

FEAR LESS: Unfailing Courage from the Ultimate Shepherd

Daily Devotional Day 3: Our Refuge and Strength

[Family Version]

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Have you ever been really sad or upset about something and just wanted to run and hide? Describe what happened and what that felt like.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Who do you typically run to when you get hurt? Who do you want to talk to or hug when you are upset? Why do you think you run to that person?

READ: Isaiah 40:6-11

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Describe the qualities of a shepherd that you see in this passage. What does He do for His sheep?

DISCUSSION QUESTION: What other kinds of people or relationships does this image of gathering them up and carrying them close to his heart remind you of?

When we fall down and scrape our knees or someone hurts our feelings and we start to cry, most of us run to our mom, dad, grandma or grandpa to comfort us. When you're hurt, nothing makes you feel better like a comforting hug from someone you love. Even big kids, grown-ups, run to others for a hug or comfort when we are hurt.

Did you know that when your mom or dad is really upset about something or really needs to talk, they usually call *their* mom or dad, or someone older than them who is like a parent? Why? Because they know their parents are the ones who love them most in the whole world. No matter what they say or do, their parents will always love them, always protect them, and always comfort them when they are sad. Their parents can be a "safe place," just like your parents hope to be for you.

In the Psalms, David describes God as the "safe place" we can run to when we're scared or hurting or the world seems overwhelming. He says, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

When God talks about being our shepherd in this passage in Isaiah, He says He loves us and cares for us just like a mom or dad who picks us up and hugs us when we are hurt or crying. Look again at the way He describes what the shepherd does in verse 11.

READ TOGETHER (again): Isaiah 40:11

Can you picture a mom or dad picking up a baby or a small child in their arms and carries them close to their heart? That's how God takes care of us when we run to Him. In verse 10, God describes His power.

- He is sovereign—that means He rules over all things, the whole universe.
- He comes in power and rules with a mighty arm—that means He is strong.
- God is like a wonderful mom or dad because He is strong and powerful enough to protect us and keep us safe, but He is also tender and loving.
- He doesn't use His power to control us; He uses it to protect us.
- His power doesn't make Him a tyrant, it makes Him a tender shepherd.

PARENT STORY: Tell a story of a time when you found refuge in God.

FAMILY ACTIVITY (young kids): As a family, create a “refuge corner” for your kids to go to when they are worried or scared or just need to escape in the Lord. It might be a small corner of their room or their closet or an old play tent. In that space, you can put a kid’s Bible, a bean bag or pillows to sit on, a stuffed animal to snuggle, and some Bible memory verses on the wall. If you don’t have the extra space to have a dedicated refuge corner, you can create a “refuge bag” with those same items. When kids need a “Jesus time out,” they can take the bag and go to a corner of their room or sit on the bed and experience refuge with God. Just make sure the refuge corner isn’t the same place as the time out-corner. It’s not a punishment! It’s a refuge.

PRAY: *Dear Jesus, thank you for being our refuge in times of trouble. Thank you for being our loving shepherd who picks us up and carries us close to His heart. I promise to always come to you when I need a safe place. In Jesus’s name, Amen.*

MEMORY VERSE: “God is our refuge and strength” — Psalm 46:1