CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

BUCKET LISTS & CHRONIC ILLNESS

By Kara Plett

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
(1 John 4:16)

Do you have a bucket list? Maybe you've never written it down, but you probably have a list in your head. Take a minute to think about what is on your bucket list.

Chronic illnesses can put a halt to many of the dreams on that list. Sometimes it can feel like you may as well dump out the whole bucket.

My new reality has left me feeling like my bucket holds many things I will no longer achieve. Focusing on this can be discouraging. For instance, even though I still have a bucket list of places I'd like to visit, the days of hitting the ground running and seeing and doing it all are impossible.

What if a bucket list looked different? I looked at the Building a Bucket List printable, and it led me to think about my dreams differently.

REVERSE BUCKET LISTS

2One of the suggestions on the printable is to make a reverse bucket list where you look back on your life (places you've been, things you've done, or things you've learned). As I spent time on this list, I was reminded of the lives I have had the privilege of touching as a teacher, groups I've been a part of, learning opportunities, and lots of travel (mission trips, holiday excursions, visits with family near and far, amazing sights, walking where Jesus walked).

I could have kept writing and writing.

I was overcome with gratitude.

The reverse bucket list caused me to reflect on so much my life has already held – things I wouldn't have known I would even put on a bucket list until I looked at them from this vantage point. Looking back filled me with rich memories and thankfulness to God for the people beside whom I've been able to journey.

It helped me see that the trip to Africa may not happen now with the limitations of this body, but there are new dreams to dream in this stage of life.

A NEW BUCKET LIST

So, I began a new bucket list with the help of the printable to jog some fresh ideas. I still jotted down some places want to go. I thought about a course I'd like to take to gain new skills and understanding. I wrote down some goals about writing. I thought about books I wanted to read, crafts I'd like to try, people I'd like to connect with more, ministries I'd like to be a part of, and volunteering I could do.

All in all, my time with both of my bucket lists left me full of gratitude for the past and anticipation for the future. I know I will keep adding to the lists and, of course, crossing things off because that's always fun!

Give it a try, won't you?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What kind of bucket list do you feel prompted to write today?
- How has God blessed you in the past?
- What do you anticipate most as you dream about the future?

PRAYER

Father, You are so good. Thank You for all the ways You have blessed us in the past and how You want to bless the future. Help us to stop and see what You have given us and to talk with You about what You still have for us. Remind us that though things may look different, it is still so good. In Jesus' name, amen.