

Scripture for caregivers

Caregiving is love with a schedule, and it goes on longer than anyone plans for. The person you care for gets the visitors and the prayers; you get the pharmacy run. These passages are for you, the one in the chair. They don't ask you to be stronger. They say who is carrying you while you carry someone else.

WHEN YOU ARE WORN OUT

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily 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.”

Come to me, all who labor and are heavily burdened. Then a yoke, which is a tool for work. Not less to carry; a way of carrying it with someone gentle.

Isaiah 40:29-31

“He gives power to the weak. He increases the strength of him who has no might. Even the youths faint and get weary, and the young men utterly fall; but those who wait for Yahweh will renew their strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run, and not be weary. They will walk, and not faint.”

He gives power to the weak. The order of the images matters: eagle, then running, then walking without fainting. Most of caregiving is the walking. That, too, is renewed strength.

Psalms 73:26

“My flesh and my heart fails, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

My flesh and my heart fail. The psalm allows the failing. Something holds underneath it.

WHEN YOU FEEL INVISIBLE

Colossians 3:23-24

“And whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord, and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord. Written to people whose work nobody honored. Yours is seen.

Matthew 25:40

“The King will answer them, ‘Most certainly I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”

“Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me.” The pharmacy run counts.

WHEN YOU RESENT IT, AND THEN FEEL GUILTY

Psalms 34:18

“Yahweh is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves those who have a crushed spirit.”

Near to the brokenhearted, and the crushed. Resentment and exhaustion are not failures; they are what crushing feels like. The nearness comes anyway.

Galatians 6:9

“Let's not be weary in doing good, for we will reap in due season, if we don't give up.”

Let's not be weary in doing good. Paul names the weariness first. He doesn't pretend it away.

WHAT TO SAY

- To yourself: “I can be tired and still be doing this well.”
- To a caregiver you know: “What can I take off your plate this week?” Then take it. Not “let me know.”
- “Go home and sleep. I'll sit with her tonight.” The single most useful sentence a friend can say.

WHAT NOT TO SAY

- × To a caregiver: “You're a saint.” It closes the door on them ever admitting it's hard.

HOW TO USE THIS

Tape one of these to the dashboard or the pill organizer. Psalm 73:26 for the bad days. Matthew 25:40 for the invisible ones. And please, accept the help when it's offered; letting someone sit with your mother for an evening is not a failure of love.