

LIFELONG CAREGIVING

"STRENGTH FOR THE LONG JOURNEY"

Key Passages

- 2 Corinthians 4:16 "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."
- Galatians 6:9 "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Story

Margaret watched her friends celebrate their youngest children's college graduations, their faces glowing with pride and relief. "We did it," they said, "we raised them successfully." At 55, Margaret was just beginning to understand that her "raising" would never end. Her 23-year-old son with autism would need support for the rest of his life—and most likely hers.

The realization of lifelong caregiving hits different families at different moments. For some, it's apparent from early diagnosis; for others, it dawns gradually as peers reach independence while their children cannot. Either way, it requires a fundamental shift in perspective about parenthood, aging, and legacy.

Paul's encouragement in 2 Corinthians speaks directly to this reality: though the body may tire, the spirit can be renewed daily. This isn't about pretending the journey is easy, but finding sustainable strength for the long road ahead. The promise isn't that caregiving will end, but that grace will be sufficient for each day.

Lifelong caregiving is not a consolation prize but a sacred calling—one that shapes character, builds dependency on God, and creates unique opportunities for love and service.

Discussion Qs

1. How has accepting the reality of lifelong caregiving changed your perspective on parenting?
2. What helps you find joy and purpose in the daily aspects of caregiving?
3. How do you maintain hope for your child's future while accepting current limitations?
4. What support systems are most important for sustainable caregiving?
5. How has lifelong caregiving shaped your understanding of God's faithfulness?

Dads

1. How do you prepare emotionally and practically for potentially caring for your child throughout your lifetime?
2. What legacy do you want to leave in how you've cared for your special needs child?
3. How do you balance accepting lifelong caregiving while still encouraging your child's independence?

Moms

1. How do you maintain your own identity and interests while being a lifelong caregiver?
2. What helps you process the grief of potentially never having an "empty nest" season?
3. How do you handle questions or comments from others about your caregiving commitment?

Couples

1. How do you ensure that lifelong caregiving strengthens rather than strains your marriage?
2. What conversations do you need to have about sharing caregiving responsibilities as you age?
3. How do you plan for your own care needs while ensuring your child's needs are met?

Application: Identify one change you can make to create more sustainable caregiving rhythms.