

BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....”
John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK


“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a

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Jesus Heals My Sickness

I don’t know why I became sick, why I am still sick, or if I will ever be healthy. My illness can be so unpredictable that it’s difficult for me to commit to anything, and this uncertainty upsets me. I want answers; much like Job I am often dismayed and confused by what is happening to me. But, also like Job, I have learned that God is in complete control.

God’s grace and plan is particularly evident when I take time to intentionally reflect on my life. In those moments, it becomes clear to me that God has been in control, loving and holding me, even when I was ignoring him.

Here’s just one example: When I was preparing to join AmeriCorps after graduating from college, I looked at positions all over the country. At the time I was feeling healthy and wanted to go somewhere new and exciting. Where I ended up, however, was a tiny farming community in my home state of Wisconsin. And I was bitter about it.

A few months later my illness got worse, and I realized God’s purpose for putting me here. I am close to family and friends, and able to use my parents’ health insurance. If I had gotten my way I would be a thousand miles from my loved ones, wrestling alone with my illness and without effective health insurance. Not to mention the fact that I would have missed out on all the great work I’ve been privileged to be a part of.

Where I am and what I have been able to do are clearly results of God putting me in the right place at the right time or somehow using me in his amazing work for his glory, despite my illness. This is an incredible privilege. After looking back and seeing how many times my strength should have failed, or how many times God carried me through the day, I have no doubt that God is in control.

I’m not sure why I became sick or if I’ll ever heal, but I know that all of our lives are filled with trials and tribulations. We live in a fallen world and we will suffer, whether through spiritual struggles, physical ailments, persecution, or unfortunate events.

How, then, do we find hope in our suffering? Through Jesus Christ. God does not waste our suffering. God does not waste our trials. Living with my illness has been difficult, but I know that I would not have become the same person I am today without it. God has used this opportunity to shape me, grow me, and bring me closer to him.

Source: <https://intervarsity.org/blog/what-my-chronic-illness-has-taught-me>

KEY VERSE

II Corinthians 12:9 (NKJV)

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: II Corinthians 12:7-10; Psalm 41:3; Luke 19

Introduction

1. Have you or someone close to you dealt with serious illness? What did you learn from this experience?
2. What are some spiritual challenges that people face while dealing with sickness?

Tuesday: Mathew 8:16-17; Isaiah 40:28-31; Luke 20

God Is In Control

3. Do you believe that God heals people today? What do you base your beliefs about healing on?
4. The article on the cover of this Growth Guide gives one person's testimony about dealing with chronic illness. He writes that "God has been in control, loving and holding me, even when I was ignoring him. How have you experienced this in your life?"

Wednesday: John 9:1-3; Job 2:3-7; Luke 21

Sense The Purpose

5. Can there be purpose in sickness? What are some reasons why sickness comes into our lives?
6. Whatever the reason is for our sickness, God wants to teach us something through our sickness. What are some valuable things you have learned because of illness?

Thursday: II Corinthians 1:3-4,12:7-10; Philippians 3:10; Luke 22

See The Positive

7. When you are dealing with illness it is difficult to see the positive. What positive aspects of suffering do you find in today's readings?
8. What are some positive things you have experienced while you were ill?
9. What are some steps you can take to focus on the positive during sickness?

Friday: James 5:13-14; Revelation 21:4; Luke 23

Seek The Power

10. Have you ever prayed for someone who was sick? How did God answer your prayers?
11. Have you ever had people pray for your illness? What was that experience like?
12. There are some illnesses that God does not heal on earth, but heals in heaven. How can you maintain an eternal perspective this week while dealing with sickness or any other challenge you may face?