

Battles & Breakthroughs

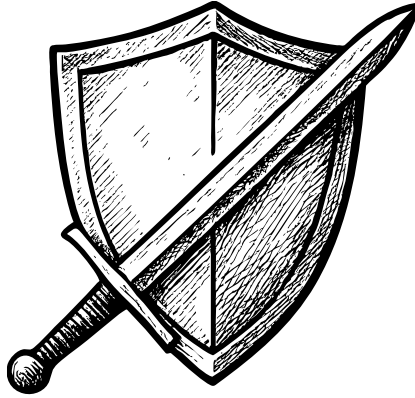
Victory in Christ for Chronic Illness and Life's Toughest Battles

Nina Cesena

READING SAMPLE

Opening material and Days 1-3

An excerpt from the supplied book PDF. Original pages, formatting and pagination are retained.



BATTLES AND BREAKTHROUGHS:

Victory in Christ for Chronic Illness and
Life's Toughest Battles

Nina Cesena

Battles and Breakthroughs

Victory in Christ for Chronic Illness and Life's Toughest Battles

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Dear Friend,

If you're holding this devotional in your hands, I want you to know something first: you are seen. Not just by me, but by the God who created you, who knows every struggle, and who has a purpose even in the hardest parts of your story.

For me, that story began with a diagnosis of autoimmune ITP. Everything shifted in an instant. My body was weak, my plans were shattered, and my faith was tested in ways I had never experienced before. But looking back, I see ITP as my “whale,” just as Jonah had his. God used it to get my attention, to draw me closer, to remind me of who He is and how deeply I am loved.

Through that season, I learned something priceless: faith is not always something we can feel—it's a conscious choice. On the days when healing felt far away and my prayers seemed unanswered, I discovered what it meant to choose faith. That choice transformed me. ITP refined me. It taught me perseverance. It made my spirit strong, even while my body felt weak.

And here's the truth I want you to hold onto: this isn't just my story. If you are walking through chronic illness or any trial that leaves you weary, you and I share something sacred. Our stories may look different, but the God who writes them is the same. He sees you. He loves you. And He promises to use even this—for His glory and His kingdom.

That's what this devotional is about: transformation, not just survival. Victory, not defeat. Hope that is rooted in something unshakable.

Together, let's fix our eyes on the God who turns suffering into strength, ashes into beauty, and pain into purpose.

With hope,

Nina

How to Use This Devotional

This devotional was designed to be more than words you read—it's an invitation to walk closely with the Lord each day. Here are some simple ways to get the most out of your journey:

✦ **Set aside time each day.** Whether it's morning or evening, create a quiet space where you can meet with the Lord. Let these pages become a daily rhythm of encouragement and truth.

✦ **Bring a journal.** Each entry has a reflection prompt. Write your thoughts, prayers, and what God is showing you. Journaling will help you track not only your progress, but also the breakthroughs God is bringing along the way.

✦ **Speak the Faith Declarations out loud.** Romans 10:17 reminds us, *"Faith comes from hearing the Word of God."* From the very beginning, God's spoken voice created the heavens and the earth. In the same way, your spoken voice has a powerful effect on your body, mind, and spirit. Declare God's truth over yourself, and let it strengthen your heart with every word.

Healing is often a journey, and faith grows as we walk it out. As you read, reflect, write, and declare, may you experience the love of Christ in fresh ways and step into the victory He has already won for you

Contents

Section 1: Guarding the Mind.....	1
Day 1: When the Diagnosis Hits.....	3
Day 2: Speaking Life Over Your Health.....	5
Day 3: When Doctors Don't Have Answers.....	7
Day 4: Trusting God When Your Body Feels Like the Enemy.....	9
Day 5: A Bruised Body, But Not a Broken Spirit	11
Day 6: God in the Waiting Rooms.....	13
Day 7: What to Believe When Labs Disappoint You	15
Day 8: Trading Fear for Faith.....	17
Day 9: The Brain-Changing Power of Gratitude.....	19
Day 10: Healing Isn't Always Instant, But Hope Can Be	23
Section 1 Summary	25
Section 2: Protecting the Heart.....	27
Day 11: When the Flare-Ups Come.....	29
Day 12: Releasing the Pressure to "Stay Strong"	31
Day 13: His Grace Is Enough on Tired Days.....	33
Day 14: When Others Don't Understand.....	35
Day 15: Walking by Faith, Not by Google.....	37
Day 16: The Gift of Rest in the Battle.....	39
Day 17: The Power of Prayer When You Feel Powerless.....	41
Day 18: Remembering What God Has Done	43
Day 19: The Power of Peace in Your Nervous System.....	47
Day 20: Your Story Matters—Even in the Middle	49
Section 2 Summary	51
Section 3: Steadying the Steps.....	53

Day 21: It’s Okay to Grieve 55

Day 22: His Mercy Is New Every Morning..... 57

Day 23: Surrender and Stillness..... 59

Day 24: Even Here, He Has a Purpose..... 61

Day 25: Nourishing Your Temple with God’s Wisdom 63

Day 26: Worship When You Don’t Feel Well..... 65

Day 27: Look Again—you’re Healing..... 67

Day 28: Nothing Can Separate You 69

Day 29: Victory Looks Like Faith 71

Day 30: Refined Through Suffering 73

Day 31 – Healing while on the Journey 75

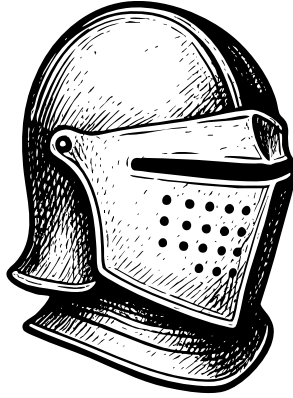
Section 3 Summary 77

When You Wonder Where God Is..... 79

Scripture References by Day..... 81

Words to Hold On To: 93

For More Information..... 95



Section 1: Guarding the Mind

The Helmet of Salvation

“Secure in Christ, I protect my mind with truth.”



Day 1: When the Diagnosis Hits

💡 **God's Kingdom is unshakable, even when life feels like it's falling apart.**

📖 *Psalm 46:1–2; Jeremiah 29:11*

“God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;” — Psalm 46:1–2

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

— *Jeremiah 29:11*

I remember the day I received my diagnosis like it was yesterday. It was a weekend, and I found myself at an urgent care clinic—covered in bruises, red dots, and blood blisters in my mouth. Something was clearly wrong. They ran bloodwork, and soon after, a nurse rushed in with urgency written all over her face. My platelet count was 2,000. (For reference, it should have been over 150,000.) They sent me straight to the hospital.

I was twenty-eight years old and had never faced anything like this. No broken bones, no hospital stays—suddenly everything changed. Instead of vacation plans, I checked into a sterile hospital room where the on-

call hematologist gave my condition a name: Idiopathic Thrombocytopenia Purpura. ITP for short. For the next several days, I was tethered to medications, monitored closely, and warned not to get out of bed without help.

I cried. I was scared. I was angry. I didn't know what the future would hold. But here's what I've learned since that moment: the diagnosis was not the end of my story. It was an invitation into transformation. It became the moment I would begin to discover God not only as Creator and Savior, but as Healer, Refuge, and ever-present Strength.

God's Kingdom was not shaken that day. His plans for me had not been canceled. His promises were still true, and in time I would learn to lean on Him like never before.

Maybe that's where you are today—sitting in shock, waiting for answers, unsure of what's next. Take heart: God is still in control. His Kingdom is advancing in your life, even in the waiting. He is your refuge, your strength, and your hope.

💡 **Reflection Prompt:**

When you first received your diagnosis—or even now—what emotions have surfaced? Fear? Confusion? Grief? What would it look like to lay those emotions at the feet of Jesus today, inviting His peace into your heart?

👤 **Faith Declaration (Speak this out loud):**

"I declare that God's Kingdom is unshakable in my life. He is my refuge and my strength. His plans for me are good, and He is not finished with me yet. I will not be defined by fear, but by His victory and His promises."



Day 2: Speaking Life Over Your Health

💡 **Your words carry Kingdom power—release life, not fear.**

📖 *Proverbs 18:21; Mark 11:23*

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” — Proverbs 18:21

“...whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart... it will be done for him.” — Mark 11:23

I remember the day I first heard the words, *“Your platelet count is dangerously low.”* My heart sank. Fear crept in. It felt like my body had betrayed me, and I wasn’t sure if I’d ever feel normal again.

But along the way, God began teaching me a Kingdom principle that has forever changed me: my words carry authority. They don’t just describe my situation—they shape my atmosphere and my reality.

In those early days, I often spoke fear without even realizing it:

- “My body just won’t respond.”
- “This will never get better.”
- “There’s no cure.”
- “This is my new normal.”

Those words agreed with fear, and fear started writing the story. But God gently invited me to shift my language—not by denying reality, but by aligning with His truth in the middle of it.

So I began to speak life:

- “God is healing me.”
- “My body is aligning with His design.”
- “His Kingdom is advancing in me, even when I don’t see it yet.”

Those words didn’t magically change my lab results overnight, but they changed *me*. They pulled me out of despair and anchored me in faith. And here’s the truth: mountains still move today when God’s people speak with bold faith.

Your mountain might look like a stubborn diagnosis, an uncertain doctor’s report, or a treatment that hasn’t worked yet. But you are not powerless. Every time you open your mouth, you get to decide: will your words agree with fear, or with the God who moves mountains?

✨ **Reflection Prompt:**

What have your words been declaring over your life and health? Are they reinforcing fear—or releasing faith? What truth from Scripture can you begin declaring today to shift your atmosphere?

🙏 **Faith Declaration (Speak this out loud):**

“I declare that my words align with God’s Word. I will not speak fear; I will speak life. Mountains move in Jesus’ name. My body is being restored according to God’s design. His Kingdom is alive in me, and I agree with His victory today.”



Day 3: When Doctors Don't Have Answers

💡 **God's wisdom is greater than human understanding.**

📖 *James 1:5, Isaiah 55:8-9*

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. — James 1:5

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

— Isaiah 55:8-9

When I was first diagnosed, I assumed the doctors would know exactly what to do. I thought surely, someone with years of training would have the answers I was desperate for.

But instead, I heard words like:

- "We don't know the cause."
- "There's no cure."
- "We'll just have to wait and see."

Maybe you've heard something similar about your own condition. Whether it's ITP or another chronic illness, those words can shake you.

I remember lying in my hospital bed thinking: *If they don't know, how am I supposed to know what's best?*

That's when God began to shift my perspective. He reminded me: doctors are limited, but He is not.

He formed my body with intention.

He knows every cell, every pathway, every imbalance.

And His wisdom isn't boxed in by medical research, lab results, or statistics.

I am deeply grateful for medical professionals—I believe God often uses their knowledge and skill. But their limits don't define God's possibilities. His wisdom stretches far beyond theirs.

So when the “experts” don't have answers, I've learned to pause, pray, and ask. James 1:5 promises that when we ask for wisdom, God gives it generously. He is faithful to guide us with peace that doesn't always make sense in the natural, but always aligns with His higher ways.

Your healing journey may not look like anyone else's. But you don't have to walk it in confusion. God's wisdom is available, and His Spirit will lead you step by step.

✨ **Reflection Prompt:**

Where have you been relying only on human wisdom? What would it look like today to ask God to lead your journey with His higher wisdom?

🙏 **Faith Declaration (Speak this out loud):**

“God's wisdom is guiding me. When people don't have answers, I trust the One who does. He is leading me with peace, and He is the Healer.”

Thank you for reading

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