

# FAITH AND CHRONIC PAIN OR ILLNESS

Romans 8:18-26

Psalm 13

## Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- Do you know someone that's living with chronic pain, cancer, or a chronic disease?
- How do you think (or have you seen) chronic pain or chronic illness affect a person's faith?

The realities of living with chronic pain, cancer, or other long-term illnesses impacts individuals not just physically, but mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Scripture is clear that God cares about our experiences and remains present with us in the midst of our pain. But *knowing* that truth and *feeling* that truth are two very different things. Rev. Chelsey Harmon joins our conversation to help us understand the relationship between our faith and chronic pain and illness, and to help us discover how we can both know and feel the truth of God's presence and glory in the midst of even the most difficult of human experiences. And for those walking alongside someone with chronic pain or illness, we'll look at how scripture can guide us as we seek to provide compassionate, faith-supporting care and encouragement to the people we know and love.

**Listen:** [Faith and Chronic Pain or Illness](#)

## Reflection

After listening, consider:

- In segment 1, Chelsey says, "I cannot say to [my L5 vertebra]: I don't need you anymore, so just get out of here. You know, I have to actually think about it as being part of me...myself, and my new life with Christ." Later she talks about remembering that she is "one in whom Christ dwells and delights." What do you think about her perspective on chronic pain? Does it change how you think about living with a chronic condition? In what ways might this perspective benefit you or someone you know living with a chronic condition?
- Chelsey says "the glory of Christ being revealed in my life in the here and now; and that can happen through my sufferings...my illnesses...my pain...the chronic conditions of life." Where do you see Christ's glory being revealed in your life or in the life of someone you know experiencing chronic pain, chronic illness, or cancer?
- In segment 2, Chelsey defines lament as "saying goodbye to what was in sadness and sorrow, so that you might say hello to what God is bringing now; and be able to step forward with God." Do we leave enough room for this kind of lamenting in our faith journeys? Why or why not?
- Is it always appropriate to pray for healing? Why or why not? What else might we pray for when we pray for ourselves or others living with chronic pain or chronic diagnoses?

## Related Passages

- **1 Corinthians 12:12-26**
- **John 9:1-7**
- **James 5:13-16**
- **Matthew 18:19-20**
- **Mark 11:23-24**
- **2 Corinthians 4:16-17**

## Conclusion

When Chelsey discusses prayer, she notes that contemplative prayer helped her grow in faith and understanding while living with chronic pain. She mentioned particularly the practice of focusing on images or descriptions of God. Create your own list of images or descriptions of God from scripture. How might these images help you recognize the loving presence of God and see the glory of Jesus Christ in the midst of your daily living?

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<https://groundwork.reframemedia.com/episodes/faith-and-chronic-pain-or-illness>

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