

A GUIDE FOR
PRAYING IN
THE DARK

FROM W PUBLISHING GROUP & HOPE HEALS



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A NOTE FROM KATHERINE

Dear one, I know intimately how seasons of suffering can make a connection with God feel altogether out of reach. Pain presents so many challenges, but I don't want prayer to be one of them for you. So I've put together this guide so you can borrow my words on the days when you don't have any of your own. I hope each prayer, scripture, and reminder of truth invites you toward the kind of healing you need most in places that might surprise you. Above all, I pray you'll experience God's closer-than-breath presence as a companion on your journey through the dark.

WITH YOU AND FOR YOU,

Katherine

Borrow My Prayers

OVERWHELMING EMPTINESS

God, some days I feel hollow inside. My life seems like it's withering on the vine. New problems arise every minute and no one seems to care. Give me eyes to see your provision in my past and present so I can anticipate the future harvest with hope. I can't do it on my own, so I'm asking you to help me sing praise in the middle of this mess. I resolve to thrive—not just survive—in this temporary drought. Because you are my friend and you've promised not to leave me, I need not wait to celebrate your presence with me today.

Based on Habakkuk 3:17-18

MORE FROM TREASURES IN THE DARK

No. 25 - Showing Up Scared

No. 47 - Don't Wait to Celebrate

No. 64 - The Next Best Thing to Time Travel

AN ADAPTABLE HOPE

God, I want to find joy in my sufferings because I know they will produce goodness in me—the truest goodness of patience, endurance, character, and hope. Despite the hurt I've felt and will feel, I'll cling to the truth that hope never leads to shame. You loved me when I thought I was whole and after I found out I was broken. In the many little deaths I will endure in life, I trust you will allow some things to die forever, and that you will choose to resurrect and nourish what is good.

Based on Romans 3:5-8

MORE FROM TREASURES IN THE DARK

No. 22 - Breaking Open

No. 54 - Conversations with John

No. 85 - The Whole Blasted, Blessed Process

Your Reflections



Borrow My Prayers

HUNTING FOR TREASURES

God, I trust that you are traveling behind me and before me. You are leveling the mountains, crashing through gates, and leaving clues of your presence along the way. You are in the past and the present and the future, in the shadows and in the light. Parts of my past, present, and future look dark, but I know you have hidden treasures there for me to find, even now. I trust that you are tirelessly broadening my perspective and offering me hope where I never expected to find it.

Based on Isaiah 45:2-3

MORE FROM TREASURES IN THE DARK

No. 4 - In the Dark

No. 6 - The Knot

No. 12 - The Blank Page

BLESSING MY LIMITATIONS

God, reveal to me the truth of who I am and tell me all about the good work you've set out for me to do. Grant me the courage to lean into my assignment wholeheartedly, instead of wasting my time comparing myself to your other children or pining for my old dreams. Equip me to take responsibility for doing my creative and enthusiastic best with the one and only life I've been given. I want to live it well to the end.

Based on Galatians 6:4-5

MORE FROM TREASURES IN THE DARK

No. 43 - Wheelchair Free

No. 46 - Dreaming New Dreams

No. 71 - A New Kind of Calling

Your Reflections



Borrow My Prayers

RETHINKING GOODNESS

God, I've done my best to walk well with you, so why does it feel like you are holding back so much from me? Deconstruct all my limiting ideas of goodness until they align with what is truly good. Train me to trust that you're a God of abundance, not of neglect. I always have access to your presence, which means goodness is never far away.

Based on Psalm 84:11-12

MORE FROM TREASURES IN THE DARK

No. 7 - The Good Life

No. 8 - The Gift or the Giver

No. 11 - More

ACCEPTING MY BOUNDARY LINES

God, the boundary lines around my life include a lot of things I wouldn't have chosen. You call them pleasant, but sometimes I find them disappointing and suffocating. Adjust my vision to focus on all the deeply good and refining things within the boundaries of my life. I want to delight in the shape of my life today, somehow.

Based on Psalm 16:6

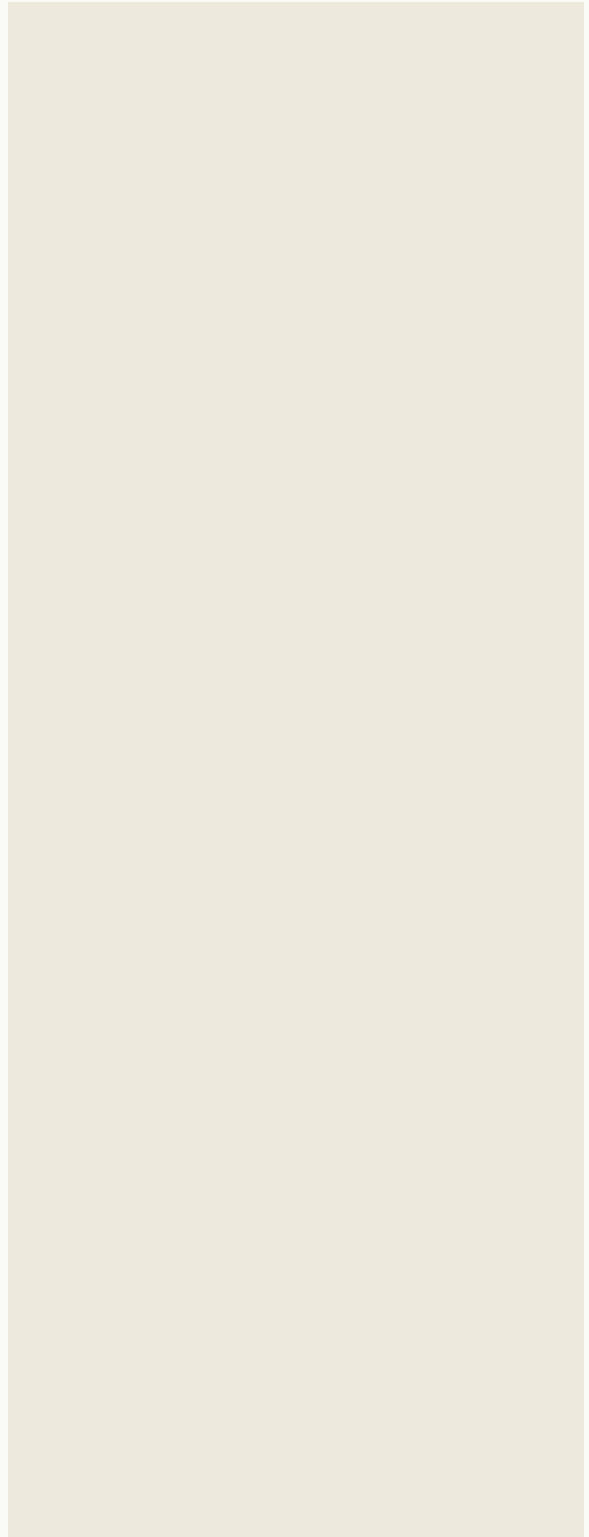
MORE FROM TREASURES IN THE DARK

No. 24 - Hitting the Limits

No. 38 - Chosen, Not Cursed

No. 55 - A Life Worth Loving

Your Reflections



Borrow My Prayers

A BUSTED-UP BODY

God, I'm tempted to believe you made some mistakes as you knit me together. Remind me that you do not make mistakes. Thank you for this faltering body, the one that allows me to experience my life and reminds me of how fleeting and fragile it all is. Even when I don't feel like it, the facts remain: I was wonderfully and carefully made, and I am being wonderfully and carefully re-made in the shape of Jesus. I trust your craftsmanship, God.

Based on Psalm 149:14-16 & 2 Corinthians 4:7

MORE WORDS TO BORROW

No. 23 - Wake-Up Call

No. 34 - The Portrait

No. 42 - Hope in the Flesh

ABOVE-AND-BEYOND RESTORATION

God, it feels like a cloud of locusts have swarmed me and gnawed away at my very soul. I cannot even fathom a day when life will feel full and free and fresh again. Right now it's just a famine. Can you lend me the divine imagination to hope for life-to-the-fullest restoration for what's been lost?

Based on Joel 2:25

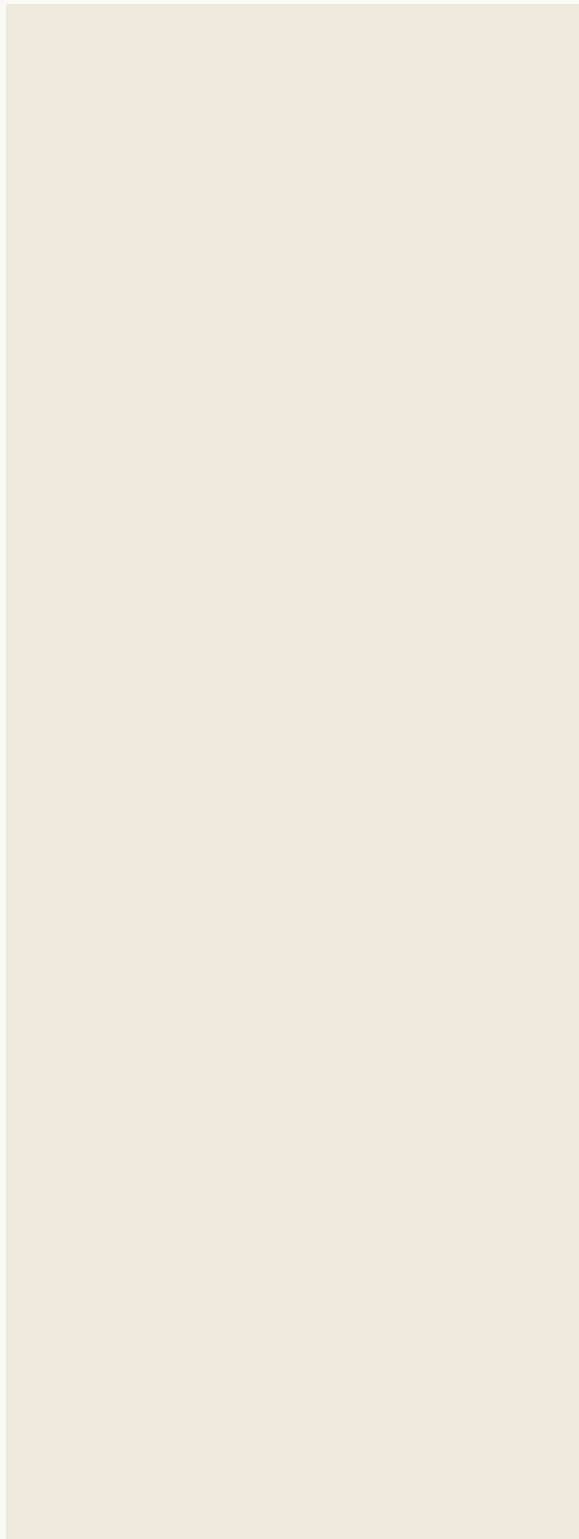
MORE WORDS TO BORROW

No. 14 - Hungry

No. 26 - A Low-Grade Sorrow

No. 62 - What the Locusts Ate

Your Reflections





WRITING NEW NARRATIVES

Suffering redefines everything in our lives, for better or worse. In times of deep pain, we have an opportunity to surrender to God the stories we've been telling and open our hands to receive new stories in return. God is ready to re-narrate the lies of scarcity, isolation, and chaos with truths of abundance, belonging, and significance.

OLD NARRATIVE	GOD’S RE-NARRATION
<p>I am alone in my struggle.</p>	<p>“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”</p> <p>ISAIAH 41:10 (ESV)</p>
<p>Weakness is a liability.</p>	<p>“For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”</p> <p>2 CORINTHIANS 12:10 (ESV)</p>
<p>I am not beloved.</p>	<p>“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”</p> <p>ROMANS 8:38-39 (NIV)</p>

OLD NARRATIVE	GOD’S RE-NARRATION
<p>I have no value.</p>	<p>“What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.”</p> <p>LUKE 12:7 (NLT)</p>
<p>God doesn’t care about my pain.</p>	<p>“You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.”</p> <p>PSALM 56:8 (NLT)</p>
<p>God has abandoned me.</p>	<p>“Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you.”</p> <p>ROMANS 8:38-39 (NLT)</p>

OLD NARRATIVE	GOD’S RE-NARRATION
<p>I am not important to God.</p>	<p>“Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for the child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you! See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands.”</p> <p>ISAIAH 49:15-16 (NLT)</p>
<p>I’ve got to get it together to be a friend of Jesus.</p>	<p>“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”</p> <p>MATTHEW 11:27-30 (NLT)</p>
<p>My sorrow separates me from God.</p>	<p>“If your heart is broken, you’ll find God right there; if you’re kicked in the gut, he’ll help you catch your breath.”</p> <p>PSALM 38:18 (MSG)</p>

Reflect on your story. Re-narrate it in your own words.

OLD NARRATIVE	YOUR RE-NARRATION
I am alone in my struggle.	
Weakness is a liability.	
I am not beloved.	
I have no value.	
God doesn't care about my sadness.	
God has abandoned me.	
I am not important to God.	
I've got to get it together to be a friend of Jesus.	
My sorrow separates me from God.	



PRAYER & SCRIPTURE CALENDAR

Sometimes we're too close to our own suffering to be able to appreciate it's long arc toward redemption. No matter where you find yourself on your journey through the darkness, I truly believe you can catch glimpses of healing and hope in the midst of the hurt. Those glimpses might help us imagine the restoration to come. Use this prayer template and the corresponding numbered scriptures to reflect on and record the ways you're hurting, healing, and hoping today, squarely within your current circumstances. If you aren't able to fill in a category or two on a particular day, don't worry! Complete what you can, then move on. I'm inviting you to practice this quick and simple treasure hunt for healing and hope for the next 30 days.

Hurting

Healing

Hoping

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Hurting

Healing

Hoping

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Hurting

Healing

Hoping

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Day One

“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit.”

PSALM 34:18 (ESV)

Day Two

“Don’t be afraid, for I am with you.
Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will
strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with
my victorious right hand.”

ISAIAH 41:10 (NLT)

Day Three

“Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will
not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and
your staff protect and comfort me.”

PSALM 23:4 (NLT)

Day Four

“And we know that in all things God works for the
good of those who love him, who have been called
according to his purpose.”

ROMANS 8:28 (NIV)

Day Five

“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.”

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4 (NIV)

Day Six

“My comfort in my suffering is this: Your
promise preserves my life.”

PSALM 119:50 (NIV)

Day Seven

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty
hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all
your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

1 PETER 5:6-7 (NIV)

Day Eight

“Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.
Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will
return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.”

PSALM 126:5-6 (NIV)

Day Nine

“We know that suffering produces perseverance;
perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope
does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been
poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit,
who has been given to us.”

ROMANS 5:3-5 (NIV)

Day Ten

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion?
Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover
your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk
with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn
the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything
heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and
you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

MATTHEW 11:28-30 (MSG)

Day Eleven

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

PSALM 147:3 (NIV)

Day Twelve

“Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.”

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18 (NLT)

Day Thirteen

“Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.”

PSALM 42:11 (NIV)

Day Fourteen

“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 (NIV)

Day Fifteen

“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23 (ESV)

Day Sixteen

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure”

HEBREWS 6:19 (NIV)

Day Seventeen

“I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.”

PSALM 40:1-3 (NIV)

Day Eighteen

“I’ve told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I’ve conquered the world.”

JOHN 16:33 (MSG)

Day Nineteen

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”

1 PETER 4:12-13 (NIV)

Day Twenty

“You’re blessed when you feel you’ve lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.”

MATTHEW 5:4 (MSG)

Day Twenty-One

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.”

ROMANS 12:12 (NTL)

Day Twenty-Two

“Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.”

PSALM 62:5-8 (NIV)

Day Twenty-Three

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10 (NIV)

Day Twenty-Four

“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.”

ISAIAH 43:2 (NIV)

Day Twenty-Five

“By your words I can see where I’m going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path.”

PSALM 119:105 (MSG)

Day Twenty-Six

“Pure gold put in the fire comes out of it proved pure; genuine faith put through this suffering comes out proved genuine. When Jesus wraps this all up, it’s your faith, not your gold, that God will have on display as evidence of his victory.”

1 PETER 1:6-7 (MSG)

Day Twenty-Seven

“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.”

2 CORINTHIANS 4:8-10 (NIV)

Day Twenty-Eight

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

HEBREWS 4:16 (ESV)

Day Twenty-Nine

“He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us.”

2 CORINTHIANS 1:4 (MSG)

Day Thirty

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

REVELATION 21:4 (NIV)



MAKE IT PERSONAL: REFLECTION PROMPTS

My story of suffering may seem completely unique to me. While it's true that some of the details of my story are deeply personal and specific—as are your's—the larger themes of my story are sweepingly universal. So let's make my story personal to you. Use these prompts to process your places of pain. Think of these questions as a lantern that will help you shine the light of God's comfort and truth into the darkness of your suffering. I am praying that you will find treasures in the depths of your pain, even today.

Consider the landscape of your life today. Where are the darkest hollows? What is the most significant point of pain for you? Don't compare this pain to anyone else's story. Whatever grief you're experiencing is valid and in need of healing.

Approach your pain from a posture of curiosity, rather than judgment. When you think about this hardship, what do you feel in your body? In your spirit? Are you in a place of complete disbelief and shock? Or do you sense it's time to begin healing?

Follow your fear for a moment. If your suffering played out in the worst way possible, what would that look like for you? Where would God be in that scenario? What wouldn't feel true to you anymore?

What questions are keeping distance between you and God? What do you feel afraid to ask God? Ask them now with the gentle confidence that God can withstand any doubt and handle any grappling. Impossible questions might just tether you even closer to God, if you'll risk the intimacy of asking.

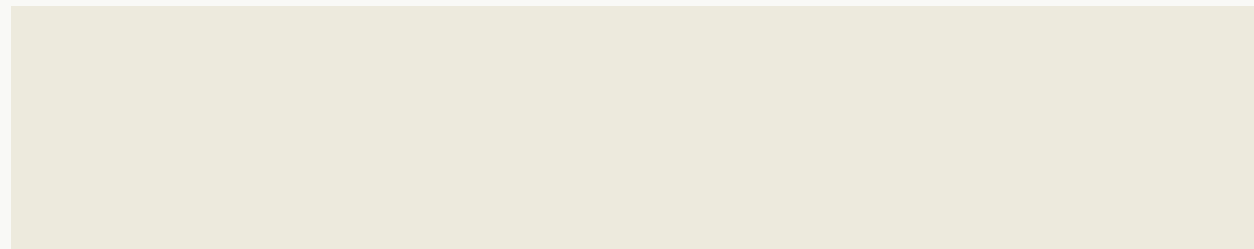
Dream up the details of the best possible version of your life. What does it look like? Can you make a distinction between your version of goodness and God's version of true goodness? Make a list.

Now consider the life you're actually living. Within the boundary lines around you, what is truly good today? What is good, lovely, noble, and true about your life?

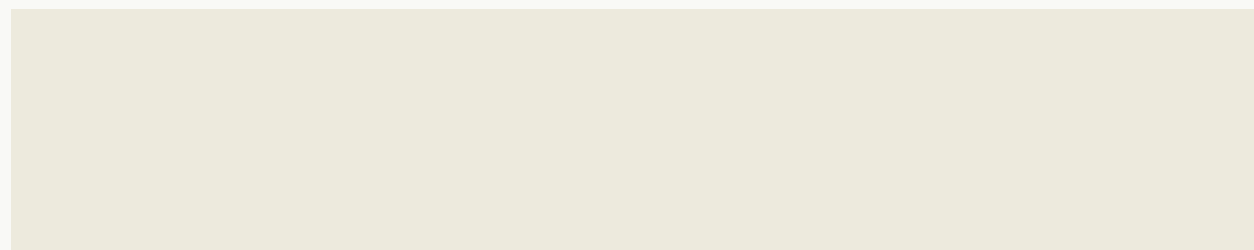
God's Word tells us that suffering grows us into more persevering, patient, integrated, and hopeful people. In my words, trauma can be a type of expansion. Survey your suffering. Now list the possibilities that each point of pain may be offering to you in terms of spiritual growth, depth, and development.

If you feel as if the present is empty of God's provision or presence, it's nearly impossible to imagine the future with any kind of hope. Look into your past and identify an experience of God's intervention, blessing, or comfort. Describe it here. How does reflecting on God's provision in the past change the way you're feeling about your future in this moment?

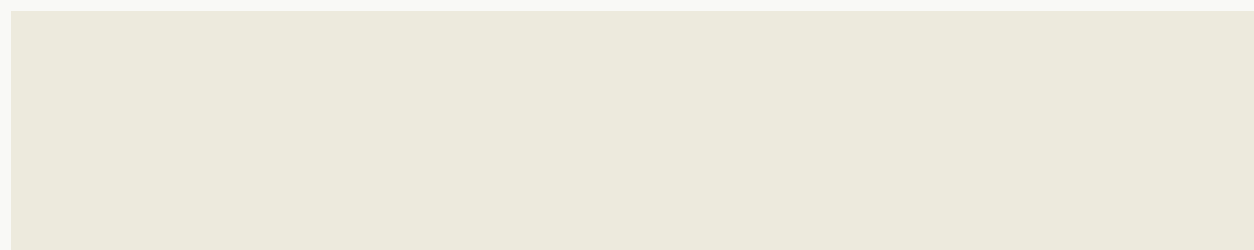
Traumatic experiences drive us to a place of self-protection. And rightfully so! If your fists are clenched tightly around something today, let's figure out what you're protecting. What feels most vulnerable in your life today?



In case no one's reminded you yet: Congratulations! You're alive today. You've been given a here-and-now, even if it's not the one you wanted or imagined. So how are you going to use it? Within the realities and limitations of your circumstances, ask God for the divine imagination to envision how you can use this one-and-only life well today. What's he saying to you?



Resolving to use this one-and-only life well is a little act of rebellion against despair. My favorite form of rebellion is celebrating in the midst of pain and uncertainty. These celebrations are never anything grand, but they sure are meaningful. How can you choose to celebrate your life today?



For me, healing looks so different from what I thought it would be. There was a time I thought healing meant a return to my original state. But now I don't know if I'd want to return to who I was. Healing happened in the place I needed it most: my soul. Allow yourself to dream what the truest, deepest version of healing would look like in your story. Describe it. Risk the vulnerability of asking God to join you in making that healing happen.

