***We Don’t Have What It Takes to Care for Our Parents***

**(Post is 533 words)**

When my husband and I were young parents, our church friends had an ongoing joke that reflected the challenge of raising little humans. We designated that carefree time of life before the arrival of the first offspring as “BC” - *before children.* Before childrenwe enjoyed spontaneous outings, a little extra spending money, and a good night’s sleep.

But after the children’s arrival, everything changed. Grocery store trips required hours of preparation. Paychecks often ran out before the next payday. And we regularly navigated our days in a sleep-deprived state.

Caring for little ones was tough. Then they grew to be teenagers and parenting stretched us to new lengths. Now, with our children grown, we can look back and clearly see how God sustained us with His grace through every stage of parenting.

Then we totally skipped the empty-nest stage. The summer our last child left for college, my 80-year-old father-in-law arrived. One young birdie flew out and one old birdie flew in.

Granted, Pappaw only needed a little assistance during the first years he spent with us. Then his health began to decline and he experienced one major problem after another. As doctors, medication, lengthy hospital stays, surgeries, and rehab dominated his life, he needed us more and more.

For a season, I was helping both my husband with his father and making regular trips to care for my own parents. I desperately wanted to do it all right, but the responsibilities felt heavy, draining.

I quickly realized I don’t have what it takes. I’m ill-equipped to make good decisions for my parents. I lack the spiritual strength to love and care for them unconditionally. One minute I want to hug them and tell them everything will be alright and the next I want to force them to “listen to reason.”

Many of you are there now - overwhelmed with the needs of your parents. With the responsibility of caring for them. Like me, you don’t have what it takes to do it well.

But I know Someone who has everything we need and more. Caring for aging and ill parents challenges us daily and can stretch us to the breaking point. But, by His power and grace, God will give us everything we need to care for them and live a life that pleases God “through our knowledge of Him who called us” (2 Peter 1:3).

As we abide in Jesus, God’s powerful provision flows through this life-giving connection. The power is Christ *in* us, working *through* us to minister to our parents. Caring for our parents is a joint venture with God. As we step out in obedience, God provides the power to fuel our efforts. God doesn’t promise the task will be easy. But He does promise our efforts make a difference.

Today, let’s take a deep breath and settle into the amazing truth that our powerful God *will* provide everything we need for this journey. Let us draw close to Jesus and hold tight.

*What can you do each day to purposefully stay connected to Jesus? How will abiding in Jesus strengthen you for your God-given task?*

*Kathy Howard calls herself a “confused southerner.” Raised in Louisiana, she moved with her engineer husband around the U.S. and Canada. She says “pop” instead of “Coke” and “you guys” as often as “y’all.” But she’s still a southern girl at heart! Kathy encourages women to live an unshakeable faith by standing firm on our rock-solid God no matter life’s circumstances. Kathy, the author of eight books, including the new daily devotional* [*“30 Days of Hope When Caring for Aging Parents,*](http://www.kathyhoward.org/books/30-days-of-hope-when-caring-for-aging-parents/)*” has a Master’s in Christian Education. She is passionate about Bible study and discipleship and loves sharing at women’s events and retreats. Kathy is also a regular contributor to Crosswalk.com, Hello Mornings, Arise Daily, and more. Kathy and her “mostly retired” husband live in the Dallas/Ft Worth area near family. They have three married children, four grandsons, and three dogs – one of them on purpose. She provides free discipleship resources and blogs regularly at* [*www.KathyHoward.org*](http://www.KathyHoward.org)*. Kathy also connects with women at* [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/KathyHowardUnshakeableFaith/)*,* [*Pinterest*](https://www.pinterest.com/kathyhhoward/)*, and* [*Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/mkathoward/)*.*

***30 Days of Hope When Caring for Aging Parents***

Struggling to navigate the parent/child role reversal? Kathy Howard’s new book, *30 Days of Hope When Caring for Aging Parents*,explores God’s Word to find hope and encouragement for the wide range of physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual challenges the adult child caregiver may experience. Each of the 30 devotions – which can also serve as a guide for a daily quiet time – includes a Scripture passage, a real-life illustration, biblical commentary/application, and questions for reflection.

**(Alternate bio)**

*A former “cultural Christian,” Bible teacher Kathy Howard now lives an unshakeable faith for life and encourages other women to embrace real, authentic faith. Kathy is the author of 8 books, including* [*“30 Days of Hope When Caring for Aging Parents”*](http://www.kathyhoward.org/books/30-days-of-hope-when-caring-for-aging-parents/)*. Find spiritual encouragement and free discipleship helps on* [*her website*](http://www.kathyhoward.org/)*.*