

Holy Spirit's Special Way of Holding You Close to Him

Ever have that one song that speaks profoundly to your heart?

You turn it up louder the moment you hear the first chords on the radio. You Google it, play it at full volume, close your eyes and lift your arms, either in praise or surrender to God. You work out chords in an effort to make it your own on the guitar or piano. You realize you have it memorized when you find yourself singing the lyrics as you go through your day. It becomes your anthem, your mantra, your praise, your prayer. There is one line or the whole song that grabs you and holds you and meets you right where you are.

One that keeps running through my head is Casting Crown's "Just Be Held." I'd share my favorite line, but I believe I'd be writing the complete song down for you. It's such a beautiful, thoughtful song about letting go of all the things we tend to grasp so desperately and letting God hold us.

Just be held.

There is something so precious and comforting about being held, about being wrapped in the embrace of another. Protected. Loved. Secure.

I read in *U.S. News and World Report* that being held is good for our health. It decreases heart rate, causes "a drop in the stress hormone cortisol and norepinephrine" and provides for a better reaction to stress. In fact, premenopausal women (ahem) who were hugged often had lower stress and lower blood pressure than women who weren't. How about that!? Being held is a good thing all the way around!

So what does being held by God really mean? It isn't like I can really rest in His physical arms, so how do I do that? At this moment, I don't know what that looks like practically. I

just know I want to know.

There have been times, usually difficult times, when I have felt so deeply loved and cared for by God that I would say I've felt held. I've felt held up by God—you know, like I feel faint with life and He holds me up so that I can carry on. I've felt held in place when I know God wants me to stand and wait. I've felt held to a purpose when God wants me to focus and face something. But being held, like two-arms-wrapped-around-me held—I don't know what that means.

My youngest daughter struggles so much with behavior, attitude and sass. I've found that often if I can just get her to settle down in my arms for a moment, she is more peaceful and less difficult. I have to chase her down sometimes and force her into a hug. She might fight for a bit, but I can feel her body relax and sense a change in her. It does not work 100 percent of the time, but enough that I notice.

I wonder, *Does God have to chase me down sometimes and wrestle me into His arms?* I'm confident the answer is a resounding yes.

I have found without a doubt that peace comes in His presence and stress fades when I'm near Him.

In fact, my prayer this morning was that I would have a lot of time in His Word because I find such peace in His presence, in His Word.

I feel so hopeful when I read His Word. I want to experience that all the time.

Maybe that's the embrace. His Word. It's so comforting and peace-giving. It opens my eyes and reveals things to me I never imagined. It changes me.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in

righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

As I was looking up verses about the Word, it hit me. The Word is Jesus. So when the Word wraps itself around me, I'm being held by Jesus. When the Word is comforting, sustaining, protecting and showing me how precious and valuable and loved I am, that's Jesus!

That's being held!

No wonder once I start spending time with God in His Word, I don't want to stop. I have such a longing for more. I want more Jesus, more being held by Him, more feeling loved, protected and sustained by Him.

And when I run away out of guilt, shame, or fear, I miss Him so much. I miss the comfort of His presence and the wisdom of His word. But maybe it's more. Maybe it's the comfort of realizing that His embrace through His Word is honest and pure and loving and strong.

That it is always available. Never denied. Never withheld. Never absent. Always.

It is always.

There is not a day that goes by lately that I don't long to dive headfirst into His Word, to saturate my day with its wisdom, to pour its peace over me like a fountain, to splash its joy around my home and relationships, to drink of the depths of its love, to float in the faithfulness of my Lord who loves me without ceasing, without condition, without expectation.

The more I sit in the presence of God, the more I want to keep doing so, and the more I want to share the "wonderfulness" of it. I can't even think of an adequate word to describe it. (Obviously, because I think I made up the word *wonderfulness*!)

Lately during my morning time with God, I've been praying about how to encourage my children. I realized that I take time to study His Word, but not with my children. A Bible story here or there, nothing deep. I'm ready to go deep again! (Not sure they are though!) So I'm praying about where and how to do this. God has faithfully provided time for me, and I can trust that He will do it for my children as well.

It's doable. God calls me to it. And God tells me how.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God. The Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deut. 6:4-9).

Bring the Word in to every day, every moment of every day.

All the time, share.

Take advantage of the proverbial teachable moment, every moment.

If I'm in the Word, it is so much easier to share it. If I'm spending time with the Lord, allowing the Holy Spirit to ripen all that beautiful spiritual fruit, I'm able to offer it to my children and help them taste and see that the Lord is good! (Read Psalm 34:8.)

I want to help them understand what it means to be held by God, to climb on His welcoming, wonderful lap and lean into the peace He offers, to hear His heartbeat of love, to sync our hearts with His so that we can grow stronger and wiser and more loving.

To be held in the arms of His word, to rest in His presence.

Held by our Savior. {eoa}

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