

Some Thoughts On Grief

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Several families of our little group are dealing with the loss of loved ones in just the last few weeks. Tragic events that have brought on the suddenness of death and the associated deep grief that accompanies it. May these thoughts be of some help.

The loss of a loved one is the worst of times. But loss also comes in many forms. The loss of health and the adjustment to a new way of living is one way. Another is when our close friends move and we lose that closeness. We lose jobs. Engagements are broken. Friendships are betrayed. All loss causes us to grieve and we are emotionally wrecked. Grief is a feeling of deep mental anguish caused by loss that effects our lives. Because we live in a fallen world, life inevitably includes sorrow. When sin entered the world, it brought physical and spiritual death along with all the ramifications that go with it. Death and loss of anything we value causes grief. And at the top of the list is death. Death is an enemy of the human race not just a part of life.

Grieving the death of a loved one is an individual process. There is no standard way everyone deals with grief. For some, there is an initial numbness followed by enduring pangs of yearning for the person who has died. Others feel anxious and have trouble sleeping, perhaps dwelling on old arguments or words they wish they had spoken to the one departed. Sudden outbursts of tears are common in grief, triggered by memories or reminders of their loved one. Or maybe it is a combination of all the above. The point is that not all people grieve the same way or for the same amount of time. Grief is an essential part of being human and dealing with it is a must in order to move on with life.

Over time, the intensity of grief will likely subside, but don't rush the grieving process. And don't expect your feelings and emotions will be like anyone else's. Sometimes well-meaning people say at times like this, "I know how you feel." They may have gone through a similar circumstance but they don't know how you feel. God made each person unique and your grieving process will be your personal journey. Folks wanting to help would be better suited to start with just holding the hand of those who weep and weep with them. See Romans 12:15. But for folks grieving, keep in mind that the weight of grief is lighter when shared. And don't forget to share with God.

In time, our friends will go on with their busy lives and we may wonder how we will cope then. God doesn't abandon us however. Let the Lord know, "My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word." (Psalm 119:28.) Cling to God's promises as you work through your grief. "He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength." (Isaiah 40:29.) The Bible is full of such assurances from God so hold on to them and don't cease to remind Him of those promises. God does care! I love the prayer where David stated confidently, "*You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?*" (Psalm 56:8.)

When Abraham's beloved wife Sarah died, the divine record says he "mourned and wept." There is nothing unmanly or unscriptural about weeping in a time of grief. Even "Jesus wept." (John 11:35) and He knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead in mere minutes. Don't be ashamed to weep at the loss of a loved one but hang on to God who catches each of our tears in the palm of His hand. God loves you in the worst of times.