

Comforting with Christ and His Word

Have you ever been in a situation where you just don't know what to say to a person? As you go and visit with widows, you will likely have a lot of those moments. There are certainly things that we shouldn't say. There are also some things that we should say and do to comfort. But really, our words are always inadequate. Thankfully, God gives us His words – and they are always good, always helpful, and always true.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*

We're going to provide you with a booklet of Scripture passages that you can use when comforting widows. This document is about using that; it's about using God's Word to bring comfort to people.

The first step to comforting someone with Christ and His Word is prayer.

-On our own, we are completely inadequate at comforting and at using God's Word. But, God will send us His Holy Spirit, whom he calls “the Comforter” to speak through us, to help us to interpret and use the Scriptures, and to work in those whom we are talking to in order to actually bring them comfort.

-Before every visit to a widow, take a few moments and pray. Be humble and recognize your own inadequacy without God. Pray that God would give you wisdom and the right words to say. Pray that God would put His Spirit on you and work and speak through you. Pray that God would put His Spirit on the person that you're talking to so that they would be truly comforted.

-John 14:16-17 – *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”*

-Romans 8:26-27 – *“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”*

Each time you visit a widow, you should spend time listening and talking with them about their lives, struggles, etc. But make sure that every time, you also spend time in God's Word. When the time comes, choose a passage and read it to them.

-As you read, do so slowly and clearly. Make sure that they can hear and understand you.

-When you read, emphasize with your voice particular parts of the passage that you think are particularly pertinent.

When you have finished reading, it is important that you say a few words about what you just read. During this time, you should connect what you were talking about with them to God's Word – His hope, His promises, His love, and His death and resurrection for mankind.

-When you do this, never discount or discourage their thoughts and their feelings, but rather acknowledge them. It's normal, understandable, and acceptable for them to feel sad, hurt, upset, angry, lost, etc. Don't take this as a 'lack of faith.' Rather, understand that in their current situation, they are really struggling. Remember, even Jesus, who had perfect faith, grieved and was in anguish (**John 11:35, Luke 22:44**).

-Present God's message, not as a 'cure' for what they are feeling, but rather as a light in the darkness, something sturdy they can cling to (**Psalm 119:105, 2 Peter 1:19**). If you present it as a 'cure', they may see themselves as weak or inadequate when their emotions aren't immediately fixed, and rarely will God miraculously, instantaneously 'cure' someone's grief.

-God's Word is like a diamond, as you turn it, different facets shine and sparkle. Use God's Word as the light in the particular darkness that they have expressed that they are feeling. For instance:

-If they have expressed despair or depression, speak God's message in terms of 'hope.'

-If they have expressed loneliness, speak God's message in terms of 'relationship' or 'love.'

-If they have expressed uncertainty or fear, speak God's message in terms of 'peace.'

-Ultimately, God's Word is about Jesus Christ – his death and resurrection. Whatever passage that you are reading them **NEEDS TO BE CONNECTED BY YOU TO JESUS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR THEM.**

-It's the cross and empty tomb that really assure us that 'hope,' 'relationship,' 'love,' and 'peace' are real. Jesus' death and resurrection are the only things that really provide and prove these comforts.

-1 Corinthians 1:18 – *“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

-1 Corinthians 1:23-24 – *“We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”*

-1 Corinthians 2:2 – *“For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”*

-Jesus' death and resurrection provide a three-fold comfort that is better than any other in the universe. As you connect the Bible passage to their hurt and to Jesus' cross and empty tomb, make sure to bring in these three aspects of comfort:

1. Jesus' cross proves that God knows exactly what they're going through. God knows sorrow, pain, loss, hurt, abandonment, fear, etc.

-Hebrews 2:9-10 – *“But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.”*

2. God cares for us immensely. In the cross, we see that God is ‘all in’ for us. He’s already done what was worst for himself in order to do what’s best for us – He’s not going to stop caring for us now.

-Romans 8:32, 35, 38-39 – *“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?... For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

3. God will deliver us from our sufferings. Jesus’ crucifixion shows that God cares so much about us that he would do the most radical of all things: allow himself to die in order to forgive the sins that have ruined this world and caused us so much suffering. Jesus’ resurrection proves that God really has defeated sin, death, and suffering. He doesn’t promise to deliver us this moment, but the cross and empty tomb demonstrate that God will one day deliver us from our suffering to an eternity free from suffering!

-Colossians 1:13-14 – *“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”*

-Revelation 21:4 – *“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

-By doing all of this, you are taking their grief and giving them the tool that they need for positively dealing with their emotions: God’s Word and His promises. You’re giving them something certain. You’re giving them something they can trust. And you’re turning them away from themselves and helping them to focus on God. They won’t immediately be better, but as you continue to speak God’s comforting message, their faith will be bolstered and God will bring them relief and comfort.

Finally, you should always pray with those whom you are visiting. Put them and their sorrows and sufferings in the hands of God – the only One who truly can and does help.

-Invite God into their lives, ask Him to cradle them in His arms, ask Him to bring healing to their grief, ask Him to help in any particular situations that they mentioned, and finally, thank God for the hope, peace, love, and deliverance that He gives through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

-Ephesians 6:18 – *“Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.”*

-Philippians 4:6-7 – *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*