

From the Author of *Calling Out: Prayers for those in Isolation*
HOLLY DICKSON-RAMOS

Strong Spirit

HOPE FOR WOMEN
LIVING WITH ILLNESS

STRONG SPIRIT
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Holly Dickson-Ramos

*I dedicate this book
to my husband, Alexis.
When we made our vows
you didn't know
your lively, youthful bride
would get sick
and stay sick.
Your love and loyalty
infuse life with warmth
and comfort.
Your patience and gentleness
when I am grumpy, weak, or struggling
help me keep going.
God uses you in my life
to show me how deeply
He loves me.*

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STRONG SPIRIT

Hope for Women Living With Illness

*F*ew of us expect to be seriously ill. Fifteen years ago I thought that perfect health and carefree days were the norm.

In my early thirties, I felt energized and capable... until one day my body failed me.

In the years that followed I realized that real women struggle. Real women are not like shiny ads, radiating beauty, good spirits and perfect health every day.

For many of us, life is complicated. Challenging. We battle illness, longing for many things: to be loved, to live meaningful lives, to enjoy just one day without symptoms, without triggering a condition, to feel capable of nurturing our loved ones the way we want to, to be defined not by a condition or a diagnosis, but by our inner selves — the person God sees when He looks at us.

In the pages that follow I'll share some of the highs and lows of my own journey and I'll introduce you to women who wrestle with chronic pain, cancer, anxiety, depression, and other conditions that have impacted their physical and emotional well-being.

You and I belong to a community of real women who suffer and struggle — although brokenness may be part of this season of our lives, let's inspire one another to find God's deeper purpose for us as we allow Him to use our strengths and our weakness for His glory.