; MY YEARS ARE SHORTENED BY SADNESS. MISERY HAS DRAINED MY STRENGTH; I AM WASTING AWAY FROM WITHIN. BUT I AM TRUSTING YOU, O LORD, SAYING, "YOU ARE MY GOD!" MY FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS. —PSALM 31:10, 14-15



We had known I was pregnant with Gabriel for almost eight weeks and it had been three weeks since the prenatal testing, and we were waiting for the call with the test results. I wrote about it in my journal, the morning of January 26, 2001:

*I get a sinking feeling in my stomach when I think about knowing one way or the other, but today, I'm just ready to know, ready to know how to feel, how to plan. Mostly, I want to say yes to God in whatever he has for us. If someone had asked me when I was pregnant before if I wanted to experience what we did with Hope, I'm sure I would have said no. And yet it was the most profound experience of blessing we've ever had. She brought us so much joy. I would have been a fool to say no. So I find myself now wanting to say yes to whatever God has for us because I know his plans for me are better than I can plan for myself.*

That day the call came from the geneticist, who delivered the news that the child I was carrying was already suffering the fatal effects of Zellweger Syndrome. David and I stood in the kitchen and went over a list of Scripture verses to put on the letter we were preparing to send out to everyone we knew, looking for the verse that would best express the reality of our fear as well as our resolve. Then we found it: "But I am trusting you, O LORD, saying, 'You are my God!' My future is in your hands."

I would like to tell you that our desire to trust in God erased the fear we had about the future—but it wouldn't be true. What I will tell you is that we *determined* to trust God with the future of our family. And it wasn't a decision we made one day for forever. It is a decision we made again every day (or at least most days) and a decision we continue to make every day. It's the same for you. Will you trust God today even as your life feels shortened by sadness? Will you surrender your future into the loving hands of God?

*You are my God, and I want to trust you with the hurts of my past and the pain that may be in my future. Today I choose to trust you and believe you'll give me the grace to trust you tomorrow, too.*

### DIGGING DEEPER

Read Psalm 40. On what did the psalmist base his choice to trust God? What kind of impact did it have on the people around him? What were his circumstances? What are the benefits of trusting God?

WEEK 1  
BROKENHEARTED



REFLECTION

What are some of the untruths you hear from others and from your own mind that you need to confront with the truth?

Have you determined to trust God with your future? How is that evident in your life?

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MEDITATION

*The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those who are crushed in spirit.*

—PSALM 34:18

Quiet yourself in the presence of God, and meditate on the comforting promises of this verse.

Express your brokenheartedness and crushed spirit to God, laying it all before him.

Ask God to make the closeness of his presence known to you, and open yourself to his rescue.

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PRAYER

Praise God that his hands are big enough and strong enough to hold you and your future, no matter what happens.

Thank God for loving you enough and caring deeply enough to keep track of your sorrows and treasure your tears.

Intercede for those you love, that God would use the hurt in their lives to soften them toward himself and keep their hearts from being hardened.

Confess your tendency to focus only on the bitterness of your suffering and to forget God's unfailing love and faithfulness.

Petition God to replace the lies you have told yourself with an ever-flowing fountain of his truth.