



50 DAYS
OF HOPE

50 DAYS OF HOPE

*Daily Inspiration
for Your Journey through Cancer*



LYNN EIB



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This book is lovingly dedicated
in memory of my father
ROBERT YOXTHEIMER
1925–2011
a two-time cancer survivor,
and
in honor of my mother
GAYNOR YOXTHEIMER
a new cancer survivor
in 2011.

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- Marc and Elizabeth Hirsh, who first recognized God's call on my life to minister to cancer patients and gave me the unbelievable opportunity to live it out—without you, *none* of this would have happened.
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- All the cancer survivors and their families who allowed me to share their stories of hope with you. (I think my main “claim to fame” in life is that I have more friends with cancer than anyone else!)
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GOT HOPE?

Hope.

It may just be the best word in the English language. It has synonyms like *expectation*, *longing*, *desire*, *confidence*, *trust*, and *faith*. All of its antonyms can be rolled into one all-encompassing word: *hopelessness*.

We use it when we want to describe some of our deepest emotions, with phrases such as *our only hope*, *no other hope*, *false hopes*, and the saddest one of all—*no more hope*.

Hope can take so many different forms and meanings and even change from hour to hour, but I believe it is the one thing all cancer patients and their loved ones can agree they need—hope for today and especially hope for tomorrow.

Each week I usually meet five or six people newly diagnosed with cancer. That's because I work as a patient advocate in an oncology office where it's my job to offer emotional and spiritual support to cancer patients and their caregivers. Since 1996 I've met thousands of folks facing dreaded cancer diagnoses and scores more who have attended my Cancer Prayer

Support Group since its inception in 1991. And even though I'm a cancer survivor of twenty-plus years, I don't ever assume I know *exactly* how all these cancer patients feel. And I certainly wouldn't presume to know exactly how you and your loved ones are feeling right now.

But I do know what it feels like:

To hear my name and "cancer" in a sentence together.

To wait agonizingly long for test results.

To struggle over treatment decisions.

To watch toxic chemo drip into my veins.

To wonder if I'd see my children grow up.

And I know what it feels like to hope against hope that cancer would not have the last say in my life.

You're holding in your hand *50 Days of Hope*. This little book will take you through what many cancer survivors say are the darkest times—the first few months after a cancer diagnosis. Of course, you can read it to find hope at *any* time on your cancer journey, but it's especially written for those who recently have received a cancer diagnosis for themselves or someone they love. It's daily doses of inspiration that can be read in just a couple of minutes, because I know sometimes it's hard to concentrate and read when you're stressed about your health or the health of a loved one.

When I give someone a copy of my first book, *When*

God & Cancer Meet, I usually say something like, “If you need to, you can put this book aside for a while and pick it up later when you’re ready to read it.” I am confident that at just the right time, each person will read the book and experience the encouragement God wants to bring. People all over the world have told me that is exactly what happened to them.

Some of this book’s inspiration is taken from that first book because I wanted to take those stories and encouraging truths and put them in an easily digestible format even for the most shell-shocked new patient or loved one. Some inspiration is taken from my other books, *Finding the Light in Cancer’s Shadow* and *When God & Grief Meet*. And much of this book is filled with new, hopeful stories, as well as insights gained from my front-row seat watching God work in the lives of cancer patients and their caregivers.

So if I were handing you a copy of *this* book, I’d ask you to start reading it *today*—just one day at a time, just a few moments each day. It’s kind of like eating a little snack just to keep up your strength until you feel like having a full meal.

Cancer can deplete us physically, and just as our bodies can get malnourished, our spirits can too. That’s why you need to feed your spirit every day with truth that inspires you on your journey with cancer.

I love how author Max Lucado explains that what seems like a disaster to us may not be nearly so ominous from God's perspective:

He views your life the way you view a movie after you've read the book. When something bad happens, you feel the air sucked out of the theater. Everyone else gasps at the crisis on the screen. Not you. Why? You've read the book. You know how the good guy gets out of the tight spot. God views your life with the same confidence. He's not only read your story . . . he wrote it.¹

Please don't starve yourself of the hope you need—turn the page and find out what can happen in your life when God and cancer meet.

Lynn Eib



DAY 1

Been There, Done That

This is the kind of book I wish I could have read when I was diagnosed with locally advanced colon cancer in 1990. I was only thirty-six, and my daughters were eight, ten, and twelve. My husband's first wife had died from ALS—Lou Gehrig's disease—some twenty years earlier. I desperately needed hope and encouragement.

Don't get me wrong; many people tried to give me that. They said things like, "You'll get through this," or, "It'll be okay." But I wanted to yell back at them, "How do you know? You've never been through this!"

I had the sense that it made them feel better to tell me I was going to be all right, but it didn't do much for me.

The first person to really give me hope was a woman named Pat who came up to me after my first cancer support group meeting at the local hospital, put her arm around me, walked me to my car, and told me I would make it through my chemotherapy.

Do you know why I believed her? Not because she had years of medical training or decades of worldly wisdom. I believed her because she sported a brightly colored scarf on her head, still bald from

chemotherapy. I recognized that she *knew* because she had been there.

Pat was the first cancer survivor I ever knew personally. Now my life is filled with cancer survivors because I've spent the intervening years both as a volunteer cancer support group facilitator and as an employed patient advocate in my oncologist's office.

I have held the hands of thousands of people with cancer, listened to the fears in their hearts, and seen what gave them hope. I know that cancer patients and their caregivers are longing for encouragement as they try to make sense of what might seem like senseless suffering. It is my prayer that this book will bring you that hope.



I don't know about you, but the words I most longed to hear after my cancer diagnosis were, "Oops, we made a mistake—you don't really have cancer after all!" Obviously, that retraction never came, and I had to face the reality that my nightmare was not going away any time soon.

If I couldn't hear that my cancer diagnosis was a "mistake," the next best thing would have been to meet someone who had been in my situation and survived.

I wanted to meet a young mom with Stage 3 colorectal cancer, who had about a 40-percent chance of surviving and did just that. But I didn't know anyone remotely like that at the time.

I now know thousands of cancer survivors, including many young moms and even those with far worse odds than mine who are alive and well. I wish you and I could meet face-to-face and you could tell me your story and I could tell you about someone I know who has walked in your shoes and is doing well. My Cancer Prayer Support Group (which is believed to be the longest-running such faith-based group in the country) has all kinds of amazing survivor stories. In fact, most of the people in my group have been told their cancer is not curable, yet they still are doing well, and many of them are cancer-free years later. We have people surviving melanoma, lymphoma, leukemia, and multiple myeloma, as well as adrenal gland, pancreatic, brain, liver, lung, stomach, breast, esophageal, fallopian tube, tonsil, cervical, colorectal, ovarian, peritoneal, prostate, bladder, tongue, thyroid, kidney, and even penile cancer (I didn't even know there was such a thing until I met a fifteen-year survivor!).

Whose story would give you hope?

Jutta, a Stage 3 pancreatic cancer survivor since 1999 and still cancer-free?

Jim, diagnosed with a recurrent brain tumor in 2006, but in complete remission?

Maureen, whose journey with breast cancer showed her that God really heard her prayers?

Anne, a small-cell lung cancer survivor given about a 10-percent chance of cure in 1994 and living cancer-free?

Sandy, diagnosed with incurable ovarian cancer, but beating cancer nonetheless?

I'll share all these true, hope-filled stories and many others throughout this book. It is my prayer that as you read them, you will experience God's peace and power and presence as never before. I pray that you will believe God can be trusted to meet your deepest needs because you can see His faithfulness in these people's lives.

☀ *You can believe their stories because they have been there.*

☀ *You can believe me because I have been there.*

☀ *You can believe God because He promises He will be there.*

I know we probably don't know one another and may never meet, but would you allow me the privilege

of praying for you right now? (Just fill in your name as you read.)

Lord, I don't know what will give _____ hope . . . but You do. I know that You love _____ very much, and I am asking and believing that You will fill _____'s heart with a confident expectation that in spite of a cancer diagnosis, there is hope. Send Your healing touch wherever it is needed—body, mind, and spirit. Amen.



DAY 2

Sliding on Black Ice

Have you ever been driving down the road when all of a sudden you hit a patch of black ice? If you live in a climate that experiences true winter, you know exactly what I mean.

You're cruising along on bare pavement one minute and sliding down the road the next. You're on black ice—a covering of ice so thin that the dark pavement still shows through. If you apply the brakes, they do nothing to stop your vehicle. Instead, you just keep sliding, maybe even sideways, until you find something *bigger* than you to stop your slide!

When I was diagnosed with colon cancer, I felt as

Fear Not!

I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me.

He freed me from all my fears.

PSALM 34:4

He grants the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cries for help and rescues them.

PSALM 145:19

The LORD is for me, so I will have no fear.

What can mere people do to me?

PSALM 118:6

You can go to bed without fear;
you will lie down and sleep soundly.

PROVERBS 3:24

God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity,
but of power, love, and self-discipline.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

I (Paul) am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.

ROMANS 8:38

Waiting More (and Despising It Less)

Wait patiently for the LORD.

Be brave and courageous.

Yes, wait patiently for the LORD.

PSALM 27:14

LORD, I wait for you;

you will answer, Lord my God.

PSALM 38:15, NIV

I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits,

and in his word I put my hope.

PSALM 130:5, NIV

Let all that I am wait quietly before God,

for my hope is in him.

PSALM 62:5

As for me, I watch in hope for the LORD,

I wait for God my Savior;

my God will hear me.

MICAH 7:7, NIV

The LORD must wait for you to come to him

so he can show you his love and compassion

For the LORD is a faithful God.

Blessed are those who wait for his help.

ISAIAH 30:18

Since the world began,
no ear has heard
and no eye has seen a God like you,
who works for those who wait for him!

ISAIAH 64:4

We wait in hope for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.
In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.
May your unfailing love be with us, LORD,
even as we put our hope in you.

PSALM 33:20-22, NIV

When Worries Make You Sweat the Small (and Big) Stuff

Worry weighs a person down;
an encouraging word cheers a person up.

PROVERBS 12:25

Refuse to worry, and keep your body healthy.

ECCLESIASTES 11:10

If God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? So don't worry about these things, saying, "What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?" These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.

MATTHEW 6:30-32

Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? And if worry can't accomplish a little thing like that, what's the use of worrying over bigger things?

LUKE 12:25-26

Don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

MATTHEW 6:34

Healing Thoughts

Have compassion on me, LORD, for I am weak.

Heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony.

PSALM 6:2

O LORD my God, I cried to you for help,
and you restored my health.

PSALM 30:2

Let all that I am praise the LORD;
may I never forget the good things he does for me.
He forgives all my sins
and heals all my diseases.

PSALM 103:2-3

“LORD, help!” they cried in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.
He sent out his word and healed them,
snatching them from the door of death.

PSALM 107:19-20

Don't be impressed with your own wisdom.
Instead, fear the LORD and turn away from evil.
Then you will have healing for your body
and strength for your bones.

PROVERBS 3:7-8

A cheerful look brings joy to the heart;
good news makes for good health.

PROVERBS 15:30

A cheerful heart is good medicine,
but a broken spirit saps a person's strength.

PROVERBS 17:22

My child, pay attention to what I say.

Listen carefully to my words.

Don't lose sight of them.

Let them penetrate deep into your heart,
for they bring life to those who find them,
and healing to their whole body.

PROVERBS 4:20-22

Give Peace a Chance

May the LORD show you his favor
and give you his peace.

NUMBERS 6:26

In peace I will lie down and sleep,
for you alone, O LORD, will keep me safe.

PSALM 4:8

I listen carefully to what God the LORD is saying,
for he speaks peace to his faithful people.
But let them not return to their foolish ways.

PSALM 85:8

A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body;
jealousy is like cancer in the bones.

PROVERBS 14:30

You will keep in perfect peace
all who trust in you,
all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

ISAIAH 26:3

Because of God's tender mercy,
the morning light from heaven is about to break
upon us,

to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
and to guide us to the path of peace.

LUKE 1:78-79

Jesus said:

I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

JOHN 14:27

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

JOHN 16:33

The apostle Paul said:

Letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.

ROMANS 8:6

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 15:13

Let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

COLOSSIANS 3:15

May the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times and in every situation. The Lord be with you all.

2 THESSALONIANS 3:16

Psalm Prayers

For “whiners” like me and anyone else wanting to cry out to God. Whenever I came to the word *enemy* or *enemies*, I substituted *cancer* because it was my biggest enemy!

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?

How long will my enemy have the upper hand?

Turn and answer me, O LORD my God!

Restore the sparkle to my eyes, or I will die.

Don't let my enemies gloat, saying, “We have
defeated him!”

Don't let them rejoice at my downfall.

But I trust in your unfailing love.

I will rejoice because you have rescued me.

I will sing to the LORD

because he is good to me.

PSALM 13



LORD, hear my prayer!
Listen to my plea!
Don't turn away from me
in my time of distress.
Bend down to listen,
and answer me quickly when I call to you.
For my days disappear like smoke,
and my bones burn like red-hot coals.
My heart is sick, withered like grass,
and I have lost my appetite.
Because of my groaning,
I am reduced to skin and bones. . . .
He broke my strength in midlife,
cutting short my days.
But I cried to him, "O my God, who lives forever,
don't take my life while I am so young!"

PSALM 102:1-5, 23-24



Save me, O God,
for the floodwaters are up to my neck.
Deeper and deeper I sink into the mire;
I can't find a foothold.
I am in deep water,

and the floods overwhelm me.
I am exhausted from crying for help;
my throat is parched.
My eyes are swollen with weeping,
waiting for my God to help me. . . .
Answer my prayers, O LORD,
for your unfailing love is wonderful.
Take care of me,
for your mercy is so plentiful.
Don't hide from your servant;
answer me quickly, for I am in deep trouble!
Come and redeem me;
free me from my enemies.
PSALM 69:1-3, 16-18



Bend down, O LORD, and hear my prayer;
answer me, for I need your help.
Protect me, for I am devoted to you.
Save me, for I serve you and trust you.
You are my God.
Be merciful to me, O Lord,
for I am calling on you constantly.
Give me happiness, O Lord,

for I give myself to you.

O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive,
so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your
help.

Listen closely to my prayer, O LORD;
hear my urgent cry.

I will call to you whenever I'm in trouble,
and you will answer me.

PSALM 86:1-7



I cry out to the LORD;

I plead for the LORD's mercy.

I pour out my complaints before him
and tell him all my troubles.

When I am overwhelmed,

you alone know the way I should turn.

Wherever I go,

my enemies have set traps for me.

I look for someone to come and help me,

but no one gives me a passing thought!

No one will help me;

no one cares a bit what happens to me.

Then I pray to you, O LORD.

I say, “You are my place of refuge.
You are all I really want in life.”

PSALM 142:1-5



The LORD is my light and my salvation—
so why should I be afraid?

The LORD is my fortress, protecting me from danger,
so why should I tremble?

When evil people come to devour me,
when my enemies and foes attack me,
they will stumble and fall.

Though a mighty army surrounds me,
my heart will not be afraid.

Even if I am attacked,
I will remain confident.

The one thing I ask of the LORD—
the thing I seek most—

is to live in the house of the LORD all the days
of my life,

delighting in the LORD’s perfections
and meditating in his Temple.

PSALM 27:1-4



I love you, LORD;

you are my strength.

The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;
my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.

He is my shield, the power that saves me,
and my place of safety.

I called on the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and he saved me from my enemies.

The ropes of death entangled me;
floods of destruction swept over me.

The grave wrapped its ropes around me;
death laid a trap in my path.

But in my distress I cried out to the LORD;
yes, I prayed to my God for help.

He heard me from his sanctuary;
my cry to him reached his ears.

PSALM 18:1-6



I look up to the mountains—
does my help come from there?

My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth!

He will not let you stumble;
the one who watches over you will not slumber.
Indeed, he who watches over Israel
never slumbers or sleeps.

The LORD himself watches over you!
The LORD stands beside you as your protective
shade.

The sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon at night.

The LORD keeps you from all harm
and watches over your life.

The LORD keeps watch over you as you come and go,
both now and forever.

PSALM 121



Notes

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13. Ibid.

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About the Author



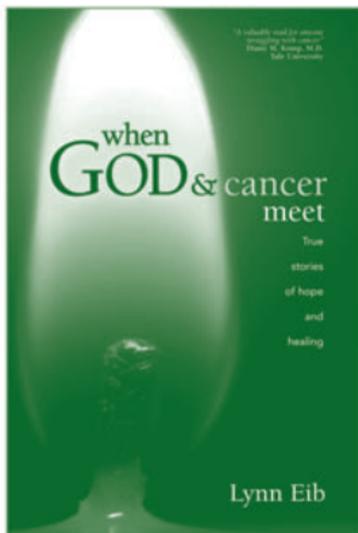
Lynn Eib is a long-time cancer survivor, journalist, and patient advocate, who has provided emotional and spiritual support to tens of thousands of cancer patients and their caregivers. The Cancer Prayer Support Group she founded in 1991 and still facilitates is believed to be the country's longest-running such faith-based group.

She is the author of the Tyndale best-seller *When God & Cancer Meet*, as well as *Finding the Light in Cancer's Shadow* and *When God & Grief Meet*. Lynn also wrote the inspirational commentary for the *He Cares New Testament with Psalms & Proverbs*, designed for those dealing with serious or chronic illness.

She speaks throughout the country on the topic of integrating faith and medicine and conducts inspiring seminars for people on an unwanted journey with cancer. Since 1996 she has worked as a patient advocate in her oncologist's office, where she also provides genetic counseling for those trying to discover if they have a hereditary cancer-causing mutation.

Lynn loves to encourage the discouraged and firmly believes that laughter is healing medicine. All of her support group meetings start with jokes and end with prayers. For resources and information, visit her website, www.cancerpatientadvocate.com.

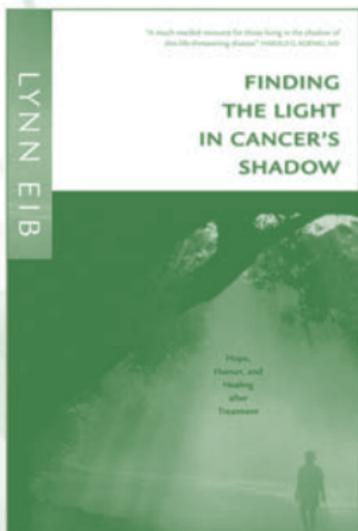
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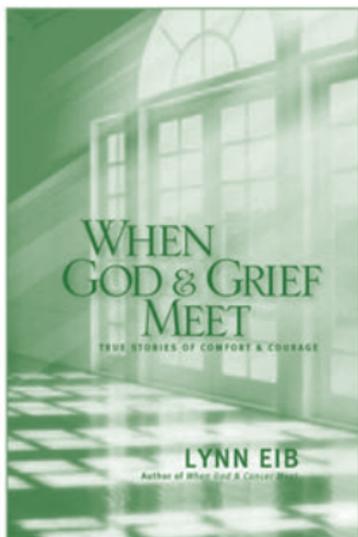
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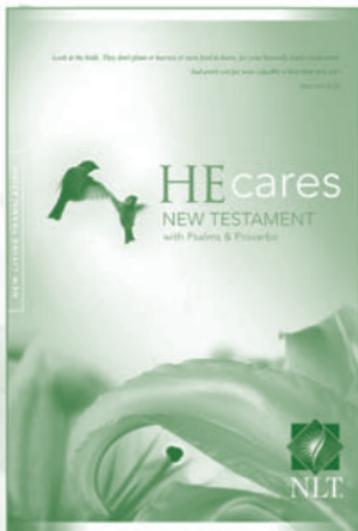
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He Cares New Testament with Psalms & Proverbs contains words of Scripture and inspirational insights by Lynn Eib for people facing serious or even chronic illness.

