



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on a wound, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.

Proverbs 25:20

Choose your song carefully

There was a sharply dressed older man. He had on his best black suit. For the last hour he stood in the church entry and greeted a long line of people who had come to say goodbye to his wife. They had told him they loved him and that everything would be okay; they reminded him that his wife was in a better place. He nodded and smiled. He knew all those things were true, but now he was just tired. He allowed himself to slump down into a comfortable chair and he stared straight ahead, wondering how long all of this would hurt.

Finally, one more visitor walked through the church doors. It was an old friend who had lost his own wife a year or so ago. He said nothing. He nodded hello and just sat down in the next chair. They sat like that in silence for a long time. It was the best thing that had happened all day. Sometimes it's enough to know that someone else understands your pain.

When one of our friends or someone we know is going through something hard, we often feel like we have to say something. We want the person to stop crying, stop panicking, stop being negative. We want to make it better. So, we try telling a joke, and it is WAY too soon. We read someone's cry for help on social media and respond with a praying hands emoji. We get under that heavy heart and try to lift it with all our might ... but it won't budge. It's as sensible as thinking that stealing your friend's big puffy jacket in the middle of winter would be a favor to them. That's what Solomon is trying to say in this proverb.

There was a younger man in his early thirties at a different funeral. The man made no attempt to hide the tears streaming down his face. He was sad for his friend who was dead. He was sad for the two sisters this dead friend had left behind. He was sad because none of this was the way this world was supposed to go. This younger man is Jesus. He's weeping at the funeral for his friend Lazarus. Even though he is well aware that Lazarus will soon be walking around alive again, Jesus takes the time to listen to Mary and Martha, joining in the sad song their hearts were singing. Jesus, as a good friend, gets down in the dust and ashes with them and with us.

What's the lesson from Jesus? Listen. Take the time to listen. Then, consider carefully what someone needs in the moment. Remember that God's design for us includes a healthy need to complete the grieving process. Sad songs can be just what we need at certain times. At other times, a different song is good to direct them to the words and promises of God.

Choose carefully the song that you "sing" to your hurting friends. Ask the Spirit for wisdom to discern what their heart needs to hear at the right time. Don't be afraid to get down in the dust and ashes with them. Don't be afraid to sit with them and walk with them in their pain.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, only you can teach me how to be a truly good friend. Give me the wisdom to know how to lovingly help those who are hurting. Amen.