**DEAR BILL**

*By Iris Richard*

 *Bill and I are old friends. When we met up for coffee recently, he told me about his struggles. His wife had developed a chronic condition which left her bedridden and Bill struggling with her care. Meanwhile, he was overwhelmed by the demands at his workplace and fears of losing his job. This led to a crisis of faith. I had found myself battling with similar emotions not long ago. We prayed together, but later I felt I had more to share, and this is the letter I wrote.*

*Dear Bill,*

 *It was nice meeting with you, even though it saddens me to hear of your setbacks and hardships. Recently I went through a rough spot in my life. Perhaps what brought me through could help you as well.*

 *When I lost sight of God, finding a place of quiet—like early in the morning, when only the birds were up and chirping, or in the quiet of night when all external commotion has ceased—led me to realize that I had to become quiet, shutting down my mental processes, to be able to hear from God clearly again.*

 *Talking with a trusted friend about my heartaches helped me process the difficult situations. I learned not to be afraid of tears.*

 *Reading a variety of spiritually feeding materials did wonders, as I found passages that turned my key. As I kept searching for hope, it did eventually spring forth.*

 *Finding even small reasons for praise kept the nagging voices of negativity and misery at bay and helped me to keep open the door to regaining my faith.*

 *Since then, I made some commitments:*

 *Whenever I find myself too worn out to pray, I pray anyway—trusting that God will hear my plea.[[See Job 22:27.]]*

 *When feeling too weary to read God’s Word, I read it anyway—God’s Word is living and powerful.[[See Hebrews 4:12.]]*

 *When too impatient to find my inner stillness, I seek for it anyway—reminding myself that God mends broken hearts.[[See Psalm 147:3]]*

 *When my thoughts are downcast and sad, I look up anyway—trusting that the fog will lift, for God promises to reward those who seek Him.[[See Hebrews 11:6.]]*

 *To end this letter, dear Bill, I wish you all the best and promise to keep your situation in my daily prayers.*

*Your friend,*

*Iris*

 *Iris Richard is a counselor in Kenya, where she has been active in community and volunteer work since 1995.*