

Walk With Scripture - Scripture Lesson

Title: *Finding Comfort in God When Missing Loved Ones During the Holidays*

Opening Prayer

Father God, we thank You for Your love and presence in our lives. As we gather today, we ask for Your comfort and guidance, especially as we navigate feelings of loss during this season. Open our hearts to Your Word and remind us of Your promises. Help us to lean on You for strength and peace. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Focus Scripture

Psalms 34:18 (ESV): *"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."*

Psalms 34:18 (NIV): *"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."*

Commentary:

This verse affirms God's compassionate presence during times of deep emotional pain. Scholars often highlight that the term "near" (קָרוֹב, *qarov*) signifies God's relational closeness to His people, offering them both support and salvation in moments of despair (Goldingay, 2006).

Reference:

Goldingay, J. (2006). *Psalms: Volume 1: Psalms 1–41*. Baker Academic.

Introduction to the Topic

The holiday season is a time of celebration, yet for many, it brings sadness and longing for loved ones who are no longer with us. Scripture reassures us that God is near to the brokenhearted, offering comfort and hope. This session will explore how His Word can strengthen us during these moments and guide us toward peace in Him.

Bible Verses for Discussion

1. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

- **ESV:** *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."*

Walk With Scripture - Scripture Lesson

- **NIV:** "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

Commentary:

This passage emphasizes God as the ultimate source of comfort. Scholars point out that the comfort described here is not merely emotional solace but a divine strengthening that enables believers to extend that same support to others (Guthrie, 2015).

Reference:

Guthrie, G. H. (2015). *2 Corinthians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.

2. **Matthew 5:4**

- **ESV:** "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."
- **NIV:** "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Commentary:

The promise of comfort to mourners reflects God's kingdom values, where grief is met with divine compassion. France (2007) notes that this comfort is both a present experience through the Holy Spirit and a future assurance in God's eternal plan.

Reference:

France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew*. Eerdmans.

3. **Psalms 147:3**

- **ESV:** "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."
- **NIV:** "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."

Commentary:

God is portrayed as a healer, addressing both physical and emotional wounds. Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014) highlight that this verse reflects God's active role in restoring wholeness to those who are suffering.

Reference:

Brueggemann, W., & Bellinger, W. H. Jr. (2014). *Psalms*. Cambridge University Press.

4. **John 14:27**

- **ESV:** "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."
- **NIV:** "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Commentary:

Jesus offers His peace as a unique gift, different from worldly peace, which is temporary and conditional. Carson (1991) emphasizes that this peace is grounded in Jesus' divine authority and provides believers with lasting comfort and assurance.

Reference:

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans.

Walk With Scripture - Scripture Lesson

Discussion Questions

1. How has God provided comfort to you during times of loss or grief?
 2. In what ways can you extend God's comfort to others during the holiday season?
 3. How does embracing the peace that Jesus offers in John 14:27 change how you approach difficult emotions?
-

Life Application

- Spend time in prayer this week, meditating on one of the verses discussed today. Let it be a reminder of God's presence and comfort in your life.
 - Reach out to someone who may also be grieving or lonely during the holidays. Offer them encouragement or invite them to join you for fellowship.
 - Consider honoring a loved one's memory by participating in a meaningful tradition or creating a new one that reflects their impact on your life.
-

Reflection and Encouragement

Reflect on the assurance that God's Word offers during times of grief. Encourage one another to rely on His promises and the support of the Christian community. Remind participants that mourning is not a sign of weakness but an opportunity to experience God's comfort and peace.

Closing Verse

Isaiah 41:10 (ESV): *"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

Isaiah 41:10 (NIV): *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

Commentary:

This verse reassures believers of God's strength and presence. Motyer (1993) emphasizes that God's promise to uphold His people reflects His faithfulness and sovereignty, encouraging believers to trust Him fully.

Reference: Motyer, J. A. (1993). *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*. InterVarsity Press.

Walk With Scripture - Scripture Lesson

Closing Prayer

"Father, we thank You for the hope and comfort found in Your Word. As we leave this time together, may we carry the peace of Christ in our hearts. Help us to rely on Your strength and extend Your love to others. Remind us daily that You are near, even in our moments of sorrow. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Takeaway Challenge

This week, commit to memorizing Psalm 34:18. When you feel overwhelmed, recite it and pray for God's peace. Additionally, reach out to someone who may be grieving and share a word of encouragement or Scripture with them.

