

# GOD UNDERSTANDS



## READERS TELL US:

*“It has given me so much comfort. The Bible passages and the different messages seem to be addressed directly to me and help me deal with my loneliness, fears and frustrations.”*

*“Ministered to me more than any other book I received.”*

*“I have used these booklets for several years as an encouragement tool. I send these booklets in place of cards. The thank-you notes we get back always say how helpful the booklets are.”*

*Go therefore and make disciples  
of all nations...*

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# God Understands

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# Comfort

How does God comfort us  
when we are sad?

In many ways –  
through the presence and kindness  
of family and friends,  
through caring actions  
from people who share our pain,  
through thoughtful words from  
people who really care about us.

And through His Word!

The Bible is full of truth and promises  
to comfort us when we are sad.

Some of those promises  
are included in this booklet.

Read them,  
think deeply about them,  
believe them.

Give your sadness to the Lord  
in prayer –  
and He will give you His peace.

## What the Bible says

“Don't worry – I am with you.

Don't be afraid – I am your God.

I will make you strong and help you.

I will support you

with my right hand that brings victory.”

*Isaiah 41:10*

“When you have troubles,

I am with you.

When you cross rivers,

you will not be hurt.

When you walk through fire,

you will not be burned;

the flames will not hurt you.

That's because I, the LORD,

am your God.

I, the Holy One of Israel,

am your Savior....”

*Isaiah 43:2-3*

“... the LORD will be

your light forever,

and the dark days of mourning will end.”

*Isaiah 60:20*

# Acceptance

It is not easy to accept the death  
of someone we love.

If the death is sudden or unexpected,  
we are usually shocked  
or stunned.

Even when death is expected,  
it is often hard to believe at first  
that our friend or loved one  
will not be with us again.

Death seems so unbearable ... so final.

The death of someone we know  
makes us think about  
our own coming death.

We may be young or old,  
but we know that  
death comes to everyone.

Accepting death as a  
natural part of life  
can help us love and trust God.

## What the Bible says

“There is a right time  
for everything ...  
There is a time to be born  
and a time to die....”

*Ecclesiastes 3:1–2*

“The length of our life has been decided.  
You alone know how long that is.  
You have set the limits for us  
and nothing can change them.”

*Job 14:5*

“... The LORD gives,  
and the LORD takes away.  
Praise the name of the LORD.”

*Job 1:21*

“LORD, tell me,  
what will happen  
to me now?  
Tell me, how long will I live?  
Let me know how short my life really is.”

*Psalms 39:4*

# Feelings

How should we feel when  
death takes someone we love away?

Should we be crushed  
with sadness?

Or should we be filled with joy  
because the person we love  
is in heaven with God?

It is not helpful to tell  
a person how he or she should  
feel when a loved one dies.

Feelings come –  
and feelings change  
from one moment to the next.

Do not be overly concerned  
about what you feel.

Rather, try to commit all  
your feelings to the Lord.

Give the Lord thanks for the times  
when you feel good.

And when you feel deep sadness,  
remember that the Lord  
understands the pain you feel and  
He cares for you.



## What the Bible says

I cry out to God for help.

I cry out to you, God; listen to me!

My Lord, in my time of trouble

I came to you.

I reached out for you all night long.

My soul refused to be comforted.

*Psalm 77:1-2*

God, you are my God.

I am searching so hard to find you.

Body and soul,

I thirst for you

in this dry and weary land

without water.

*Psalm 63:1*

Pray to the LORD,

and he will hear you.

He will save you

from all your troubles.

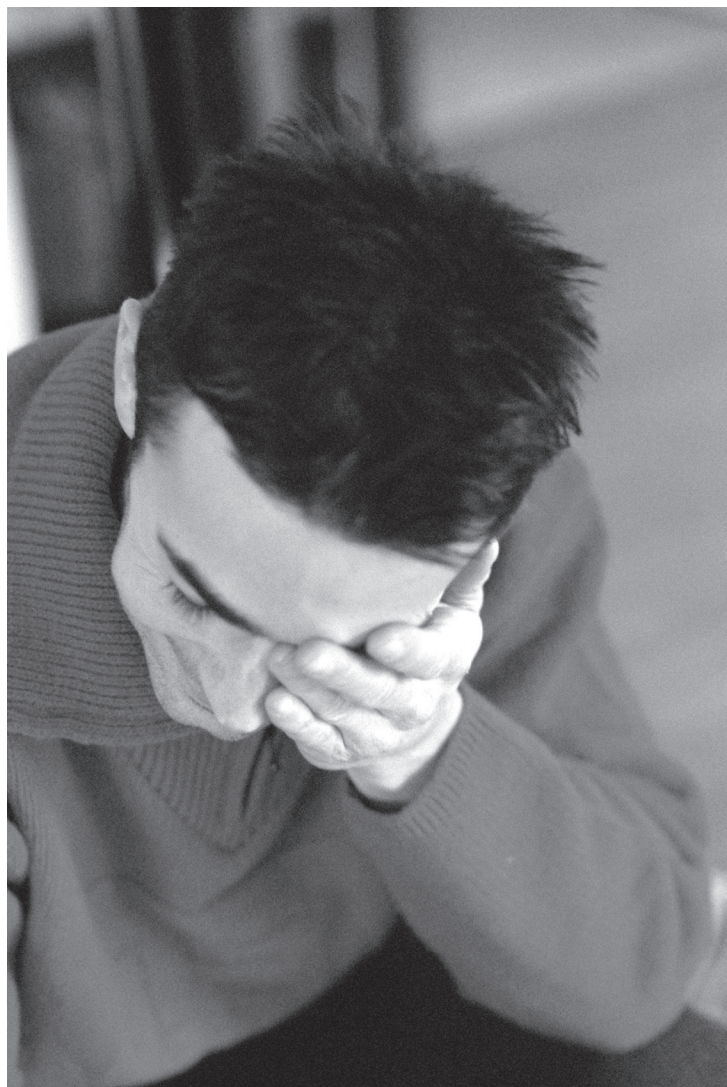
The LORD is close

to those who have suffered disappointment.

He saves those

who are discouraged.

*Psalm 34:17-18*



Trust  
in the LORD  
and wait quietly  
for his help....  
*Psalm 37:7*

# Loss

When a follower of Jesus dies,  
he or she enters directly into the  
presence of the Lord.

Because this is true  
for the follower of Jesus,  
death is a benefit – not a harm.

But when someone we love dies,  
we often have painful feelings of loss.

Husbands and wives,  
parents and children,  
brothers and sisters,  
acquaintances and friends  
can rejoice in the blessing  
the person they love has gained.  
However, we cannot escape the hurt  
of being separated from someone we love.

God understands the sadness we feel.  
He promises to stay close beside and  
never leave us alone when we hurt.  
When we trust Him in our sadness,  
He will heal our sorrow and  
give us joy again.

## What the Bible says

“We know that our body – the tent we live in here on earth – will be destroyed.

But when that happens, God will have a home for us to live in.

It will not be the kind of home people build here. It will be a home in heaven that will continue forever.

And we really want to be away from this body and be at home with the Lord.”

*2 Corinthians 5:1, 8b*

“To me, the only important thing about living is Christ.

And even death would be for my benefit.”

*Philippians 1:21*

“I will not abandon you.

I will never leave you.”

*Joshua 1:5b*

You have changed my sorrow into dancing.

You have taken away my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

*Psalms 30:11*

# Pressure

When a loved one dies,  
there are so many things  
that must be done.

Funeral arrangements, financial matters,  
personal affairs –  
Decisions on all kinds  
of important concerns.  
Along with our sadness,  
we feel the weight of this  
heavy load of pressure.

God understands that pressure.

He promises to give you  
the wisdom and strength  
to complete all you need to do.  
He promises that when you feel weak  
His grace will help you do everything.

Do not try to do these things  
in your own strength.

Tell the Lord about all your worries;  
You can count on Him to help you.

## What the Bible says

Give your worries to the LORD,  
and he will care for you.  
He will never let those  
who are good be defeated.

*Psalm 55:22*

God is our protection and source of strength.  
He is always ready to help us  
in times of trouble.

So we are not afraid  
when the earth quakes  
and the mountains fall into the sea....

*Psalm 46:1-2*

But the Lord said,  
"My grace is all you need.

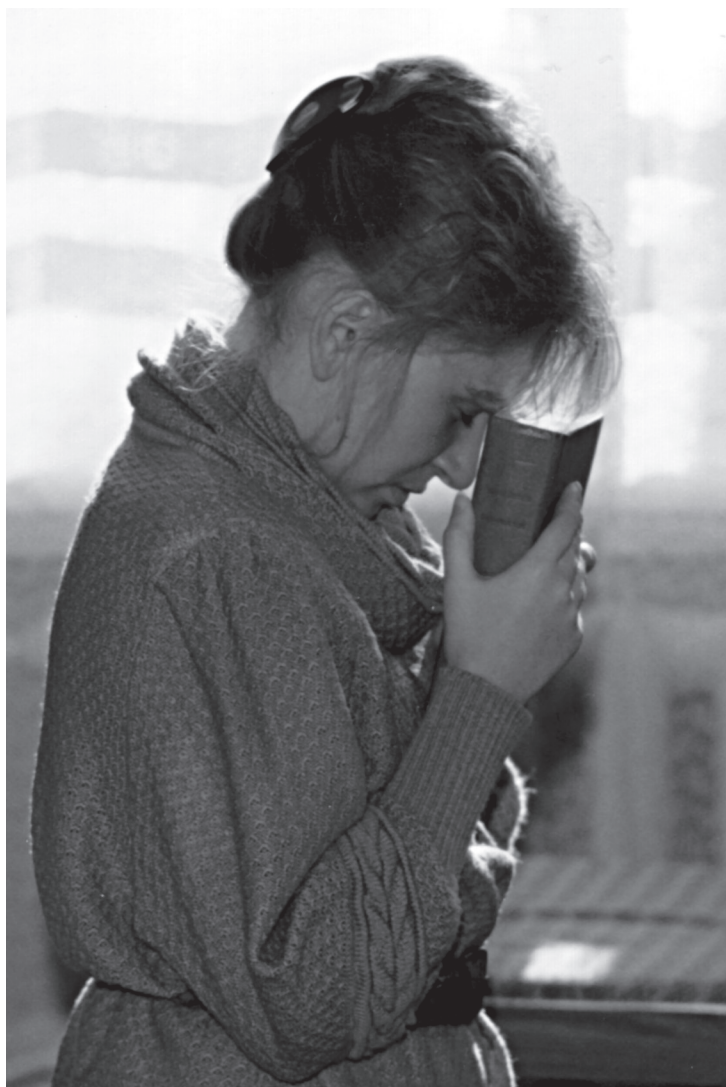
Only when you are weak can everything  
be done completely by my power."

So I will gladly boast about my weaknesses.  
Then Christ's power can stay in me.

*2 Corinthians 12:9*

Christ is the one who gives me  
the strength I need to do  
whatever I must do.

*Philippians 4:13*



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Also,  
the Spirit helps us.  
We are very weak,  
but the Spirit helps us  
with our weakness.  
We don't know  
how to pray as we should, but the Spirit  
himself  
speaks to God for us.  
He begs God for us,  
speaking to him  
with feelings  
too deep for words.

*Romans 8:26*

# Anger

Sometimes our strongest feeling  
when someone we love dies is anger.

Is it really possible?

Can someone full of sadness and grief  
also be angry?

Can someone who trusts the Lord  
still be angry?

Yes, sometimes.

Angry at God  
for taking the person you love away.

Angry at doctors  
for not keeping him or her alive.

Angry at others  
who talk like experts about comfort  
when they have never  
gone through sorrow themselves.

Angry at yourself for not showing more  
love while you had the opportunity.

Let go of your anger!

Ask the Lord to take away  
the anger in your heart.

Ask Him to fill your heart with peace.

## What the Bible says

“When you are angry,  
don’t let that anger make you sin,”  
and don’t stay angry all day.

Don’t give the devil  
a way to defeat you.

*Ephesians 4:26–27*

Tremble with fear, and stop sinning.  
Think about this when you go to bed,  
and calm down.

*Psalms 4:4*

I was so stupid.

I thought about such people  
and became upset.

God, I was upset and angry with you!

I acted like a senseless animal.

But I am always with you.

You hold my hand.

*Psalms 73:21–23*

You have let me see troubles  
and hard times,  
but you will give me new life;  
you will lift me up  
from this pit of death!

*Psalms 71:20*

# Guilt

When we think about all the things we  
could have done for the person we  
love when they were alive,  
we may feel guilty.

There are things we wish we could do over.  
There are kind words we wanted to say,  
or kind deeds we wanted to do,  
but we always put them off.

There may have been apologies  
we intended to make,  
or things we wanted to set right,  
but we never did, and now it is too late.

And so the feelings of guilt add to the  
sadness and loss that we already feel.

Does God understand guilt feelings, too?  
Of course He does!

And where we have really failed,  
God will graciously forgive us  
when we humbly ask Him.

And then, after we have been forgiven,  
we can speak and live and love  
like we wished to do before.

## What the Bible says

I am hurt and lonely.

Turn to me, and show me mercy.

Free me from my troubles.

Help me solve my problems.

Look at my trials  
and troubles.

Forgive me for all the sins I have done.

*Psalm 25:16–18*

The LORD is kind and merciful.

He is patient  
and full of love.

He does not always criticize.

He does not stay angry with us forever.

We sinned against him,  
but he didn't give us  
the punishment we deserved.

His love for his followers is  
as high above us as heaven  
is above the earth.

And he has taken our sins  
as far away from us  
as the east is from the west.

*Psalm 103:8–12*

# Joy

There are times  
when the death of someone we love  
comes as an answer to prayer.

Sometimes people suffer greatly  
from a disease with no cure.  
Others lose all desire to live,  
because there seems  
so very little to live for.  
They may have often prayed  
that God would end their suffering  
and take them home.

When such a person dies,  
there is reason for great joy.

There may still be tears  
along with joy.  
And there may be the hurt of loss  
along with thankfulness.  
But most of all, there is deep joy.

A dear and precious person that  
God loves has been welcomed  
into His presence!

## What the Bible says

Then I heard a voice from heaven.

It said, "Write this: From now on  
there are great blessings for those  
who belong to the Lord when they die."

The Spirit says, "Yes, that is true.

They will rest from their hard work.

What they have done will stay with them."

*Revelation 14:13*

To me, the only important thing  
about living is Christ.

And even death would be for my benefit.

*Philippians 1:21*

"So now these people are before the throne of God.

They worship God day and night in his temple.

And the one who sits on the throne  
will protect them.

They will never be hungry again.

They will never be thirsty again.

The sun will not hurt them.

No heat will burn them.

The Lamb in front of the throne  
will be their shepherd.

He will lead them to springs of water that give life.

And God will wipe away  
every tear from their eyes."

*Revelation 7:15-17*





... But those who trust  
in the LORD  
will become  
strong again.  
They will be like eagles  
that grow new  
feathers.  
They will run  
and not get weak.  
They will walk  
and not get tired.

*Isaiah 40:31*

# Alone with God

Visitors and friends  
are very important to you  
when you grieve.  
But it is also very important for you  
to spend some time  
alone with God.

When you are alone  
you can pour out your deepest feelings  
to your Father in heaven.  
You can let go of the feelings  
that you did not  
dare or care  
to express with other people.

God understands  
far better than anyone else  
exactly how you feel.  
God is also more patient,  
more loving,  
and more kind than others.  
And He will respond  
in mercy and in love  
to the deepest feelings  
of your heart.

## What the Bible says

Jesus and his followers were in a very busy place. There were so many people that he and his followers did not even have time to eat. He said to them,

“Come with me. We will go  
to a quiet place to be alone.  
There we will get some rest.”

*Mark 6:31*

I remember you while lying on my bed.

I think about you  
in the middle of the night.

That is because you  
are the one who helps me.

It makes me happy  
to be under your protection!

I stay close to you,  
and you hold me with your powerful arm.

*Psalms 63:6–8*

I praise the LORD because he taught me well.

Even at night he put his instructions  
deep inside my mind.

I always remember that the LORD is with me.

He is here, close by my side,  
so nothing can defeat me.

*Psalms 16:7–8*

# Loneliness

No one really understands loneliness  
until he or she has experienced it.

Widows and widowers  
know what it means to be lonely.  
Those who have lost their dearest friend  
or a constant companion  
or a precious child  
know what it means to be lonely.

An empty chair, a quiet house,  
silent meals, and long dark nights –  
all these intensify  
the awesome feelings of loneliness.

Those who have never experienced  
true loneliness  
may say they understand,  
but they really don't.

But God understands completely.  
And God promises to go with you  
through the long, dark valley  
of your present loneliness.

You may still often feel lonely,  
but you will never be alone.

## What the Bible says

The LORD is my shepherd.

I will always have everything I need.

He gives me green pastures to lie in.

He leads me by calm pools of water.

He restores my strength.

He leads me on right paths

to show that he is good.

Even if I walk

through a valley

as dark as the grave,

I will not be afraid of any danger,

because you are with me.

Your rod and staff

comfort me.

You prepared a meal for me

in front of my enemies.

You welcomed me as an honored guest.

My cup is full and spilling over.

Your goodness and mercy will be with me

all my life,

and I will live

in the LORD's house

a long, long time.

*Psalm 23*

# Tears

Tears are often a gift of God.  
Tears help to release  
the sadness that has built up  
inside you.

Tears say how deeply you feel  
and how much  
you care.

Tears speak for you  
when you cannot find words.  
You never have to be ashamed  
of tears.

God sees through your tears  
to the pain and sorrow  
of your heart.

Your tears are precious to Him.

And some day,  
when you are in heaven,  
God will wipe away  
all tears  
from your eyes.

All suffering and pain and sorrow  
will leave you forever.

## What the Bible says

Lord, I am so weak. I cried to you all night.  
My pillow is soaked; my bed is dripping wet from  
my tears.

*Psalm 6:6*

LORD, hear my prayer!  
Listen to the words I cry to you.  
Look at my tears....

*Psalm 39:12*

When he punishes,  
he also has mercy.  
He has mercy  
because of his great love and kindness.  
He does not enjoy causing people pain.  
He does not like to make anyone unhappy.

*Lamentations 3:32–33*

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.  
There will be no more death, sadness,  
crying, or pain.  
All the old ways are gone.”

*Revelation 21:4*

# Fear

After the death

of someone who was very dear to us,  
our hearts are sometimes filled with fear.

At times it may be hard to say

just what it is we are afraid of,  
but at other times, we know.

We may be afraid because –

we do not know

what it will be like to live alone,

we do not know

how all the bills will now be paid,

we do not know

whom we can trust completely,

we do not know

who will take care of us

if we no longer

can take care of ourselves.

God understands those fears.

God promises

to listen to our deepest concerns,

to provide for us in our needs,

to stay close to us

when we are afraid.



## What the Bible says

“God lives forever.

He is your place of safety.

His power continues forever....”

*Deuteronomy 33:27*

My God will use his glorious riches  
to give you everything you need.

He will do this through Christ Jesus.

*Philippians 4:19*

“When birds are sold, five small birds cost only two pennies. But God does not forget any of them. Yes, God even knows how many hairs you have on your head. Don't be afraid. You are worth much more than many birds.”

*Luke 12:6–7*

“Be strong and be brave.

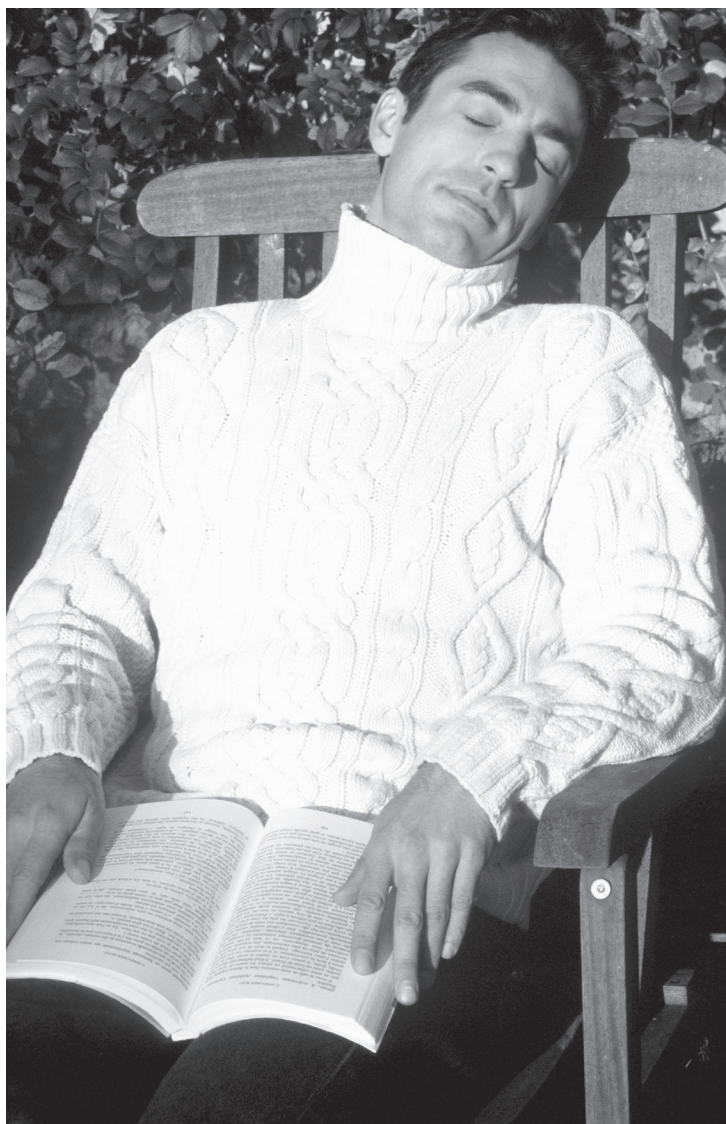
Don't be afraid

of those people

because the LORD your God is with you.

He will not fail you  
or leave you.”

*Deuteronomy 31:6*



Give all your  
worries  
to him,  
because he cares  
for you.

*1 Peter 5:7*

# Questions

Amid the swirling thoughts that go through  
your mind in a time of sorrow  
are questions.

Hard questions.

Questions that cannot always  
be answered.

Why do good people suffer and die,  
while the wicked go on  
to enjoy their sinful ways?

Why do older people live on and on  
with nothing to do,  
while young mothers and young fathers  
and little children are taken away?

Why do some people  
get restored to health,  
while others die  
from the same disease –  
and both have prayed?

Does God listen to our questions?  
Does He care that we can't understand?

Of course, He listens.  
Of course, He cares.

## What the Bible says

“Why must a suffering person  
continue to live?

Why let anyone live  
such a bitter life?

Such people want to die,  
but death does not come....”

*Job 3:20–21*

“Why do evil people live long lives?

Why do they grow old  
and successful?”

*Job 21:7*

“Do you [God] enjoy hurting me?

Do you enjoy ignoring me  
while smiling

at what evil people say?”

*Job 10:3*

How long will you forget me, LORD?

Will you forget me forever?

How long will you refuse to accept me?

How long must I wonder if you have  
forgotten me?

How long must I feel this sadness in  
my heart?...

*Psalms 13:1–2*

# Answers

The Bible never tells us that all our questions  
will be answered  
and every confusing problem will be  
solved in this life.

But God tells us enough  
so we can know  
that He has the answers  
even when we don't.

God's ways are completely  
good and right.

God does what is best for His children -  
always.

He asks us to trust Him  
even when we cannot understand Him.

He asks us to follow Him  
even when it is not clear where He is  
leading us.

God will never leave us or lead us down  
a wrong path.

His ways will always lead us safely  
to our heavenly home with Him.

And, when we are safely with Him,  
we will understand the answers  
to the questions that worry us now.

## What the Bible says

“Just as the heavens are higher  
than the earth,  
so my ways are higher than your ways,  
and my thoughts are higher  
than your thoughts.”

*Isaiah 55:9*

We know that in everything God works for the good of those who love him. These are the people God chose, because that was his plan.

*Romans 8:28*

Yes, God’s riches are very great!  
His wisdom and knowledge have no end! No  
one can explain what God decides.  
No one can understand his ways.

*Romans 11:33*

It is the same with us.

Now we see God as if we are looking  
at a reflection in a mirror.

But then, in the future,  
we will see him right before our eyes.

Now I know only a part,  
but at that time I will know fully,  
as God has known me.

*1 Corinthians 13:12*

# Home

For many of us,  
home is the most wonderful place  
on the entire earth.

For us, home is a place where our family  
loves us just the way we are.  
They understand us and we enjoy  
being together.

But no matter how lovely  
our earthly home,  
the time comes  
when we must leave it.

All of us.

And then,  
where  
will  
our home  
be?

For the Christian who dies,  
home is heaven,  
And heaven is a place of joyful worship,  
comfort, and peace.  
To be in heaven is to be in the  
glorious presence of God.  
To be in heaven is to be home!



## What the Bible says

Jesus said,

“Don’t be troubled.

Trust in God, and trust in me.

There are many rooms in my Father’s house.

I would not tell you this if it were not true.

I am going there

to prepare a place for you.

After I go and prepare a place for you,

I will come back.

Then I will take you with me,

so that you can be where I am.”

*John 14:1–3*

So we always have confidence.

We know that

while we live in this body,

we are away from the Lord.

We live by what we believe will happen,

not by what we can see.

So I say that we have confidence.

And we really want to be away

from this body and be

at home with the Lord.

*2 Corinthians 5:6–8*



Praise be  
to the God and Father  
of our Lord Jesus  
Christ.  
God has great mercy,  
and because of his mercy  
he gave us a new life.  
This new life brings us a  
living hope  
through Jesus Christ's  
resurrection from  
death.  
Now we wait to receive  
the blessings God  
has for his children.  
These blessings  
are kept for you  
in heaven....

*1 Peter 1:3-4*

# Glory

The Bible does not answer  
all our questions  
concerning death.

But the Bible makes very clear  
that the glory – the splendor –  
that awaits the children of God  
will make all that we have suffered in  
this life feel like nothing at all!

The most beautiful earthly scene  
that we can imagine  
can't measure up to  
the beauty of heaven.

For the child of God,  
death is the open door to the  
glory of heaven.

That's why the Bible  
speaks of a believer's death  
as a benefit or something  
of value that we gain.

Jesus Christ takes away the fear of  
death and replaces it with the hope of  
glory – the splendor and beauty of being  
at home with Him in heaven.

## What the Bible says

We have sufferings now,  
but these are nothing compared  
to the great glory  
that will be given to us.

*Romans 8:18*

That is why we never give up.  
Our physical body  
is becoming older and weaker,  
but our spirit inside us  
is made new every day.

We have small troubles for a while now,  
but these troubles are helping us  
gain an eternal glory.

That eternal glory is much greater  
than our troubles.

So we think about what we cannot see,  
not what we see.

What we see lasts only a short time,  
and what we cannot see  
will last forever.

*2 Corinthians 4:16–18*

# Victory

Everyone who loves and follows Jesus Christ  
is promised a glorious victory  
over the power of death.

However, final victory does not come  
until the day when God raises those  
who have died to life again.

On that great day,  
the people who loved and followed  
Jesus will rise  
with gloriously, perfect bodies – like the  
body of Jesus Himself when  
God raised Jesus from the dead.

These new bodies will never  
become sick or suffer or die.

There will be no weakness  
or frailty or pain.

There will be only strength and health;  
our body will be perfect in every way.

When that time comes,  
our victory in Jesus  
will be complete.

Death will be gone forever,  
and sadness and crying  
will flee forever too!

## What the Bible says

But the government that rules us is in heaven. We are waiting for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from there. He will change our humble bodies and make them like his own glorious body. Christ can do this by his power, with which he is able to rule everything.

*Philippians 3:20–21*

It will be the same when those  
who have died are raised to life.

The body that is “planted” in the grave will ruin  
and decay, but it will be raised to a life that  
cannot be destroyed.

When the body is “planted,” it is without honor.

But when it is raised, it will be great and glorious.

When the body is “planted,” it is weak.

But when it is raised, it will be full of power.

The body that is “planted” is a physical body.

When it is raised, it will be a spiritual body....

So this body that ruins will clothe itself  
with that which never ruins.

And this body that dies will clothe itself  
with that which never dies.

When this happens, the Scriptures will be made true:  
“Death is swallowed in victory.”

*1 Corinthians 15:42–54*

I heard a loud voice from the throne. It said, “Now  
God’s home is with people. He will live with them.

They will be his people. God himself will be with  
them and will be their God.”

*Revelation 21:3*

# Invitation

The victory and glory described in these pages are promised to everyone who loves and follows Jesus Christ. He takes care of His followers and promises to stay close during our darkest times.

Here are four steps to begin or maintain a relationship with Jesus – not only in times of sadness, but also during the times of joy, which He promises will return:

## **1. Read the Bible – every day!**

God wrote the Bible for you. Listen to what He is telling you. Hear His comforting words.

## **2. Talk to God – every day.**

Your loved one is not here to talk to anymore, but God is. Praying to Him is not as hard as you might think. Just say what's on your mind.

## **3. Keep it up.**

When you are angry and grieving, you may not feel like reading the Bible or praying. But keep it up. God understands.

## **4. Let others know.**

You may not be ready to talk with people for a while. But when your hurts are healing you can help others by sharing how talking and listening to God helped you.



## What the Bible says

Jesus said,

“I assure you,  
anyone who hears what I say  
and believes in the one who sent me  
has eternal life.

They will not be judged guilty.  
They have already left death  
and have entered into life.”

*John 5:24*

Jesus said,

“Here I am!  
I stand at the door and knock.  
If you hear my voice  
and open the door,  
I will come in and eat with you.  
And you will eat with me.”

*Revelation 3:20*

He will keep you strong until the end  
so that on the day  
when our Lord Jesus Christ comes,  
you will be free from all blame.

God is faithful.

He is the one who has chosen you  
to share life with his Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

*1 Corinthians 1:8–9*