



God's Love for Us is Sure and Strong

*Comfort from God's Word
for Caregivers of Persons
with Debilitating and
Terminal Illnesses*

GOOD NEWS TRANSLATION



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God's Love for Us is Sure and Strong

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Introduction

There may be nothing sadder or more painful than witnessing a loved one succumb to a debilitating or terminal illness. As a caregiver, the struggle to cope with the challenges involved in providing love, care, and a secure environment for a loved one can be overwhelming. Beyond seeing to your loved one's physical and emotional needs, you are faced with acknowledging your own feelings as you maintain a steadfast and compassionate vigil during your loved one's physical and/or mental decline. You, the caregiver, are also affected by your loved one's illness.

As the illness progresses, a cycle of doubt and worry may take hold. You may become anxious and fearful of the difficulties to come; you may find yourself grieving the loss of a relationship that can no longer be what it once was. Your own sense of well-being is important, and you yourself need others to whom you can turn for support, strength, and comfort.

Caregiving is an extension of Jesus' own ministry of compassion, love, and care. Jesus said, "...whenever you did this for one of the least important of these followers of mine, you did it for me!" (Matthew 25.40b)

This booklet brings together a collection of Scripture passages from which you can draw strength and comfort, through the power of God's Word. Key verses are highlighted throughout the text as a way of providing you with reminders that God cares for you and your loved one and promises to support and sustain you in your role as a caregiver.

While this booklet is designed specifically for you, the caregiver, you are encouraged to share it with your loved one for whom you are providing care—perhaps by reading passages aloud at a designated time each day and inviting your loved one to join with you in repeating the comforting words of assurance. Reading and listening to God's Word is an activity you can do together.

Reflect on the power of God's precious Word as you—

*Face your own feelings
Face day-to-day care
Face difficult decisions, and
Face death and loss.*

God cares for you. Draw upon the strength of God's love for you, and remember—

The Lord is merciful and will not reject
us forever.
He may bring us sorrow, but his love
for us is sure and strong.

Lamentations 3.31, 32



Facing Your Feelings

“It can’t be!”

“Surely the doctor is mistaken!”

Perhaps this was your initial reaction to the news that someone you love has been diagnosed with a terminal illness. Denial is a very normal and human way of protecting yourself from anything that is too painful to accept. It cushions you from the impact of distressing news and allows you time to sort all the feelings that are stirred up.

When Jesus spoke to his disciples about his own impending suffering and death, Peter’s immediate reaction was one of denial, and disbelief.

From that time on Jesus began to say plainly to his disciples, “I must go to Jerusalem and suffer much from the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. I will be put to death, but three days later I will be raised to life.”

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “God forbid it, Lord!” he said. “That must never happen to you!”

Jesus turned around and said to Peter, “Get

away from me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my way, because these thoughts of yours don't come from God, but from human nature."

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you want to come with me, you must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me. For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake, you will find it. Will you gain anything if you win the whole world but lose your life? Of course not! There is nothing you can give to regain your life. For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each one according to his deeds. I assure you that there are some here who will not die until they have seen the Son of Man come as King."

Matthew 16.21-28

God's Word of Assurance

For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake, you will find it.

"Why me?"

"How can I cope?"

"What will happen next?"

"What can I do?"

“Am I doing enough?”

These questions speak of the anger, despair, fear, helplessness, and guilt that come upon you as you begin to struggle to accept your loved one's condition. Such feelings are normal. God hears your cries, knows your pain, and assures you that, whatever you are experiencing emotionally, you can approach God and express your feelings.

There is nothing that can be hid from God; everything in all creation is exposed and lies open before his eyes. Let us, then, hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we have a great High Priest who has gone into the very presence of God – Jesus, the Son of God. Our High Priest is not one who cannot feel sympathy for our weaknesses. On the contrary, we have a High Priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin. Let us have confidence, then, and approach God's throne, where there is grace. There we will receive mercy and find grace to help us just when we need it.

Hebrews 4.13-16

God's Word of Assurance

Let us have confidence, then, and approach God's throne, where there is grace. There we will receive mercy and find grace to help us just when we need it.

Know that the LORD hears your weeping.

LORD, don't be angry and rebuke me!
Don't punish me in your anger!
I am worn out, O LORD; have pity on me!
Give me strength; I am completely exhausted
and my whole being is deeply troubled.
How long, O LORD, will you wait to help me?

. . .

I am worn out with grief;
every night my bed is damp from my
weeping;
my pillow is soaked with tears.
I can hardly see;
my eyes are so swollen
from the weeping caused by my enemies.

. . .

The LORD hears my weeping;
he listens to my cry for help
and will answer my prayer.

Psalm 6.1-3, 6, 7, 8b, 9

God's Word of Assurance

*The LORD hears my weeping; he listens to my
cry for help and will answer my prayer.*

Know that the LORD sees your despair.

How much longer will you forget me, LORD?
Forever?

How much longer will you hide yourself
from me?
How long must I endure trouble?
How long will sorrow fill my heart
day and night?
How long will my enemies triumph over me?

Look at me, O LORD my God, and answer me.
Restore my strength; don't let me die.
Don't let my enemies say, We have defeated him.
Don't let them gloat over my downfall.

I rely on your constant love;
I will be glad, because you will rescue me.
I will sing to you, O LORD,
because you have been good to me.

Psalm 13

God's Word of Assurance

*I rely on your constant love; I will be glad,
because you will rescue me.*

Know that the LORD understands your anger.

When my thoughts were bitter
and my feelings were hurt,
I was as stupid as an animal;
I did not understand you.
Yet I always stay close to you,
and you hold me by the hand.

You guide me with your instruction
and at the end you will receive
What else do I have in heaven but you?
Since I have you, what else could I
want on earth?
My mind and my body may grow weak,
but God is my strength;
he is all I ever need.

Those who abandon you will certainly perish;
you will destroy those who are unfaithful
to you.
But as for me, how wonderful to be near God,
to find protection with the Sovereign Lord
and to proclaim all that he has done!

Psalm 73.21-28

God's Word of Assurance

God is my strength; he is all I ever need.

Know that the LORD will not abandon you.

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
I will fear no one.
The LORD protects me from all danger;
I will never be afraid.

. . .

I have asked the LORD for one thing;
one thing only do I want:
to live in the LORD's house all my life,

to marvel there at his goodness,
and to ask for his guidance.
In times of trouble he will shelter me;
he will keep me safe in his Temple
and make me secure on a high rock.

. . .

Hear me, LORD, when I call to you!
Be merciful and answer me!
When you said, "Come worship me,"
I answered, "I will come, LORD."
Don't hide yourself from me!

Don't be angry with me;
don't turn your servant away.
You have been my help;
don't leave me, don't abandon me,
O God, my savior.
My father and mother may abandon me,
but the LORD will take care of me.
Teach me, LORD, what you want me to do,
and lead me along a safe path.

Psalm 27.1, 4, 5, 7-11a

God's Word of Assurance

*The LORD is my light and my salvation;
I will fear no one.*

. . .

The LORD will take care of me.

"How much more of this can I take?"

*"Why doesn't anything I do
ever seem to help?"*

The more you try to do to help your loved one, the more questions you may encounter. Each question is a call to face troublesome feelings—resentment, impatience, frustration, helplessness, and grief.

The LORD understands your impatience and frustration.

From the depths of my despair I call to you,
LORD.

Hear my cry, O LORD;
listen to my call for help!

If you kept a record of our sins,
who could escape being condemned?

But you forgive us,
so that we should stand in awe of you.

I wait eagerly for the LORD's help,
and in his word I trust.

I wait for the LORD
more eagerly than sentries wait for the
dawn—
than sentries wait for the dawn.

Psalm 130.1-6

God's Word of Assurance

*I wait eagerly for the LORD's help,
and in his word I trust.*

No matter how helpless you may feel at times, the LORD is watching over you and is always near.

I look to the mountains;
where will my help come from?
My help will come from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

He will not let you fall;
your protector is always awake.

The protector of Israel
never dozes or sleeps.

The LORD will guard you;
he is by your side to protect you.
The sun will not hurt you during the day,
nor the moon during the night.

The LORD will protect you from all danger;
he will keep you safe.
He will protect you as you come and go
now and forever.

Psalm 121

God's Word of Assurance

*My help will come from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.*

The LORD is ready to teach you new ways of coping.

To you, O LORD, I offer my prayer;
in you, my God, I trust.

. . .

Teach me your ways, O LORD;
make them known to me.
Teach me to live according to your truth,
for you are my God, who saves me.
I always trust in you.

Remember, O LORD, your kindness and
constant love
which you have shown from long ago.
Forgive the sins and errors of my youth.
In your constant love and goodness,
remember me, LORD!

Because the LORD is righteous and good,
he teaches sinners the path they
should follow.
He leads the humble in the right way
and teaches them his will.
With faithfulness and love he leads
all who keep his covenant and
obey his commands.

. . .

I look to the LORD for help at all times,
and he rescues me from danger.
Turn to me, LORD, and be merciful to me,
because I am lonely and weak.
Relieve me of my worries
and save me from all my troubles.

Consider my distress and suffering
and forgive all my sins.

Psalm 25.1, 2a, 4-10, 15-18

God's Word of Assurance

*Teach me your ways, O LORD;
make them known to me.*

God is always ready to give you the strength you need.

Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out.

1 Corinthians 10.13

God's Word of Assurance

*God keeps his promise, and he will not
allow you to be tested beyond your power to
remain firm.*

It is important to admit your doubts, because doubt can instruct you in the ways of faith. Acknowledging doubts is something many people of faith experience from time to time.

Peter experienced doubt and his faith was tested.

Then Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people away. After sending the people away, he went up a hill by himself to pray. When evening came, Jesus was there alone; and by this time the boat was far out in the lake, tossed about by the waves, because the wind was blowing against it.

Between three and six o'clock in the morning Jesus came to the disciples, walking on the water. When they saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said, and screamed with fear.

Jesus spoke to them at once. "Courage!" he said. "It is I. Don't be afraid!"

Then Peter spoke up. "Lord, if it is really you, order me to come out on the water to you."

"Come!" answered Jesus. So Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water to Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he was afraid and started to sink down in the water. "Save me, Lord!" he cried.

At once Jesus reached out and grabbed hold of him and said, "What little faith you have! Why did you doubt?"

They both got into the boat, and the wind died down. Then the disciples in the boat

worshiped Jesus. “Truly you are the Son of God!” they exclaimed.

Matthew 14.22-33

God’s Word of Assurance

Jesus spoke to them at once. “Courage!” he said. “It is I. Don’t be afraid!”

Jesus understood the doubts that Thomas experienced.

It was late that Sunday evening, and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors, because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities. Then Jesus came and stood among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you.” Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive people’s sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (called the Twin), was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

Thomas said to them, “Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands and put my finger on those scars and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

A week later the disciples were together again indoors, and Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands; then reach out your hand and put it in my side. Stop your doubting, and believe!"

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus said to him, "Do you believe because you see me? How happy are those who believe without seeing me!"

John 20.19-29

God's Word of Assurance

Happy are those who believe without seeing me!

At times you may feel overwhelmed. Remember that God offers you spiritual renewal day by day.

For this reason we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day after day. And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble. For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever.

For we know that when this tent we live in—our body here on earth—is torn down, God will have a house in heaven for us to live in, a home he himself has made, which will last forever. And now we sigh, so great is our desire that our home which comes from heaven should be put on over us; by being clothed with it we shall not be without a body. While we live in this earthly tent, we groan with a feeling of oppression; it is not that we want to get rid of our earthly body, but that we want to have the heavenly one put on over us, so that what is mortal will be transformed by life. God is the one who has prepared us for this change, and he gave us his Spirit as the guarantee of all that he has in store for us.

So we are always full of courage. We know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord's home. For our life is a matter of faith, not of sight. We are full of courage and would much prefer to leave our home in the body and be at home with the Lord. More than anything else, however, we want to please him, whether in our home here or there.

2 Corinthians 4.16—5.9

God's Word of Assurance

For our life is a matter of faith, not of sight.

Lord is a loving parent who cares for all your needs.

Jesus said, “Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks will receive, and anyone who seeks will find, and the door will be opened to those who knock. Would any of you who are fathers give your son a stone when he asks for bread? Or would you give him a snake when he asks for a fish? As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”

Matthew 7.7-11

God's Word of Assurance

Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.



Facing Day-to-Day Care

"Where do I begin?"

"How can I help?"

"What can I do today?"

As you become familiar with the nature of your loved one's illness and begin to accept the limitations it brings, you'll find ways to offer day-to-day care. Your loved one's need for love, attention, care, and kindness will increase. The challenges you face may intensify feelings of resentment, anger, depression, and guilt. Turn your troubles over to the Lord, and let God's love and care for you be your daily source of strength.

Turn to God each day for renewal and strength.

God is our shelter and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble.
So we will not be afraid, even if the earth
is shaken
and mountains fall into the ocean depths;
even if the seas roar and rage,
and the hills are shaken by the violence.

There is a river that brings joy to the city of God,
to the sacred house of the Most High.
God is in that city, and it will never be destroyed;
at early dawn he will come to its aid.
Nations are terrified, kingdoms are shaken;
God thunders, and the earth dissolves.

The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come and see what the LORD has done.
See what amazing things he has done
on earth.

He stops wars all over the world;
he breaks bows, destroys spears,
and sets shields on fire.

“Stop fighting,” he says, “and know
that I am God,
supreme among the nations,
supreme over the world.”

The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Psalm 46

God's Word of Assurance

*God is our shelter and strength, always
ready to help in times of trouble.*

*When feeling overwhelmed by troubles, turn to the
Lord for help.*

I am surrounded by many troubles—
too many to count!
My sins have caught up with me,
and I can no longer see;
they are more than the hairs of my head,
and I have lost my courage.
Save me, LORD! Help me now!

. . .

May all who come to you
be glad and joyful.
May all who are thankful for your salvation
always say, “How great is the LORD!”

I am weak and poor, O Lord,
but you have not forgotten me.
You are my savior and my God—
hurry to my aid!

Psalm 40.12, 13, 16,17

God’s Word of Assurance

*I am weak and poor, O Lord, but you
have not forgotten me.*

Trust in the LORD for comfort and safety.

Whoever goes to the LORD for safety,
whoever remains under the protection of the
Almighty,
can say to him,
“You are my defender and protector.

You are my God; in you I trust.”
He will keep you safe from all hidden dangers
and from all deadly diseases.
He will cover you with his wings;
you will be safe in his care;
his faithfulness will protect and defend you.
You need not fear any dangers at night
or sudden attacks during the day
or the plagues that strike in the dark
or the evils that kill in daylight.

A thousand may fall dead beside you,
ten thousand all around you,
but you will not be harmed.
You will look and see
how the wicked are punished.
You have made the LORD your defender,
the Most High your protector,
and so no disaster will strike you,
no violence will come near your home.
God will put his angels in charge of you
to protect you wherever you go.
They will hold you up with their hands
to keep you from hurting your feet on the
stones.
You will trample down lions and snakes,
fierce lions and poisonous snakes.
You will trample down lions and snakes,
fierce lions and poisonous snakes.

God says, “I will save those who love me
and will protect those who acknowledge me
as Lord.

When they call to me, I will answer them;
when they are in trouble, I will be with them.
I will rescue them and honor them.
I will reward them with long life;
I will save them.”

Psalm 91

God's Word of Assurance

*He will cover you with his wings;
you will be safe in his care.*

Love is the greatest of all spiritual gifts. Discover its power to transform your daily life.

The apostle Paul wrote:

I may be able to speak the languages of human beings and even of angels, but if I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or clanging bell. I may have the gift of inspired preaching; I may have all knowledge and understand all secrets; I may have all the faith needed to move mountains—but if I have no love, I am nothing. I may give away everything I have, and even give up my body to be burned—but if I have no love, this does me no good.

Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but is happy

with the truth. Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

Love is eternal. There are inspired messages, but they are temporary; there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease; there is knowledge, but it will pass. For our gifts of knowledge and of inspired messages are only partial; but when what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear.

When I was a child, my speech, feelings, and thinking were all those of a child; now that I am an adult, I have no more use for childish ways. What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face-to-face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete—as complete as God’s knowledge of me.

Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13

God’s Word of Assurance

Love is patient and kind.

When you place your hope in God, you will never be disappointed.

The apostle Paul wrote:

Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has brought us by faith

our Lord Jesus Christ. He has brought us by faith into this experience of God's grace, in which we now live. And so we boast of the hope we have of sharing God's glory! We also boast of our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.

Romans 5.1-5

God's Word of Assurance

We know that trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope.

Give thanks every day for God's eternal love.

Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good;
his love is eternal.

Give thanks to the greatest of all gods;
his love is eternal.

Give thanks to the mightiest of all lords;
his love is eternal.

He alone performs great miracles;
his love is eternal.

By his wisdom he made the heavens;
his love is eternal;

he built the earth on the deep waters;
his love is eternal.

He alone performs great miracles;
his love is eternal.
By his wisdom he made the heavens;
his love is eternal;
he built the earth on the deep waters;
his love is eternal.
He made the sun and the moon;
his love is eternal;
the sun to rule over the day;
his love is eternal;
the moon and the stars to rule over the night;
his love is eternal.

. . .

Give thanks to the God of heaven;
his love is eternal.

Psalm 136.1-9, 26

God's Word of Assurance

*Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good;
his love is eternal.*

Trust in the LORD for guidance each day.

Protect me, O God; I trust in you for safety.
I say to the LORD,
You are my LORD;
all the good things I have come from you.

How excellent are the LORD's faithful people!
My greatest pleasure is to be with them.

Those who rush to other gods
bring many troubles on themselves.
I will not take part in their sacrifices;
I will not worship their gods.

You, LORD, are all I have,
and you give me all I need;
my future is in your hands.
How wonderful are your gifts to me;
how good they are!

I praise the LORD, because he guides me,
and in the night my conscience warns me.
I am always aware of the LORD's presence;
he is near, and nothing can shake me.

And so I am thankful and glad,
and I feel completely secure,
because you protect me from the power of death.
I have served you faithfully,
and you will not abandon me to the world of
the dead.

You will show me the path that leads to life;
your presence fills me with joy
and brings me pleasure forever.

Psalm 16

God's Word of Assurance

I praise the LORD, because he guides me.

Pray each day and know that God will give you whatever you need.

Jesus said, “When you pray, do not use a lot of meaningless words, as the pagans do, who think that their gods will hear them because their prayers are long. Do not be like them. Your Father already knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray:

‘Our Father in heaven:

 May your holy name be honored;
 may your Kingdom come;

 may your will be done on earth as it
is in heaven.

Give us today the food we need.

Forgive us the wrongs we have done,

 as we forgive the wrongs that others
have done to us.

Do not bring us to hard testing,

 but keep us safe from the Evil One.’

“If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done.”

Matthew 6.7-15

God’s Word of Assurance

Give us today the food we need.



Facing Difficult Decisions

"Should I put her in a nursing home?"

"Can I continue to care for him on my own?"

Long-term care for your loved one may lead to your having to make a difficult choice—continuing to care for your loved one at home or finding a reputable long-term care facility. The decision to relocate your loved one and to endure a painful separation will require an adjustment in lifestyle for you as well. Remember that you are not alone in this time of prayerful decision-making—the Lord is with you to guide and sustain you.

Jesus entrusted the care of his mother to one of his disciples.

Standing close to Jesus' cross were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there; so he said to his mother, "He is your son."

Then he said to the disciple, "She is your mother." From that time the disciple took her to live in his home.

John 19.25-27

Jesus turned to God in prayer as he struggled with the agonizing decision to offer his life for humanity's sake.

Then he went off from them about the distance of a stone's throw and knelt down and prayed. "Father," he said, "if you will, take this cup of suffering away from me. Not my will, however, but your will be done."

Luke 22.41, 42

God's Word of Assurance

Your will be done.

Trust in God's understanding and care.

LORD, you have examined me and you know me.
You know everything I do;
 from far away you understand all my
thoughts.
You see me, whether I am working or resting;
 you know all my actions.
Even before I speak,
 you already know what I will say.
You are all around me on every side;
 you protect me with your power.
Your knowledge of me is too deep;
 it is beyond my understanding.

Where could I go to escape from you?
 Where could I get away from your presence?
If I went up to heaven, you would be there;

if I lay down in the world of the dead, you
would be there.

If I flew away beyond the east
or lived in the farthest place in the west,
you would be there to lead me,
you would be there to help me.

I could ask the darkness to hide me
or the light around me to turn into night,
but even darkness is not dark for you,
and the night is as bright as the day.
Darkness and light are the same to you.

You created every part of me;
you put me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because you are to be feared;
all you do is strange and wonderful.
I know it with all my heart.

When my bones were being formed,
carefully put together in my mother's womb,
when I was growing there in secret,
you knew that I was there—
you saw me before I was born.

The days allotted to me
had all been recorded in your book,
before any of them ever began.

O God, how difficult I find your thoughts;
how many of them there are!

If I counted them, they would be more than the
grains of sand.

When I awake, I am still with you.

. . .

Examine me, O God, and know my mind;
test me, and discover my thoughts.

Find out if there is any evil in me
and guide me in the everlasting way.

Psalm 139.1-18, 23, 24

God's Word of Assurance

*You are all around me on every side;
you protect me with your power.*

Like Abram who followed the LORD's instructions and moved his household from Haran to Canaan, learn to walk by faith.

The LORD said to Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's home, and go to a land that I am going to show you. I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, But I will curse those who curse you. And through you I will bless all the nations."

When Abram was seventy-five years old, he started out from Haran, as the LORD had told him to do; and Lot went with him. Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the wealth and all the slaves they had acquired in Haran, and they started out for the land of Canaan.

When they arrived in Canaan, Abram traveled through the land until he came to the sacred tree of Moreh, the holy place at Shechem. (At that time the Canaanites were still living in

the land.) The LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “This is the country that I am going to give to your descendants.” Then Abram built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. After that, he moved on south to the hill country east of the city of Bethel and set up his camp between Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There also he built an altar and worshiped the LORD. Then he moved on from place to place, going toward the southern part of Canaan.

Genesis 12.1-9

God’s Word of Assurance

I will bless you... so that you will be a blessing.

When you are facing difficult decisions and challenges, it is especially important to remember that God is with you.

After the death of the LORD’s servant Moses, the LORD spoke to Moses’ helper, Joshua son of Nun. He said, “My servant Moses is dead. Get ready now, you and all the people of Israel, and cross the Jordan River into the land that I am giving them. As I told Moses, I have given you and all my people the entire land that you will be marching over. Your borders will reach from the desert in the south to the Lebanon Mountains in the north; from the great Euphrates River in the east, through the Hittite country, to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. Joshua, no one will be able to defeat you as long as you live. I will

be with you as I was with Moses. I will always be with you; I will never abandon you. Be determined and confident, for you will be the leader of these people as they occupy this land which I promised their ancestors. Just be determined, be confident; and make sure that you obey the whole Law that my servant Moses gave you. Do not neglect any part of it and you will succeed wherever you go. Be sure that is always read in your worship. Study it day and night, and make sure that you obey everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Remember that I have commanded you to be determined and confident! Do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the LORD your God, am with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1.1-9

God's Word of Assurance

Do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the LORD your God, am with you wherever you go.

Claim the hope shared by all who trust in God.

The desert will rejoice,
and flowers will bloom in the wastelands.
The desert will sing and shout for joy;
it will be as beautiful as the Lebanon
Mountains
and as fertile as the fields of Carmel and
Sharon.

Everyone will see the LORD's splendor,
see his greatness and power.

Give strength to hands that are tired
and to knees that tremble with weakness.
Tell everyone who is discouraged,
"Be strong and don't be afraid!
God is coming to your rescue,
coming to punish your enemies."

The blind will be able to see,
and the deaf will hear.
The lame will leap and dance,
and those who cannot speak will shout for
joy.

Streams of water will flow through the desert;
the burning sand will become a lake,
and dry land will be filled with springs.
Where jackals used to live,
marsh grass and reeds will grow.

There will be a highway there,
called "The Road of Holiness."
No sinner will ever travel that road;
no fools will mislead those who follow it.
No lions will be there;
no fierce animals will pass that way.
Those whom the LORD has rescued
will travel home by that road.
They will reach Jerusalem with gladness,
singing and shouting for joy.

They will be happy forever,
forever free from sorrow and grief.

Isaiah 35.1-10

God's Word of Assurance

*Give strength to hands that are tired
and to knees that tremble in weakness.*

*When things seem to be darkest, the LORD is there to lead
and guide you.*

The LORD is my shepherd;
I have everything I need.
He lets me rest in fields of green grass
and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.
He gives me new strength.
He guides me in the right paths,
as he has promised.
Even if I go through the deepest darkness,
I will not be afraid, LORD,
for you are with me.
Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me.

You prepare a banquet for me,
where all my enemies can see me;
you welcome me as an honored guest
and fill my cup to the brim.

I know that your goodness and love will be with
me all my life;
and your house will be my home as long
as I live.

Psalm 23

God's Word of Assurance

*I know that your goodness and love will be
with me all my life.*





Facing Death and Loss

"Is the end really near?"

"Is there nothing else I can do?"

As you face the death of your loved one and your physical relationship comes to an end, the memory of that relationship will remain with you. As the survivor, you may experience doubts and fears as you struggle to begin a new life without your loved one. God is with you in the midst of your grief and will be with you always.

Even though death will overtake each one of us, we are assured of the great promise that all who believe in Jesus Christ shall see God's glory.

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had been buried four days before. Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Judeans had come to see Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother's death.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "If you had been here, Lord, my brother would not have died! But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask him for."

“Your brother will rise to life,” Jesus told her.
“I know,” she replied, “that he will rise to life on the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die; and those who live and believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

“Yes, Lord!” she answered. “I do believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”

After Martha said this, she went back and called her sister Mary privately. “The Teacher is here,” she told her, “and is asking for you.” When Mary heard this, she got up and hurried out to meet him. (Jesus had not yet arrived in the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him.) The people who were in the house with Mary comforting her followed her when they saw her get up and hurry out. They thought that she was going to the grave to weep there.

Mary arrived where Jesus was, and as soon as she saw him, she fell at his feet. “Lord,” she said, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died!”

Jesus saw her weeping, and he saw how the people with her were weeping also; his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved. “Where have you buried him?” he asked them.

“Come and see, Lord,” they answered.

Jesus wept. “See how much he loved him!” the people said.

But some of them said, “He gave sight to the blind man, didn’t he? Could he not have kept

Lazarus from dying?”

Deeply moved once more, Jesus went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone placed at the entrance. “Take the stone away!” Jesus ordered.

Martha, the dead man’s sister, answered, “There will be a bad smell, Lord. He has been buried four days!”

Jesus said to her, “Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believed?” They took the stone away. Jesus looked up and said, “I thank you, Father, that you listen to me. I know that you always listen to me, but I say this for the sake of the people here, so that they will believe that you sent me.” After he had said this, he called out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” He came out, his hands and feet wrapped in grave cloths, and with a cloth around his face. “Untie him,” Jesus told them, “and let him go.”

John 11.17-44

God’s Word of Assurance

I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die; and those who live and believe in me will never die.

Even when experiencing doubt and uncertainty, you can be certain of God’s faithfulness.

How wonderful are the things the LORD does!
All who are delighted with them want to

understand them.
All he does is full of honor and majesty;
his righteousness is eternal.

The LORD does not let us forget his wonderful
actions;
he is kind and merciful.
He provides food for those who honor him;
he never forgets his covenant.

. . .

In all he does he is faithful and just;
All his commands are dependable.
They last for all time;
they were given in truth and righteousness.
He set his people free
And made an eternal covenant with them.
Holy and mighty is he!

Psalm 111.2-5, 7-9

God's Word of Assurance

*The LORD does not forget his wonderful
actions; he is kind and merciful.*

*Be assured of the hope that is shared by all who continue
to live in fellowship with God.*

See how much the Father has loved us! His
love is so great that we are called God's
children—and so, in fact, we are. This is why the
world does not know us: it has not known God.

My dear friends, we are now God's children, but it is not yet clear what we shall become. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is. Everyone who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure, just as Christ is pure.

1 John 3.1-3

God's Word of Assurance

We know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him.

You can claim victory over death through Jesus Christ, who conquered death once and for all.

Someone will ask, "How can the dead be raised to life? What kind of body will they have?" You fool! When you plant a seed in the ground, it does not sprout to life unless it dies. And what you plant is a bare seed, perhaps a grain of wheat or some other grain, not the full-bodied plant that will later grow up. God provides that seed with the body he wishes; he gives each seed its own proper body.

And the flesh of living beings is not all the same kind of flesh; human beings have one kind of flesh, animals another, birds another, and fish another.

And there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies; the beauty that belongs to heavenly bodies is different from the beauty that belongs to

earthly bodies. The sun has its own beauty, the moon another beauty, and the stars a different beauty; and even among stars there are different kinds of beauty.

This is how it will be when the dead are raised to life. When the body is buried, it is mortal; when raised, it will be immortal. When buried, it is ugly and weak; when raised, it will be beautiful and strong. When buried, it is a physical body; when raised, it will be a spiritual body. There is, of course, a physical body, so there has to be a spiritual body. For the scripture says, "The first man, Adam, was created a living being"; but the last Adam is the life-giving Spirit. It is not the spiritual that comes first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first Adam, made of earth, came from the earth; the second Adam came from heaven. Those who belong to the earth are like the one who was made of earth; those who are of heaven are like the one who came from heaven. Just as we wear the likeness of the man made of earth, so we will wear the likeness of the Man from heaven.

What I mean, friends, is that what is made of flesh and blood cannot share in God's Kingdom, and what is mortal cannot possess immortality.

Listen to this secret truth: we shall not all die, but when the last trumpet sounds, we shall all be changed in an instant, as quickly as the blinking of an eye. For when the trumpet sounds, the dead will be raised, never to die again, and we shall all be changed. For what is mortal must be changed into what is immortal; what will die must be

changed into what cannot die. So when this takes place, and the mortal has been changed into the immortal, then the scripture will come true: “Death is destroyed; victory is complete!” “Where, Death, is your victory? Where, Death, is your power to hurt?” Death gets its power to hurt from sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

1 Corinthians 15.35-57

God’s Word of Assurance

Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Jesus points the way to God our Father and promises to prepare a place for all who believe in him.

“Do not be worried and upset,” Jesus told them. “Believe in God and believe also in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so. And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am. You know the way that leads to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going; so how can we know the way to get there?”

Jesus answered him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me. Now that you have known me," he said to them, "you will know my Father also, and from now on you do know him and you have seen him."

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father; that is all we need."

Jesus answered, "For a long time I have been with you all; yet you do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Why, then, do you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe, Philip, that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I have spoken to you," Jesus said to his disciples, "do not come from me. The Father, who remains in me, does his own work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. If not, believe because of the things I do. I am telling you the truth: those who believe in me will do what I do—yes, they will do even greater things, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the Father's glory will be shown through the Son. If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it."

John 14.1-14

God's Word of Assurance

*I am the way, the truth, and the life;
no one goes to the Father except by me.*

Before his death, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples. You can claim that promise now.

Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey my commandments. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive him, because it cannot see him or know him. But you know him, because he remains with you and is in you.

“When I go, you will not be left all alone; I will come back to you. In a little while the world will see me no more, but you will see me; and because I live, you also will live. When that day comes, you will know that I am in my Father and that you are in me, just as I am in you. “Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. My Father will love those who love me; I too will love them and reveal myself to them.”

John 14.15-21

God’s Word of Assurance

*When I go, you will not be left all alone;
I will come back to you.*

Jesus has promised to be with you always.

The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go.

When they saw him, they worshiped him, even though some of them doubted. Jesus drew near and said to them, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28.16-20

God’s Word of Assurance

I will be with you always, to the end of the age.

The blessings of a new heaven and a new earth are to be shared by those who are faithful to God. God will dwell eternally with them.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. And I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: “Now God’s home is with people! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared.”

Revelation 21.1-4

God's Word of Assurance

Now God's home is with people! He will live with them, and they shall be his people.

Claim the hope that comes through faith.

To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see. It was by their faith that people of ancient times won God's approval.

It is by faith that we understand that the universe was created by God's word, so that what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen.

Hebrews 11.1-3

God's Word of Assurance

To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.





God Cares for You as You Care for Others

“Must I do this all on my own?”

*“Is there no one else who understands
what I’m going through?”*

Caregiving is not only giving care; it is also receiving care and allowing others to care for you. In times of great stress, let other people know how you’re feeling and be honest about the help you need. Identifying with others and becoming part of a support group are ways of sharing the common burden of caring for a loved one with a terminal illness and of coping with grief and loss.

Thank God and acknowledge the importance of giving and receiving help from others who are experiencing similar troubles.

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, and the God from whom all help comes! He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God. Just as we have a share in Christ’s many sufferings, so also through Christ we share in

God's great help. If we suffer, it is for your help and salvation; if we are helped, then you too are helped and given the strength to endure with patience the same sufferings that we also endure. So our hope in you is never shaken; we know that just as you share in our sufferings, you also share in the help we receive.

2 Corinthians 1.3-7

God's Word of Assurance

He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God.

Give thanks for the support and care offered by family and friends.

The apostle Paul wrote:

In my life in union with the Lord it is a great joy to me that after so long a time you once more had the chance of showing that you care for me. I don't mean that you had stopped caring for me—you just had no chance to show it. And I am not saying this because I feel neglected, for I have learned to be satisfied with what I have. I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough. I have learned this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether

I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.

Philippians 4.10-13

God's Word of Assurance

I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.

As God promised to care for the people of Israel during their time of exile in Babylon, so, too, will God continue to care for you.

Israel, the LORD who created you says,
“Do not be afraid—I will save you.
I have called you by name—you are mine.
When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you;
your troubles will not overwhelm you.
When you pass through fire, you will not be burned;
the hard trials that come will not hurt you.
For I am the LORD your God,
the holy God of Israel, who saves you.
I will give up Egypt to set you free;
I will give up Ethiopia and Seba.
I will give up whole nations to save your life,
because you are precious to me
and because I love you and give you honor.
Do not be afraid—I am with you!”

Isaiah 43.1-5a

God's Word of Assurance

I have called you by name—you are mine.

Sing, heavens! Shout for joy, earth!
Let the mountains burst into song!
The LORD will comfort his people;
he will have pity on his suffering people.

But the people of Jerusalem said,
“The LORD has abandoned us!
He has forgotten us.”
So the LORD answers,
“Can a woman forget her own baby
and not love the child she bore?
Even if a mother should forget her child,
I will never forget you.
Jerusalem, I can never forget you!
I have written your name on the palms of my
hands.”

Isaiah 49.13-16

God's Word of Assurance

*I can never forget you! I have written your
name on the palms of my hands.*

*Jesus offers you his abiding peace and comfort
in your distress.*

Jesus said, "Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid. You heard me say to you, 'I am leaving, but I will come back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father; for he is greater than I. I have told you this now before it all happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe. I cannot talk with you much longer, because the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, but the world must know that I love the Father; that is why I do everything as he commands me."

John 14.27-31a

God's Word of Assurance

Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give to you.

Because God is the source of love, there is nothing that can overpower it. God's love is everlasting.

I consider that what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his children. For creation was condemned to lose its purpose, not of its own will, but because God willed it to be so. Yet there was the hope that creation itself would one day be set free from its

slavery to decay and would share the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we know that up to the present time all of creation groans with pain, like the pain of childbirth. But it is not just creation alone which groans; we who have the Spirit as the first of God's gifts also groan within ourselves as we wait for God to make us his children and set our whole being free. For it was by hope that we were saved; but if we see what we hope for, then it is not really hope. For who of us hopes for something we see? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

In the same way the Spirit also comes to help us, weak as we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express. And God, who sees into our hearts, knows what the thought of the Spirit is; because the Spirit pleads with God on behalf of his people and in accordance with his will.

We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose. Those whom God had already chosen he also set apart to become like his Son, so that the Son would be the first among many believers. And so those whom God set apart, he called; and those he called, he put right with himself, and he shared his glory with them.

In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? Certainly not God,

who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son—will he not also freely give us all things? Who will accuse God’s chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! Who, then, will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God, pleading with him for us! Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death? As the scripture says,

“For your sake we are in danger of death at all times; we are treated like sheep that are going to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8.18-39

God’s Word of Assurance

There is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Keep God's promise of blessing and peace
in your heart always.*

May the LORD bless you and take care of you;
May the LORD be kind and gracious to you;
May the LORD look on you with favor and give
you peace.

Numbers 6.24-26





A Parting Word

“Did I really do enough?”

Even when you've done all you could to provide love, companionship and care for your loved one, you may be troubled by doubts. You may ask yourself, “Could I have been more patient? kinder?” Throughout the Scriptures the message of God's renewing love is sure and strong.

Rely on God's love each day and embrace God's many promises.

“Do not cling to events of the past
or dwell on what happened long ago.
Watch for the new thing I am going to do.
It is happening already—you can see it now!
I will make a road through the wilderness
and give you streams of water there.”

Isaiah 43.18,19

The LORD says,

“...I have always loved you, so I continue to show you my constant love.”

Jeremiah 31.3





Appendix: Caring for Yourself

While caring for another, it is important to remember to care for yourself. You are not alone. Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11.28)

1. Begin each day with quiet time and prayer. Take time to prepare for the day and to renew yourself spiritually. Meditate on some of your favorite Scripture passages. Jesus began each day with prayer:

Very early the next morning, long before daylight, Jesus got up and left the house. He went out of town to a lonely place, where he prayed. (Mark 1.35)

2. Get adequate rest.

3. Maintain a healthy diet and exercise in moderation.

4. Take time for yourself and enjoy life outside of your caregiver role. This is not being selfish. Going for walks, listening to music, keeping up with hobbies, etc., are an important part of your own self care.

5. Maintain contact with family and friends. Reach out to others and avoid becoming isolated. Seek out and join a support group in your community.

6. Seek assistance within your community through organizations that can provide helpful services such as home-delivered meals, transportation services, home health care services, adult day-care programs.

7. Listed below are the website addresses of some organizations that offer help:

American Association for HomeCare
www.aahomecare.org

Eldercare Locator Service
www.eldercare.gov

Interfaith Caregivers Alliance
www.interfaithcaregivers.org

National Family Caregivers Association
www.nfcacares.org

National Association of Professional
Geriatric Care Managers
www.caremanager.org



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