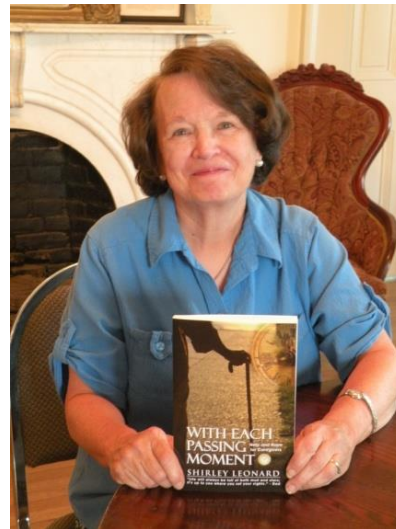


Discussion Guide
for
*With Each Passing Moment:
Help and Hope for Caregivers*

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For More Information

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Book published by: Sonfire Media, LLC
PMB 232
Galax VA 24333
ISBN No. 978-0-9825773-8-7

Chapter 1: AND SO IT BEGINS

“Day by Day and with Each Passing Moment”

1. This book is built around a hymn. Has a special hymn (or song) been important to you or your loved ones? What is it and what has it meant to you?
2. Chapter 1 opens with Christ asking the disciples why they're afraid. What frightens you these days? Be honest.
3. On page 3, Shirley writes about dealing with “guilt and fear gremlins” that seemed to whisper in her ear. Can you relate to that? Why do guilty feelings ramp up fear?
4. She also notes that those gremlins invited other “friends”: impatience, resentment, and self-pity. Have any of those made life harder for you? How? When?
5. One of the unexpected blessings mentioned in chapter 1 was the bonus of time spent with her parents. Have you found that true in your own situation? Talk about it.
6. For Shirley, journaling became a sanity-saver. Can you think of ways it might help you? How about carving out just five minutes a day this week to try it?
7. Have you felt fuzzy and or frazzled, as a caregiver, or otherwise? (Page 5) When? Why?

Prayer: Open my eyes, Lord, that I may see what really matters today. Calm my fears and teach me to lean on you—day by day, and with each passing moment, until the answer comes. Amen

Chapter 2: WHEN YOU NEED AN ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

“Strength I Find to Meet My Trials Here”

1. Is it hard for you to recognize or admit when you need an attitude adjustment? Why or why not? What attitudes cause you the most trouble?
2. Can you relate to the “juggling act” described on page 7? For the author, it was a challenge to keep up with the needs of her parents, children, and the ministry she shared with her husband. What needs are you juggling, or have you juggled?
3. Do you expect your pastor or his or her spouse to be “strong, and full of faith, no matter what”? Do you expect that of yourself or others? Is that realistic—for anybody?
4. For the author, spending time with another pastor’s wife helped her refocus. Who or what helps you do that?
5. How did you become a caregiver? Did the role unfold gradually, or did a crisis land you there suddenly?
6. The author wished she’d recognized the warning signs of her father’s mini-strokes before the big one happened. What regrets do you carry?
7. Share a happy memory that can help you shift your focus from “mud to stars.” (Page 11)

Prayer: Father, the needs facing me feel huge today. Help me see them honestly but without being a drama queen (or king). Adjust my attitude, Lord. Amen.

Chapter 3: WHEN YOU NEED COMFORT

“Trusting in My Father’s Wise Bestowment”

1. Read the Scripture on page 13. Has this verse proved true in your own life? How has the Lord brought comfort or encouragement to you? Did it make you want provide that for someone else?
2. Page 13 also describes the different reactions of three daughters. How have your family members reacted differently to the caregiving needs you face?
3. Page 14 describes an out-of-state cousin’s report. Have far away family or friends ever been a support to you? How?
4. List things you can praise God for right now. (Read Philippians 4:8 Page 14)
5. Page 16 deals with the author’s reaction to both good and not-so-good nurses. Have you experienced both kinds? Can you share some examples of each kind?
6. How often do you feel like there’s not enough of you to go around? (Page 17) How do you handle that?
7. What can you do to be good to yourself? Seriously!

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you truly are the Lord of all comfort. When I am all tied up in knots, come untangle me. Amen.

Chapter 4: WHEN YOU NEED COURAGE

“I’ve No Cause for Worry or for Fear”

1. On page 19, the author writes about complications of caregiving that can pile up. How does that apply to your situation (past or present)?
2. What about the fear of not being able to meet all the needs you see? What does that feel like for you?
3. Have you ever had a panic attack? What triggered it? How did you handle it?
4. Has God ever surprised you with a gift of courage? When, where, how?

5. Who has been an example of courage for you?

6. What scares you most about caregiving?

7. List the 5 things that scare you most right now. Pray about each of them.

Prayer: Father, I’m so scared. The situation in front of me seems way beyond my ability. And yet, even now I am beginning to sense your courage replacing the spaghetti in my backbone. Amen.

Chapter 5: WHEN YOU NEED CREATIVITY

“He Whose Heart is Kind Beyond all Measure”

1. How do you fill the days for the person you care for? Is it hard or easy?
 2. How do you balance life? Caregiving, marriage, family, work? Does it feel more like a seesaw or a merry-go-round?
 3. Is it hard for you to talk about your feelings, especially about caregiving? Do you know why?
 4. Are you a good listener? Could you do better?
 5. Have you tried journaling yet? Would you be willing to do it on a trial basis – for just a few weeks, just to have a place to vent?
 6. When have you stuffed down anger or resentment about caregiving? How often do you hold back tears or words or both?
 7. Create something this week. (Ideas on page 30)
What do you enjoy making? Is there something you haven't done for a while and would like to? Would it be fun to try something new?
- Prayer: Ah, Creator, you have made us in separate and unique ways. Teach me again to laugh a lot, respect the other people in my life, and figure out new ways to cope. And if I need to scream sometimes, Father, please create just the right space and time for that too. Amen.**

Chapter 6: WHEN YOU NEED DIRECTION

“Gives Unto Each Day What He Deems Best”

1. Are you good at directions? How hard is it for you to ask for help?
2. Have you ever been lost? Where, when?
3. Have you ever felt lost from God? Where, when?
4. King Jehoshaphat had a few strikes against him (page32) because of his family tree. Have you ever felt that way?
5. King Jehoshaphat also had 3 separate armies coming at him at the same time. What “enemies” are lining up against you lately? (Page 33)
6. Have you ever pretended that caregiving is easier than it really is? Why? Does pretending work very well?
7. Find a verse to claim as your personal road map or GPS for this week.

Prayer: Lord, where I’m lost, point me in the right direction. Where I’ve wandered off, set me back on the right path. Amen.

Chapter 7: WHEN YOU NEED ENCOURAGEMENT

“Lovingly, Its Part of Pain and Pleasure”

1. Have you experienced the compassion of God lately?
How? When?

2. The Bible says, “My yoke is easy and My burden is light”
(Matthew 11:30 NASB). How does that ring true for you?

3. What lessons have you learned from the children in your
life? Can you list some?

4. Have you ever worn yourself ragged with self-imposed
expectations (page 37)? How can you change that or
avoid doing it in the future?

5. When have you felt the Holy Spirit’s inner nudge?

6. What discourages you?

7. What or who encourages you most?

Prayer: Lord, I have been so discouraged lately. You know. You see the weariness that fills my body and my spirit. Thank you for every small bit of encouragement you provide for the journey. Amen.

Chapter 8: WHEN YOU NEED ENDURANCE

“Mingling Toil with Peace and Rest”

1. As this chapter opens, Shirley describes feeling as if she had “hit the wall” as a caregiver. Have you ever felt like you had no more to give? Talk about it.
2. Have you ever had more than one caregiving situation to deal with at the same time? How did that work out?
3. Page 42: The author’s mother said, “Life’s not fair, but God is good.” How does that ring true for you?
4. Being at their farm provided a rest for their souls for the author and her husband. Where or how do you find rest for your own soul? (Page 43)
5. Who has been an example of endurance for you?
6. Has music, and/or silence ever been a love song from heaven for you? (page 45) Talk about it.
7. Write down things that drain you and ask the Lord to refill your well.

Prayer: Father, it feels like I have nothing left to give. Refill me; help me endure. I’m yours, Lord. Keep me going for however long this takes. Amen.

Chapter 9: WHEN YOU NEED FAITH

“Every day the Lord Himself is With Me”

1. Have you ever looked for self-confidence in the wrong places? What was the result?
 2. What wrong roads have you gone down in the search for meaning or security?
 3. Have you ever felt like your faith wasn't strong enough? When? Why?
 4. Has caregiving ever felt like “a rock too big for God himself to move”? When? (Page 50)
 5. Have you seen glimpses of God's work in the heart of the one you're caring for?
 6. Does counting your blessings come easily for you?
 7. Make a list today and count your blessings.
- Prayer: Lord Jesus, there is much I don't understand. I do realize, though, that I am powerless to handle life apart from you. Increase my faith, Lord. Amen.**

Chapter 10: WHEN YOU NEED FORGIVENESS

“With a Special Mercy for Each Hour”

1. Have you ever felt like “the elastic of your life has snapped”? When, why? (Page 53)
2. What good memories connect you to the person you’re caring for?
3. Have there ever been times you wanted to hold on to anger or resentment? (Page 55) Talk about it.
4. How hard is it for you to choose forgiveness? (Page 56)
5. Who has become the target of your moods most often?
6. What people or situations or tools (songs, scriptures, etc.) has God used to woo you out of the trap of unforgiveness?
7. If you realize you have a chip on your shoulder, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, let Christ lift it off.

Prayer: Lord, you alone know the size of the chip on my shoulder. Carrying it around is getting too hard. Move beyond the smallness of my heart with the vastness of your compassion. Teach me again to forgive. Amen.

Chapter 11: WHEN YOU NEED HELP

“All My Cares He Fain Would Bear and Cheer Me”

1. Read the verse at the top of page 59. How does that speak to you right now?
 2. Are there days when being a caregiver makes you feel locked in? Talk about that.
 3. Is it hard for you to ask for help? Why?
 4. Page 60 cites the story in 1 Samuel about Hannah weeping for two reasons: her infertility and Elkanah’s cluelessness about her feelings. Have you ever felt that no one really understands how you feel? When?
 5. Do you ever put on a brave front when you’re totally falling apart on the inside? Are there times when that is okay, and times when maybe it’s not so good? (Page 61)
 6. Have answered prayers ever amazed you? Talk about it.
 7. How have you learned to hear God’s voice in a new situation or a new season of life? Talk about it.
- Prayer: Father, whatever I have to face today or tomorrow, let me realize that help is on the way. You are still in control. Amen.**

Chapter 12: WHEN YOU NEED HOPE

“He Whose Name is Counselor and Pow’r”

1. In the middle of caregiving, have you ever wanted to just take a break from it and feel sorry for yourself? Even about something completely unrelated to caregiving? (Page 65) Talk about it.
2. Looking forward to the trip to see her daughter brought hope for the author. Has there been an event to look forward to that lifted your spirits, even for a little while? (Page 66) What happened?
3. What memories help you hang on to hope? (Page 67)
4. Do you remember the sound of making popcorn before it was a microwave event? Can you think of other sounds from the past that you miss?
5. Can you share memories with the person you’re caring for? How does it help?
6. Where has God provided hope for you? (Page 69)
7. List the top five things you hope for in this season of your life.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thanks for all the ways hope returns to my heart. Amen.

Chapter 13: WHEN YOU NEED JOY

“The Protection of His Child and Treasure”

1. What memories bring you joy? Name a few.
 2. Have you been able to laugh about any caregiving situations? Talk about them.
 3. Have you found surprising bits of joy tucked into unexpected moments? Talk about them. (Page 73)
 4. How can you bring some fun into life, both for the one you care for and for yourself?
 5. Who or what brings you joy now?
 6. Do you give yourself permission to indulge in a good cry now and then? (Page 74) Why or why not?
 7. Do something crazy, just for fun. What might that be for you?
- Prayer: Lord Jesus, restore to me the joy of my salvation. I've been moping long enough. Amen.**

Chapter 14: WHEN YOU NEED LOVE

"Is A Charge that on Himself He Laid"

1. Do you know the story of how your parents fell in love? Your grandparents? Could you find out?
 2. Have you told those stories to the next generation? Would you like to?
 3. Do you agree that coming to Christ can happen either suddenly or gradually?
 4. What's the difference between caring out of duty and out of love? Are they sometimes mixed together?
 5. For your caregiving, are there more often things to endure or experiences to share? (Page 77)
 6. Is the person you're caring for ever hard to love? Are you? Talk about that.
 7. How does love make a difference in your caregiving?
- Prayer: Lord Jesus, I've been so lazy in loving, and so wimpy. Your lavish love puts mine to shame, yet lifts me up. Amen.**

Chapter 15: WHEN YOU NEED PATIENCE

“As Your Days, Your Strength Shall Be in Measure”

1. How hard is it for you to be patient with the person you're caring for?
 2. How hard is it for you to be patient with yourself?
 3. How hard is it for you to be patient with others (medical personnel, other family members, friends, etc.)? Talk about that.
 4. Have you ever recorded your loved one's stories—on tape or written them down? (Page 55) Would you like to try? What's stopping you?
 5. Is it hard or easy for you to wait? How could you do better?
 6. Has the Lord been a gentle Teacher for you? How, when? (Page 88)
 7. Read the *Shirley's Sanity Saver* on page 88. Let it happen for you.
- Prayer: Lord Jesus, you've been so patient with me. Give me a hint about how to be more like you. Amen.**

Chapter 16: WHEN YOU NEED PEACE

"This the Pledge to Me He Made"

1. Do you have strong family ties to support you in your caregiving?
 2. Have you ever felt like you should have all the answers, but don't? (Page 91) Talk about it.
 3. Who have you watched move through pain and loss, teaching you lessons, without them knowing it? (Like the author and her Aunt Dorothy?)
 4. Have you ever failed to appreciate one season of life because you knew it was ending soon? Or because you were stuck in a previous one? Talk about it.
 5. Have you learned how to "fight with praise"? (Page 92) Would you like to try it?
 6. Has God been telling you to slow down and listen? Talk about it.
 7. Be still and know that He is God.
- Prayer: Forgive me for the times I rush through life, Lord. Thank you for tucking surprises into the nooks and crannies of my day. Help me slow down enough to catch a glimpse of your presence tucked into today and let me soak up your peace. Amen.**

Chapter 17: WHEN YOU NEED PERSPECTIVE

“Help Me Then in Every Tribulation”

1. Is it hard for you to see the big picture? What does that mean for you?
 2. How often do you find yourself juggling roles? Do you find yourself switching gears or changing hats? How exhausting is that, really? How does the Father help you pull that off? (Page 96)
 3. Are you a good listener? Could you do better?
 4. Have misunderstandings ever messed up things for you? (Page 97) Talk about that.
 5. Have you ever run away, emotionally? (Page 98) How? When? Why?
 6. Do you ever feel like no matter what you do, it's the wrong thing? (Page 99) How frustrating is that for you?
 7. How do children help change your point of view? Give some examples.
- Prayer: Lord, it's hard to know what's really happening to the people I love, and how I should feel or act. Please help me see this from their point of view, and yours. Amen.**

Chapter 18: WHEN YOU NEED SELF-CONTROL

“So to Trust Your Promises, O Lord”

1. Have you ever felt like you've earned your bad moods or rotten attitude? (Page 101) Have you ever yelled at God? Talk about it.
2. Think about Jesus being tired and thirsty, yet he still focused on the needs of the Samaritan woman. How does that make you feel?
3. How has God been the “Lord of new beginnings” for you? (Page 102)
4. What does it mean to you to “remember what matters and forget what doesn't”? (Page 102)
5. Do you ever misjudge people? How can you do better?
6. Do you ever feel misjudged by others? How could you change that perception?
7. In what areas of your life do you need more self-control?

Prayer: OK, Lord, I admit it. I'm not good at controlling my moods or my actions or reactions. Please send the Holy Spirit to give me the strength of mind and will needed for this season in my life. Amen.

Chapter 19: WHEN YOU NEED STRENGTH

“That I Lose Not Faith’s Sweet Consolation”

1. How has the mother-in-law dynamic worked in your family? Do the jokes ring true? Talk about it.
 2. Talk about your own memories of grandparents. How did they influence your life? (Page 107)
 3. What does the promise of 1 John 5:13 mean to you? (Page 108)
 4. There’s a line on page 109 that says, “Sharing the sorrow with each other made each of us a bit stronger.” Have you ever experienced that? Talk about it.
 5. On page 110, there’s a line about God’s strength being made perfect in our weakness. Have you found that to be true? When?
 6. Claim the verse on page 111—that your strength will be renewed day by day like morning dew. Do you need that kind of strength? When are you most aware of needing strength beyond your own?
 7. Ask the Lord to be strong in you today.
- Prayer: Lord Jesus, I’m such a mess. I long to be strong for the ones I love, but my body and heart are worn out. Lord, I need you to be strong in my today. Amen.**

Chapter 20: WHEN YOU NEED TRUTH

“Offered Me within Your Holy Word”

1. Has it ever been hard for you to face the truth about any aspect of caregiving? How? Why? When?
2. Has it ever been hard for you to face the truth about your own attitude? (Page 114) How? Why? When?
3. Who's the most Christ-like person you've ever known? Talk about him or her.
4. How have you felt as if one experience of your life helped to prepare you for another one?
5. Have caregiving situations ever changed so quickly that you had trouble keeping up? (Page 115) Talk about it.
6. Have medical or other experts ever given you conflicting advice? (Page 116) What was that like?
7. Who can you trust to tell you the truth?

Prayer: Lord, there are so many things that confuse me and there is so much I don't understand. I'm counting on the fact that you not only know but you are the Truth. Amen.

Chapter 21: WHEN YOU NEED UNDERSTANDING

“Help Me, Lord, When Toil and Trouble Meeting”

1. Did you fight a lot with your siblings when you were children? Were they mostly silly spats, or more serious? How does that affect your caregiving roles today?
 2. Have you and your siblings ever talked about a shared experience that you each remember quite differently? Talk about that.
 3. How are caregiving duties shared in your family? Do you need to learn how to ask for help or maybe, delegate some of the tasks? (Page 122)
 4. Have you had help in caregiving from any non-family folks? How did you find them?
 5. Have you had to make hard choices regarding caregiving? (Page 128) Talk about that.
 6. For the author, Sally Lunn bread triggered unexpected tears. What has done that for or to you?
 7. What do you do to take a break from the pressures of caregiving? How do you relax? (Page 126)
- Prayer: Father, today I don't understand much of anything. I'm tired and grouchy and part of me wants to forget I'm a caregiver. Thanks, Lord, for understanding. Amen.**

Chapter 22: WHEN YOU NEED VISION

“E’er to Take as from a Father’s Hand”

1. Have you ever had a time when you felt “wrapped in the arms of the Comforter”? Talk about that. (Page 128)
2. Have you ever needed God to clear away old ideas, feelings or attitudes? (Page 128) When?
3. Has it ever been hard for you to tell somebody else what you really need? (Page 129) What happened?
4. Have you ever fallen into the trap of blaming somebody else for your actions or reactions? Who? Why?
5. Have you ever had to take a break from caregiving because of your own physical problems? How did that feel? (Page 129)
6. What kind of vision/hopes/dreams do you hold for your children or grandchildren? Talk about them.
7. What’s your own personal dream? (Page 132)

Prayer: Lord, become my vision. You are already Lord of my heart; turn all my dreams and imaginations to you. Amen.

Chapter 23: WHEN YOU NEED WISDOM

“One by One, the Days, the Moments Fleeing”

1. Has God ever given you “wisdom in the night”? Talk about it. (Page 133; Psalm 15:7)
 2. One more time – how many things have you had to juggle while caregiving? Name them.
 3. How close have you come to panic as a caregiver? (Page 133) Talk about it.
 4. Do you ever have times you feel like you’re following God one step at a time like the Israelites with the cloud by day and the flame by night? (Page 134) Talk about it.
 5. How hard is it to face the needs for full-time, out of the home care? Is it something you might have to deal with relatively soon?
 6. Who are you especially thankful for today? (Page 135)
 7. Let that person know— by phone, email, snail mail, or in person.
- Prayer: Ah, Lord, how I need your insight for the days ahead. I am clueless about the best way to handle things, even in my own heart. Give me a hint, Lord. Replace my foolishness with your wisdom. Amen.**

Chapter 24: WHEN YOU NEED WONDER

“Till I Reach the Promised Land”

1. What fills you with wonder these days? Name a few things that do that for you.
 2. Have you ever gone through a season when you felt you'd outgrown your need for faith? (Page 129) What happened?
 3. On page 140, Shirley writes about a pastor who said, "...there's something in every person so wonderful that only God could have put it there." Does that ring true for you? Talk about it.
 4. Have you ever known anyone like Mother Phillips who turned from grief and suffering to fill other lives with blessings? Who? (Pages 140-141)
 5. What experiences have you had either being with or not being able to be with a loved one when they died? Which is harder?
 6. What is your concept of heaven? (Page 147)
 7. Find some ways you might restore a sense of wonder to your life. Share them.
- Prayer: Father, I need you to restore the wonder I had as a child. Forgive me for ignoring the beauty you lavish all around me—especially in the people you've given me to care for. Amen.**

