FREE GUIDE

A Reflection for Hard Days

A short faith-based reading for when words are hard to find.

Ask Dr. Penny
Comfort, care, hope · askdrpenny.com

OPENING

For the days when words are hard to find

Some days are simply heavy. Maybe it is grief, worry, exhaustion, or a sadness without a name. On those days, even prayer can feel out of reach.

This short reflection is for those days. You do not need to feel faithful to use it. You do not need the right words. You only need a few quiet minutes and a willingness to be honest about where you are.

- Find somewhere you can sit undisturbed for ten minutes.
- Turn your phone face down, or leave it in another room.
- Read slowly. If one line catches you, stay there. You do not have to finish.

If faith feels complicated right now

Doubt and anger are not the opposite of faith. Many of the oldest prayers we have are full of both. You are welcome here exactly as you are.

THE READING

A very present help

> *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*
>
> Psalm 46:1

Notice that the psalm does not say trouble will not come. It assumes trouble will come. What it promises is presence: a refuge to rest in, and strength that is not only our own.

> *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*
>
> Matthew 11:28

This is an invitation, not an instruction. There is nothing here about trying harder or having it all together. Only "come", just as you are, carrying what you carry.

You might read these lines aloud, slowly, two or three times. Let the words do the work, even if your feelings do not change right away.

REFLECTION

Questions to sit with

Choose one question. Write, pray, or simply sit with it. There are no wrong answers.

What am I carrying today that feels too heavy?

Where have I sensed even a small moment of help or presence this week?

What would rest look like for me right now?

What do I want to say to God, honestly, today?

A SIMPLE PRACTICE

A breath prayer

A breath prayer is an ancient practice: a short phrase prayed slowly with your breathing. It is helpful when your mind is too tired or too busy for longer prayers.

1. **Sit comfortably,** with your feet on the floor and your hands resting in your lap.
2. **Breathe in slowly** and silently say: "You are my refuge."
3. **Breathe out slowly** and silently say: "I am not alone."
4. **Repeat for two or three minutes.** If your mind wanders, simply come back to the words.

Other phrases you might use

- "Be near me" (breathing in) ... "Give me rest" (breathing out)
- "Here I am" ... "Hold me"
- "Lord, have mercy" ... "Grant me peace"

Make it your own

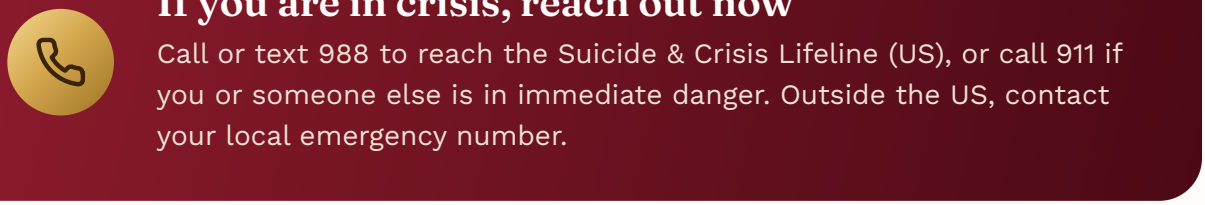
If these words do not fit your tradition, choose a line of scripture, a hymn or a prayer that does.

WHEN YOU NEED MORE

You do not have to do this alone.

Faith can be a deep source of comfort, and it is also fine to need more support than prayer alone. Our faith-based counseling makes room for both. Consider reaching out if:

- Day-to-day life has felt hard to manage for more than a few weeks.
- Sleep, appetite, work or school have changed in ways that worry you.
- You feel numb, hopeless, or cut off from the people around you.
- Someone close to you has said they are worried about you.



About Ask Dr. Penny

Ask Dr. Penny Counseling offers individual, grief, family, and faith-based counseling, in person and by video. Sessions move at your pace, and most first appointments happen within a week.

Book a session at askdrpenny.com

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