



Scripture and Prayers for Women Walking Through Cancer

Carried Through Cancer

by Kim Harms



Day 4

“Turn, Lord! Rescue me; save me because of your faithful love. . . . I am weary from my groaning; with my tears I dampen my bed and drench my couch every night.”

PSALM 6:4, 6

PRAYER: Dear Father, Thank you that I can lament to you. Help me lay my anguish at your feet knowing you are big enough and loving enough to take it and to comfort me with your presence, even when you don't take the pain away. *Amen.*

Day 11

“The Lord is the one who will go before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or abandon you. Do not be afraid or discouraged.”

DEUTERONOMY 31:8

PRAYER: Dear Father, Thank you that you not only come alongside us in our hard circumstances but you also prepare us in advance. You are faithful to prepare me for roads I would never choose to travel on my own. Give me the eyes to see your provision, and give me peace for the journey. *Amen.*

Day 22

“You will never wash my feet,” Peter said. Jesus replied, “If I don't wash you, you have no part with me.” Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.”

JOHN 13:8–9

PRAYER: Dear Father, Thank you for giving us an example of serving and being served in the story of Jesus washing Peter's feet. In my sinful nature I want to be self-sufficient. Help me humble myself to receive help from others, knowing it is what you want, and that by serving me, others are blessed. *Amen.*

Day 34

“Commit your activities to the Lord, and your plans will be established.”

PROVERBS 16:3

PRAYER: Dear Father, Thank you that it's okay for me to say no to some good things in order to have the time and energy to do the more important things you have for me. Help me seek your strength as a caregiver, and lead me to the things you want me to do and away from the things you don't. *Amen.*

Day 46

“Now we have this treasure in clay jars, so that this extraordinary power may be from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck down but not destroyed.”

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7–9

PRAYER: Dear Father, Thank you that we can have joy regardless of our circumstances. Help me choose joy in the hard things so that I can live life to the full and so others can see that you are good, even when life is not. *Amen.*

Introduction

I am a reporter at heart. It makes me strangely happy to take the content of a thirty- to sixty-minute interview and find the five-hundred-word story that needs to be told.

In this devotional, you will read the stories of dozens of women. Women who walked hard and heartbreaking roads and saw Jesus care for them in the sweetest ways. These survivors represent a variety of ages, cancer types, and stages. Some endured minimally invasive procedures. Others will be in treatment for the remainder of their days. But regardless of her background and experience, every woman had her life turned upside down by cancer.

You will also read the stories of several caregivers—those who’ve watched someone they love suffer physical, emotional, and psychological pain and sickness brought on by cancer and its challenging treatments. Finally, you will read a handful of my own personal stories of Jesus meeting me where I needed him during both of my experiences with breast cancer—first in 2016 and again in 2023.

My hope is that this book gives *you* hope. That you can read the experiences of other women and be encouraged and inspired to trust in Jesus, our real and living hope, as you endure the long and arduous journey of cancer treatment. May our Lord be your Comforter, your Sustainer, your Savior, and your Healer.

The darkest parts of our lives are often the ones we look back on and see Jesus shine the most brightly. My desire is that the following pages expose you to some of that light.

There had to be the dark and muddy waters,
so that the sun could have something
to background its flashing glory.¹

—*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, Betsy Smith

Day 2



Harnessing the Strength Inside

Alex

That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:10 (NIV)

Alex, a retired lieutenant colonel in the USAF, was deployed twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

One night on the ground in Iraq, she ran for shelter as mortars flew overhead. She knew if she didn't make it to a safe place, she might die in that desert. Pictures of her oldest son, just two at the time, and of her husband, flashed through her mind as she ran the gauntlet to shelter. It was a scary moment, and her life was in danger, but for her, a cancer diagnosis was scarier.

"I'd faced my own mortality before. I was in Iraq."

She signed up for the military knowing the risks. She did not sign up for cancer.

As Alex sat in the radiology exam room trying to come to grips with the fact that her life was now tied to breast cancer, her mortality stared her in the face once again, and she had a frank conversation with God.

"I [said], 'Okay, you've chosen this for me for a reason. And like every other challenge you've put in front of me, I'm gonna be a leader.' That's my strength. That's what God has given me. The ability to lead."

But what does being a leader mean in treatment for invasive lobular carcinoma (cancer that originates in the breast lobules). For Alex it meant fighting well. It meant not bowing out of life as she fought. It meant showing up at her 5:00 a.m. exercise class and doing her best while in the midst of chemo. It meant sitting at her twelve-year-old son's baseball games, knowing the Neulasta on-body injector (a shot to counteract chemo side effects) taped to her arm would inject itself halfway through the fifth inning. It meant daily walks with her boys and her dog, even in her exhaustion and pain.

But it also meant embracing the sadness. It meant bawling the entire thirty-minute drive home from the radiologist. It meant crawling back into bed some days when it was all just too much.

"Just because you accept the path God has you on doesn't mean you don't feel a plethora of emotions. It doesn't mean life is all sunshine and roses. Or that you don't get angry, or you don't cry. I still did that. And that's okay."

Alex knew that God created her to be a leader, but in cancer she was not immune to weakness and days when it was hard to get out of bed and fight. But in her weakness she was blown away by the nearness of her Savior. During times when life really sucked, she could still step outside and find joy in small things, like green grass and sunshine, and feel a strength for the day she knew she was not mustering up on her own.

"Rarely are you so dependent on God. But that is where he is," she said. "In my weakness is where I found his strength."

Prayer: *Dear Father, Thank you for your strength that is made perfect in my weakness. And for my weakness that points me to your strength. Continue to provide the strength I need when I can't provide it for myself. Amen.*

Reflection: *What gifts has God given you? Are you seeing your strengths as an asset during your cancer journey? How has God shown himself to be strong for you when you don't have the energy to be strong for yourself?*