



# Words of Wisdom

From the Older Adult Ministries of  
the Kentucky Conference

## ENCOURAGEMENT FOR CAREGIVERS

### Six Bible Verses to Give You Strength for Your Care Giving Journey

When a caregiving situation continues for weeks, months, or even years, it's challenging. I've become very aware that I don't feel strong enough to handle the physical and specially the emotional demands of caregiving. I'd like to say I've always stayed positive and full of faith, but in reality, I've sometimes found it hard to keep going. I realized that I needed to learn to rely more fully on God to help me cope.

So, I've taken intentional steps to encourage myself and to keep communication lines with God open. Specific verses in my daily Bible reading sometimes jump out at me. Verses that remind me how much God loves me or promises that He will strengthen and protect me whatever the circumstances are hugely encouraging. But in the rush of everyday life, it's easy to forget, so I've been exploring ways to bring them to mind when I'm busy or feeling overwhelmed.

I organize uplifting worship songs into playlists so I can listen to them while I'm cleaning or doing the laundry. I draw or stitch Bible verses onto bookmarks, so I see them when I'm reading. Sometimes I write out reassuring scripture on small cards or sticky notes and carry them round in my pocket to take out and read throughout the day.

It's not about telling myself how I *should* feel, but more about acknowledging my true feelings to God and looking to Him to help me find a way through the difficult times. I hope you find these verses encouraging too.

#### 1. When things feel overwhelming

When your loved one gets a serious diagnosis and you don't know what the future holds, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. But sometimes it's just the myriad of day-to-day tasks that seem overwhelming, so it helps to remember that God is our strength. When I'm in this situation, one of my favorite verses is Psalm 3:3: **"For you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory and the lifter of my head."**

## **2. When you're afraid**

When you're faced with the suffering of a loved one, or the possibility of living life without them, the future can seem very dark. We all prefer to know that things will be OK, but God never promised us that life would be easy, only that He would always be with us. I've taken great comfort from Isaiah 41:10: **"Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious: I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand."**

## **3. When you're worrying about the future**

Perhaps you're got a hospital appointment tomorrow, or you're wondering who will look after your disabled child when you're gone? You're not sure how life is going to pan out. At times like this, I try to remember that God has already gone before me and has promised to be with me – no matter what. Deuteronomy 31:8 tells us **"It is the Lord who goes before you; He will be with you and will never fail you or forsake you. So do not fear or be dismayed."**

## **4. When you're feeling lonely**

Caregiving can be lonely. You may be confined to the house with little opportunity to go out or spend time with others. If like my father, your loved one becomes unable to speak or respond to you, it's easy to feel terribly alone. But God is omnipresent – with us every moment of the day and night (and sometimes nights are the most difficult). We only need to reach out and God is there. This sentiment is affirmed in Psalm 46:2: **"God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in distress."**

## **5. When you are expecting doubt**

There may be moments in the midst of caregiving when we begin to doubt that God loves us and wants the best for us. In troubling situations, it can be easy to focus on the circumstances around us and not on God's faithfulness to us. But Jesus was kind to those who doubted and didn't accuse or blame them. When Thomas doubted the truth of His resurrection, Jesus allowed him to touch the wounds and see for himself. You can read about this in John 20:24-29.

## **6. When you are weary**

Caregiving is physically demanding – you may be nursing someone who is sick or disabled, or lifting a child constantly. Just staying on top of the cooking, cleaning, and laundry can feel totally exhausting, in addition to the emotional stress you are experiencing. Sometimes, it is not easy to get as much rest as we need, and at times like these, I rely on God to give me strength. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus urges us to come to Him when we feel weary. I also love the image of an eagle rising above the storm in Isaiah 40:29-31: **"They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on eagles' wings."**

Caregiving can feel all-consuming and at times, we may feel inadequate for the task. But placing daily reminders in my path reassures me of God's presence and helps make the task feel less daunting.

By Elizabeth Manneh, a freelance writer. This was first published as an article on the webpage for Discipleship Ministries/Older Adults on November 15, 2017.