

STRENGTH FOR THE CANCER JOURNEY: 30 DAYS OF INSPIRATION, ENCOURAGEMENT, & COMFORT

A NEW BOOK BY DEBORAH BARR

BY VONDA HENDERSON

According to the American Cancer Society, in 2020, over 1.8 million new cancer cases are anticipated in the US. The words 'You have cancer' is something absolutely no one wants to hear. Yet, so many Americans of every age, race, or gender face that diagnosis.

Support is a critical component as one faces a personal cancer journey. Deborah Barr has recently written a new 30-day devotional, *Strength for the Cancer Journey*:

30 Days of Inspiration, Encouragement, and Comfort, as a comfort and support resource, based on other cancer patients' experiences. Published by Moody Publishers, this devotional contains easy to read, topic-specific insights, scriptural references, and space for personal journaling for 30 days. Each chapter can be re-read as often as needed. Chapters cover subjects every cancer patient faces, such as anger, brain fog, waiting, feeling lonely, etc.

Deborah reached out to personal friends, friends of friends, and her church family to form her panel of 'experts' – eight people who shared their thoughts on the importance of faith in God and support of others during their journey

with cancer. As Jeff (one of the eight) shared, "God loves you. God is not abandoning you. . . . [by sharing] my hope would be that I've planted a seed that the storms of cancer will water." Keela emphasized that for her, her faith and her family were the rocks she leaned on during her journey. "I have a passion for encouraging people to engage deeply with God in their hard times," shared Deborah, "and I think this book grew out of a desire to encourage people with cancer to do that."

Deborah met each of the eight participants in person for a recorded interview that covered specific topics, as well as unique questions regarding their personal experience. As she shared, "Every journey was different in some fashion."

To illustrate some of the topics, the Day 17 devotion covers brain fog, described as "The hazy thinking, lack of focus, and memory problems that sometimes result from treatments such as radiation or hormone therapy." Sometimes it's referred to as 'chemo brain.' The panel collectively described the condition as frustrating and embarrassing, especially when dealing with people who may not know you well or understand the underlying cause.

Another topic (Day 25) is titled The Hardest Part and discusses the difficulty of asking for help. As Deborah described, "Cancer sometimes forces people to admit that they do, in fact, need help. It can unleash a lot of blessing, not just for the person being helped, but also for the person who gives the help. People get to use their spiritual gifts." As Laura shared after receiving the blessings of help, "The thing I look



forward to the most is to be able to help someone else." The pay it forward cycle continues and grows from one act of help.

Each daily subject is covered in an easy to read style with scriptures related to the topic and personal insights that reassure you that you're not the only one dealing with these situations. Many have or are walking on their journey, gaining strength for each step from God, friends, and family.

Strength for the Cancer Journey can be found online at Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com, Christianbook.com or wherever books are sold. Deborah's hope is that the devotional will be provided at local cancer centers, hospital gift shops, and support centers.

Strength for the Cancer Journey is Deborah's sixth book. Her devotional for dementia caregivers, *Grace for the Unexpected Journey*, was named "Best Inspirational Book" at the 2018 Digital Book World awards. As an author, speaker, and health educator, Deborah has a God-given gift of encouragement for people impacted by devastating, life-changing conditions, either as patients or caregivers.

