

while creating a legacy of love and Christlike service that will ripple through generations. “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:4).

### Scripture Calls Believers to Bear One Another’s Burdens

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). By inviting others into this sacred responsibility, a family culture of love and unity can be formed that honors God.

### FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Caring for an aging loved one is not easy, but it is a deeply meaningful way to demonstrate God’s love. Through this season, there is an invitation to trust in His strength and provision.

Though the journey may be long and the sacrifices great, the labor is not in vain. God sees every effort and will reward faithfulness. “God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints” (Hebrews 6:10).

May this season draw caregivers closer to God as they reflect His heart to their aging loved one and to those around them.

### GOING FURTHER: RESOURCES

*The 36 Hour Day* by Nancy L. Mace and Peter V. Rabins

*Finding Grace in the Face of Dementia* by John Dunlop

*The Heart of the Caregiver* by Mary Tutterow

*God’s Care for the Caregiver* by Dr. Marilyn J. Goodwin

*Serving as a Caregiver: Practical Advice and Spiritual Encouragement* by Betty Groth



# CARING FOR AN AGED LOVED ONE

Caring for an aging loved one is one of life’s most sacred callings, yet it is often filled with emotional, physical, and relational challenges. Watching someone you love decline in health, whether it be a parent, spouse, or another family member requires strength, patience, and dependence on God. While this season can be difficult, Scripture offers wisdom and encouragement to help navigate the journey in a way that honors both God and your loved one.

### GRIEVING IN ADVANCE

As a loved one faces declining health, a caregiver may begin to grieve long before their passing. This anticipatory grief, while painful, can also be a gift from God. It provides time to process emotions gradually, allowing the caregiver to handle increasing challenges without being overwhelmed by a sudden flood of feelings. Emotions remain deep, but they are stretched out over time, enabling a person to compartmentalize the roles of both caregiver and loved one.

This gradual grief can be seen as God’s way of preparing the heart for the road ahead. “The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18). There may be times when His nearness is not felt, but that is precisely why it is recorded as truth in Scripture. God gives His Word so it can be trusted by faith, even when emotions fail to sense His presence. He is always near, offering comfort and strength, even in the moments when it feels hardest to believe. Through His grace, He equips caregivers to serve with clarity and compassion, even in the midst of sorrow.



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## REFLECTING CHRIST THROUGH SERVICE

Caregiving often involves humble and repetitive tasks such as helping with meals, transportation, bathing, and medications. While these may seem small, they are deeply significant acts of love that reflect Christ's example. "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Though the work may be exhausting, many caregivers find it rewarding. This is evidence of God's sustaining grace. "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). Every moment of service is an opportunity to glorify God by showing His love to an aging loved one. No one truly has the time to serve in this way—caregiving often requires significant sacrifices. A caregiver may need to take time away from work, adjust family routines, or completely change their schedule to meet the needs of another.

These disruptions can be frustrating, and Satan often uses them as a weapon to steal the joy and peace that come from honoring a loved one. It is important to be mindful of this tactic and to guard the heart with Scripture. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). When frustration arises, turning to God for strength and perspective allows the caregiver to trust that their sacrifices are precious in His sight. "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17). This service is not just for the loved one it is an offering to God Himself, and He will bless faithfulness.

## NAVIGATING FAMILY CONFLICTS

One of the greatest challenges in caregiving is dealing with other family members who may not agree with decisions or refuse to share in the responsibility. These dynamics can create tension, frustration, and even bitterness if left unchecked. All decisions should be made with the loved one's best interest at heart.

### WHEN DECISIONS AREN'T UNANIMOUS

Family members may disagree about medical care, living arrangements, or finances. In these situations, a caregiver should strive to maintain a spirit of humility and peace. There may even be a sense of selfishness or greed from those who are expected to help. Jesus calls His people to pursue unity, saying, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

## WHEN CONFLICT ARISES

- Communicate openly and respectfully—Share perspectives clearly while listening to others with grace. "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6a).
- Seek wisdom and prayer—Ask God for guidance and rely on His wisdom to make the best decision. "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" (James 1:5).
- Involve a mediator if needed—Sometimes, a pastor, elder, or neutral third party can help mediate and guide the family toward resolution.

## WHEN OTHERS REFUSE TO HELP

It can be especially painful when family members make excuses or refuse to assist with caregiving. While their inaction can feel unjust, Jesus calls His followers to respond with forgiveness and love. "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). The focus must remain on the loved one.

Instead of focusing on shortcomings:

- Set boundaries—Acknowledge their limitations but also be honest about personal capacity. Be willing to delegate what cannot be handled.
- Pray for them—Ask God to soften their hearts and open their eyes to opportunities to serve. "Pray for those who persecute you" Matthew 5:44.
- Focus on your calling—Remember that the responsibility is ultimately to obey God's call to serve with a joyful heart. "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men" Colossians 3:23.

## INVOLVING THE WHOLE FAMILY

For those with children or other close family members, caregiving can be a valuable opportunity to involve everyone in serving. Even young children can participate in simple yet meaningful ways such as holding a hand, reading a story, or sharing a hug. These small acts not only bring comfort to an aging loved one but also help children become more comfortable with serving and navigating moments of awkwardness or vulnerability.

Encouraging children to step into these roles teaches them the beauty of selfless service and instills compassion and humility. "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). By involving the whole family, the burden is lightened.