Proverbs 25:20 (NIV) says:

> “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.”

This verse gives us profound wisdom about how to relate to people in pain. When someone is grieving or emotionally broken, trying to cheer them up with joyful songs or humor might not be comforting at all—it can actually make their pain feel worse.

Emotional Mismatch and the Wisdom of Empathy
In the metaphor Solomon uses, taking someone’s coat away on a cold day doesn’t relieve their discomfort—it intensifies it. Likewise, pouring vinegar on soda (or a wound, as some versions say) causes a harsh, reactive fizz, symbolizing distress rather than relief. The lesson is simple: *respond appropriately to the emotional needs of others.*

This aligns with

Romans 12:15 (NIV):

> “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”

Paul teaches us to emotionally synchronize with others—to celebrate when others are joyful and to grieve with those who are mourning. This is an expression of *Christlike compassion*—putting ourselves in others’ shoes, just as Christ entered into our humanity.

Jesus: The Model of Compassion
Jesus Himself modeled this perfectly. In

John 11:33-35,

when Lazarus died, Jesus saw Mary and others weeping, and though He knew He would raise Lazarus, *He was deeply moved* and *He wept*.

“Jesus wept.” (John 11:35, NIV) —

the shortest verse in the Bible, but one of the most powerful. It shows that empathy is not weakness—it's divine. Jesus didn't rush to fix the problem before first feeling the pain of those around Him.

The Right Comfort for the Right Moment
Ecclesiastes 3:4 (NIV) says:

> "...a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance."

Discerning the right time for the right response is a mark of wisdom. Not every moment calls for celebration. Sometimes, the most healing thing we can do is simply be present and silent, just like Job's friends *before they spoke* (Job 2:13), when they sat with him in silence for seven days out of respect for his deep sorrow.

Practical Theology: Ministry of Presence
This message challenges us to offer what is called *"the ministry of presence."* Often, people don't need us to say the perfect words—they just need us to be with them, to listen, to mourn with

them, and to make space for their pain. That is how healing begins.

Conclusion
Let us be wise in how we comfort others. If someone is open to encouragement through song or joy, offer it. But when grief runs deep, meet them in that pain with understanding, not forced cheer. That is the way of Christ—gentle, patient, and full of compassion.

May the Lord bless you as you become a vessel of comfort in someone’s life.

Please share this message with others—it might be the comfort someone needs today.

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