

*5 Minutes with Jesus*

*Quiet*  
*Time for Your*  
*Soul*

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## As a Mother Comforts Her Child

**I**t seemed to sneak up on me overnight. One moment Christian was a little boy who needed his mom for so much, and the next he was off to college—independent, confident, and strong.

One morning I sat in my favorite chair with a cup of tea, looking through old family photo albums and remembering some of my favorite moments from his childhood. There was the Alaska trip when Christian was nine years old. Part of our trip package included dogsledding. The chief “musher” asked Christian if he would like to direct the sled. When Christian looked at me, I said, “Go for it! You can do it. If you fall, I’ll be right there.”

I must have said that a hundred times as he was growing up: “If you fall, I’ll be right there!” Now I say a variation of it in my prayers for him, thanking God that if Christian falls, his heavenly Father will be right there.

We can find great comfort in thinking of God as our Father. But did you know that when God wanted to describe how He comforts His children, God compared Himself to a mother?

In the book of Isaiah, God had some difficult things to say to His children, the Israelites. Despite His loving care of them, they had stubbornly rejected Him over and over again. He had sent His messengers, the prophets, to call His children back to Him, but they didn't listen. Finally, the time came when the Lord decided to let His children have their own way.

But the Israelites had forgotten something important: the same God they were rejecting was the One protecting them. He warned the Israelites that when He removed His protection, their enemies would sweep in and take them into captivity. It was terrifying, heartbreaking news—and God knew it. He couldn't bear to deliver it without comforting His children, and when He did, He used this imagery: “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you” (Isaiah 66:13).

One of the most precious blessings of taking time to replenish our souls in God's presence is the tender comfort He offers us when we are hurting. It is so easy to run to a thousand other places when our hearts are wounded, but our compassionate God wants us to come to Him. He wants us to trust Him with our wounded hearts.

Will you allow Him to comfort you today?

*If you fall, He'll be right there!*

~ Five Minutes in the Word ~

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.*

Isaiah 40:1

*You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"*

Isaiah 40:9

*He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.*

Isaiah 40:11

*Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God"? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.*

Isaiah 40:27-28

*He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

Isaiah 40:29-31





## The Lord Is Our Protector

Parents can be pretty intense when it comes to protecting their kids.

When children are tiny, it is all about babyproofing—setting up gates in front of stairs, putting guards on sharp corners, and locking cabinets filled with cleaning supplies.

Then the children get a little older, and parents frantically say a lot of the same phrases over and over: “Look both ways before you cross the street!” “Do you have your coat?” “Don’t talk to strangers!”

A few more years pass, and moms and dads find themselves having hard conversations about texting and driving, safe dating, and on and on and on . . .

I am not sure a parent ever stops being concerned about a child’s safety.

Have you ever thought about the truth that your heavenly Father wants to keep you, His child, safe too? Matthew 2 tells us about just such a time. Jesus was still young,

probably a toddler, when His earthly father, Joseph, received an urgent warning from God in a dream.

“Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him” (vv. 13–14).

I wonder how Joseph felt when those urgent words interrupted his dreams. The angel’s appearance—and message—must have been terrifying!

Jesus’ very life depended on Joseph’s willingness to listen and obey, and Joseph did not hesitate. Matthew 2:14 tells us he got up and took his family to safety that very night.

Just as Joseph loved and protected his son, God loves you and wants to keep you safe. He might speak to you urgently in a dream as He spoke to Joseph, but more often He speaks gently and softly.

One of the greatest gifts of spending time in quiet listening to God is getting to know His voice. Being able to recognize it opens the way for Him to speak into our lives and keep us from harm. Sometimes He will keep us from physical harm, but He seeks to keep us safe in so many other ways as well.

As a loving Father, He might warn us away from a toxic relationship or hold up a stop sign concerning a major life change. But one of the beautiful things about our Savior is that He also cares about

the small things in our lives, about the habits that harm us and the old wounds that make us vulnerable.

When I was young, I didn't always go along with my mother's attempts to protect me. Now that I am older, I hope I am wiser. I want to follow Joseph's example by listening closely to my loving Father's words of protection in my life.

Like Joseph, may we never hesitate to obey!

*Today I will listen for the Lord's voice  
and trust that He is watching over me.*

## ~C~ Five Minutes in the Word ~D~

*The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen  
you and protect you from the evil one.*

2 Thessalonians 3:3

*The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.*

Psalms 121:6

*If you say, “The LORD is my refuge,” and you make  
the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake  
you, no disaster will come near your tent.*

Psalm 91:9–10

*The LORD will keep you from all  
harm—he will watch over your life.*

Psalm 121:7

*The waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the  
complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to  
me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.*

Proverbs 1:32–33



## How He Longs for You

**I**t is truly one of the most heartbreaking moments in all of Scripture.

In Matthew 23:37, we see Jesus' heart for Israel, His wandering people: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing."

Jesus spoke these words to the Jews, but His divine words tell us a lot about the heart of God for all His people. Our heavenly Father longs for relationship with His children. He longs to protect them, to be near them, to hold them close to His heart.

Maybe you find that thought surprising, but we can find a lot of evidence in Scripture that God desires an intimate relationship with us. Way back in the garden, before God banished Adam and Eve from Eden, He made a promise that He would find a way to bring His children back home.

It would take centuries for that rescue story to play out. Battles would be waged and kingdoms would rise and fall, all as part of that rescue plan, all leading up to the birth of the Messiah.

And when that Messiah came, He loved to tell stories about God's longing heart. Jesus compared God and His lost children to a woman who searched for her precious lost coin, and to a shepherd who was so desperate to find one wayward sheep that he left all the other sheep to search for it and bring it home (Luke 15:1-10).

Finally, Jesus said, God's longing for His lost children was like a father who had lost his son, a father who would never give up and who would give absolutely anything to have his boy come home (vv. 11-32).

What about you? Have you wandered far away from home? Or perhaps you just need to hear your Father say those sweet words one more time:

“Oh, how I long to gather you near . . .”

*You don't have to clean yourself up to  
come home to your Father. Just come.*

## Five Minutes in the Word

*“My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”*

Luke 15:31–32

*“I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”*

Luke 15:7

*“The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*

Luke 19:10

*“I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.”*

Isaiah 44:22

*“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.”*

John 10:27–28