

## 5-Day Devotional: When Someone You Love Is Far Away

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### Day 1: The Father Who Watches

**Reading:** Luke 15:11-20

**Devotional:** The father in Jesus' parable didn't just wait passively—he watched the horizon daily, scanning for any sign of his son's return. This reflects the posture of God's heart toward us. Even when we've walked away, demanded our independence, or squandered His blessings, God never stops watching for us. The phrase "while he was still far off" shows the father had been looking, longing, and hoping. Today, consider: Are you far from God? Know that He is already watching for you, ready to run toward you with compassion. Or perhaps someone you love has wandered—take comfort that God sees them too, even when you cannot.

**Reflection:** Who in your life needs you to keep watching for them with patient, hopeful love?

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### Day 2: Love That Releases Control

**Reading:** Proverbs 3:5-6; Philippians 2:12-13

**Devotional:** The hardest act of love is often letting go. The father gave his son the inheritance and the freedom to leave, even though he knew the pain ahead. True love cannot coexist with control. When we try to manipulate outcomes or force people into our vision for their lives, we move from love to fear. God Himself honors our free will, never forcing us into a relationship but always inviting us. Today, examine your relationships: Where are you trying to control rather than trust? Releasing control doesn't mean abandoning responsibility or care—it means entrusting loved ones to God's hands, which are far more capable than ours. This requires deep faith that God is working even when we cannot see it.

**Reflection:** Which relationship requires you to release control and trust God more fully?

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### Day 3: Keeping Your Heart Open

**Reading:** Psalm 51:10-17; 2 Corinthians 7:10-11

**Devotional:** Waiting with wisdom means keeping our hearts tender, not hardened by disappointment. When relationships fracture, we face a choice: become bitter or remain open. The father in the parable didn't spend years rehearsing his son's failures or building walls of resentment. Keeping your heart open requires honest self-examination—acknowledging your role in relational pain. It means being willing to listen, apologize, and make amends. This vulnerability is risky; people may reject our attempts at reconciliation. But a closed heart guarantees continued separation, while an open heart creates possibility. God specializes in softening hardened hearts—both ours and those we love. Ask Him today to guard you against bitterness and keep you ready for reconciliation.

**Reflection:** Is there unforgiveness or defensiveness hardening your heart toward someone? Confess it to God today.

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#### **Day 4: The Porch Light of Grace**

**Reading:** Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 2:4-7

**Devotional:** A porch light says, "You're expected. You're wanted. You belong here." God's grace is the eternal porch light that never dims. While we were still sinners—still far off, still running—Christ died for us. This is the scandal of grace: God doesn't wait for us to clean ourselves up before welcoming us home. The Gospel isn't about earning your way back into God's favor; it's about discovering that you were never truly abandoned. For those carrying the pain of estrangement, this truth offers both comfort and direction. As recipients of extravagant grace, we're called to extend it to others. Leaving the porch light on means holding on to hope, refusing cynicism, and believing that God can restore what seems irreparably broken.

**Reflection:** How have you experienced God's "porch light" grace in your own life? How can you extend it to others?

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#### **Day 5: Hope That Refuses to Quit**

**Reading:** Romans 8:24-28; Lamentations 3:21-26

**Devotional:** Christian hope isn't wishful thinking or denial—it's a confident expectation grounded in God's character. The father hoped because he knew his son's true identity, even when the son had forgotten it. Hope doesn't guarantee specific outcomes on our timeline, but it trusts that God is working all things together for good. When someone you love is far away, hope keeps you praying, believing, and trusting God's timing. Hope doesn't

prevent grief—the father surely grieved daily—but it keeps grief from becoming despair. Today, whatever relational pain you carry, anchor your hope not in changed circumstances but in an unchanging God. He is faithful. His mercies are new every morning. And He specializes in bringing dead things back to life.

**Reflection:** What specific situation needs you to choose hope over despair today? Commit it to God in prayer.

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### **Closing Prayer**

*Gracious Father, thank You for never giving up on us. When we were far off, You ran toward us with open arms. Help us love others with the same patient, persistent, grace-filled love. Grant us wisdom to know when to speak and when to wait, when to act and when to trust. Keep our hearts tender, our hope alive, and our eyes fixed on You. For those we love who are distant, we entrust them to Your capable hands, believing You are at work even now. In Jesus' name, Amen.*