



THE LORD IS NEAR TO THE BROKENHEARTED

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By Wayne D. Stocks

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Divorce Ministry 4 Kids has an unofficial verse which guides most of our efforts in ministering to children of divorce, children from single parent families and those who minister to these kids. Before Divorce Ministry 4 Kids ever formally existed, I had this verse printed on the back of business cards meant to make people familiar with the site. The verse is Psalm 34:18 which says,

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. [Psalms 34:18 ESV]

This verse, written by David while he was on the run from Saul, epitomize what we are all about at Divorce Ministry 4 Kids. Our goal is to minister to children of divorce and help others to do the same, but ultimately healing comes through a relationship with the Living God – a God who is always there even in the bleakest moments – a God who collects tears in bottle and knows our every thought – a God who will someday wipe away every

tear. When we are at our lowest point is exactly when God steps in to save us. When we are brokenhearted, He can make our heart complete again. When we are crushed, He can lift us up. That is what we are ultimately all about – seeing God heal these kids who are suffering through no choice of their own. Watching as God, the Great Physician, heals their hearts and shows them firsthand how much they mean to Him.

A Word for Children of Divorce

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted. The Lord saves the crushed in spirit. If your parents are going through, or have gone through, a divorce those terms most likely describe you. At some point, perhaps even still, you experienced what it is like to have a broken heart. You know the pain of having your family torn apart in front of your eyes. You know the heartache of watching your parents, the people responsible for bringing you into this world and protecting you, declare their lack of love for one another. No doubt, your spirit has been crushed as you hoped, and maybe even prayed, earnestly that your parents would get back together. You may have questioned God – how could He let something like this happen to your family? Why won't He make things the way they used to be?

In those moments, read and meditate on this verse. When it seems like you have no one in the world who understands what you are going through, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted." When you feel like you just can't take another minute of the fighting or shuffling back and forth between two worlds, remember that "God saves the crushed in spirit." He is there for you, and He wants you to talk to Him. He earnestly desires to be in a relationship with you.

Earlier in this same Psalm, David writes:





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Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!

Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! [Psalm 34:8 ESV]

God invites us to “test” Him. Ask God for help, and you will see from personal experience that He can and will help you through. Rather than push Him away, try God, and allow Him to comfort you through this process. He will never leave nor will He forsake you.

A Word for Divorced Parents

When you got married and had kids, I have no doubt that you didn’t plan on getting divorced. Whether you are the responsible party or the injured party or you both mutually agreed that a divorce was the right thing to do, you need to understand that your kids have been greatly affected by your divorce. Your job now is to be there for them and try to help them navigate the road you have taken them down.

I think our verse today has two meanings for parents who are divorced.

1. In order to help your children, you must also deal with what you are going through. Are you brokenhearted? Are you crushed in spirit? Just because you are divorced does not mean that God cannot or will not heal you. He is as near to you in your heartache as He is to your child, and it is important that you allow Him, and ask Him, to do the healing work in you that is necessary to allow you to get back to being a first a parent and second a divorcee rather than the other way around.
2. Realize that your kids are hurting and that you need to be pointing them towards God for healing. Many parents practice a form of denial. They refuse to accept that their divorce has hurt their kids. They look at the brave faces that their kids are putting on to avoid hurting them and they think, “They’re resilient. They’ll get over it.” Don’t bank on it. So kids do manage to negotiate the rough waters by themselves – for a while, but more and more studies are showing that even those kids who “handled it well” are suffering in the long-term. Your kids need you, but most importantly they need God. Remind them that you love them, but also point them to the never-ending unfaltering love of our heavenly father.

A Word for Those Who Work With Children of Divorce

It is hard not to have your heart captured by these kids. Our natural inclination is to want to wrap them in our arms and protect them from the pain that has seeped into their young lives. In part, I believe that is a reflection of the compassion God feels for these kids. We are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus to these kids. At the same time, I think a verse like this serves to remind us of some very important truths:

1. We can help, but it is God who is the source of ultimate healing.
2. Techniques are helpful and should be taught, but the presence of God far exceeds any sort of technique for dealing with anger, talking to potential step-parents or sharing feelings with parents. All of those things are important, but it is God who is of the utmost importance.



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3. We must constantly and consistently point the children of divorce who pass through our ministries to God and remind them that He is near them at all times.