THE GIFT OF COMPASSION

### *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

### 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

In his book, *Faith and Mental Health*, Harold Koenig, M.D. wrote that mental illness could be viewed as a gift. “It can sensitize the emotionally or mentally ill person to the pain and suffering of others, uniquely equipping them with the insight and ability to help.”

### **We who live with mental health conditions will be able to relate to the sentiments the apostle Paul expressed in the above. Through our own needs for compassion, we have learned how to have compassion for those who suffer as we do. In this way our mental health issues can provide us with a gift for others.**

The hunger for God is great among those in need. That is especially true for those living with mental health issues. I know it is. I’ve seen it. I’m one for whom this is true, well remembering what it was to be ill before I had God in my life.

I, along with others like me, know the pain of depression and anxiety. I also know how terribly unfair it is to be made to feel shame for having an illness I could not help. I understand how knowing God’s love assures me of my self-worth. I’m able to pass that assurance on to others. And because I know the comfort God gives me, I’m moved to comfort others through him.

Have you heard God call you to support those who suffer as you do? Are there people in your community with whom you could relate? People who you could give reassurance to—reassurance that they’re loved, though they might be feeling rejected?

God looks for a heart filled with his love for others. He looks for a heart that’s filled with a love for Jesus and gratitude for what he’s done. He looks for a person who’s willing and eager to *“comfort those in any trouble with the comfort [they themselves] receive from God.”* (vs 4)

To such a heart God has been known to bring the greatest kind of joy. This joy goes to both—those who give his love and those who receive it.

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