

Comfort

“Comfort, oh comfort My people, says your God.” Isaiah 40:1

Have you ever needed comforted? I have. You probably have to.

Isaiah’s word to comfort people is so appropriate for our day. People everywhere are in need of comfort.

So what is comfort all about? Comfort is supporting, helping, assisting and encouraging someone when life has become uncomfortable.

Life can become uncomfortable in a hurry. Disappointments. Setbacks. Losses. Reversals. Disasters. Tragedies. Persecution. Seasons of Suffering . Comfort is what we need when life turns south and is upside down.

This devotional is on my heart because I am currently attempting to comfort some precious people who are hurting in unimaginable ways. So I am speaking to me as well as you the reader.

God’s Comforting Process

The Apostle Paul opens his second letter to the Corinthians with a word about comfort.

“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 any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.”
II Corinthians 2:3-5

Paul praises God as the source of all comfort. God comforts us in all of our affliction and difficulties. Note Paul says that our comfort is abundant through Christ. God’s comfort to us through Jesus is more than enough to endure and overcome a season of suffering.

I see three simple steps when comforting people who need comforted.

1. Receive God’s comfort ourselves (verses 3-4). We can only give what we have. To comfort others we must be comforted ourselves. The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, the Helper, the one who comes alongside to assist in time of need (see John 14:16-26. 16:7-15). God comforts us with His comfort when we are suffering.

2. Reach out to people who need comforting (verse 4a). God's comfort in my life is to be shared, not hoarded. You and I are able to comfort others because He comforted us. We can pass on God's comfort to hurting people who seek comfort and encouragement.

3. Give them the comfort God has given you (verse 4b). Share your story of God's comfort. Read scriptures that ministered comfort to you. Pray for the Holy Spirit to comfort them in the way you have been comforted. Agree in faith with them for the things they need to feel secure, stable, and strong in the Lord.

Here a few practical things I am learning about comforting people.

People who are suffering and needing comfort DON'T NEED: pious platitudes, flowery speeches, theological lectures, or shallow, sugar coated solutions to their problems. Feeling devastated, they don't need to be told in a flippant fashion that everything will be all right. Be careful not to tell them you understand their pain if you have not personally experienced what they are going through.

Hurting people don't need to hear "I am here for you" and not hear from you again.

People who are suffering and need comforting DO NEED: loved and supported unconditionally. They need people who love them to come alongside and minister to them on their terms. A listening ear...a compassionate heart...an appropriate hug is comforting. Words of hope are welcome. Sharing simple promises from God's Word provides stability and strength. Suffering folks need practical acts of service ... childcare, meals, cover chores, lighten their schedule.

They need to know that you and God are with them.

Golden Rule of Comfort: Comfort others in the same manner you would like to be comforted.

Have you received God's comfort in your life? Do you now someone that you care about who is suffering and needs comforted? Why not reach out to comfort them with the comfort you have received?

Trust me. When you sincerely and prayerfully reach out to comfort a hurting person with God's comfort, it will be received with gratitude.

"This is my comfort in my affliction, that Thy word has revived me." Psalm 119:50

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou are with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.” *Psalm 23:4*

A Word For Your Week: Comfort someone who needs comforted with God’s comfort.