

Part A) Five Sobering Truths About Grieving

1) We will all lose somebody that we love.

“It is appointed unto men once to die...” (Heb 9:27) and there is not much we can do to ultimately deter that fact. It does not matter who you are, if you have not suffered a loss of a loved one thus far, you will. It might be a spouse, a child, a parent, a brother or sister, a cousin, an uncle, an aunt or even a dear friend. Being part of life in this realm necessitates the risk of death.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 “There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven,² A time to give birth and a time to die...”

2) Grieving is a natural process.

God designed within the human being the natural process of mourning the loss of a loved one. Grieving is a natural and normal process.

It can be carried out loudly.

- Amos 5:16 Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, “There is wailing in all the plazas, And in all the streets they say, ‘Alas! Alas!’ They also call the farmer to mourning And professional mourners to lamentation.

It can be carried out quietly.

- Concerning the death of Nadab and Elihu: Leviticus 10:6 Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, “Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, so that you will not die and that He will not become wrathful against all the congregation.
- Concerning the death of Ezekiel’s wife: Ezekiel 24:16-17 “Son of man, behold, I am about to take from you the desire of your eyes with a blow; but you shall not mourn and you shall not weep, and your tears shall not come.¹⁷ “Groan silently...”

It can be carried out with great appreciation.

- Acts 9:39 So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them.

It can be carried out with great humility.

- Job 1:20-21 “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 He said, Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.”
- Genesis 37:34 So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.

It can be carried out with great sincerity.

- John 11:33-35 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her *also* weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled,³⁴ and said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”³⁵ Jesus wept.

It is carried out in many ways by many people. There should be no shame or denial that we need to mourn because we have loved someone that is not there anymore. The worse thing we can do in the mourning process is to deny that it is as natural of being human itself.

3) No two losses are the same.

I am persuaded that one of the most cruel, unintentional things to say to someone whom has lost a loved one is “I know exactly how you feel.” Other than the fact that you might have suffered a death, there are far too many factors to even approach that thought at such a tender time and on such a tender subject. Consider the following:

Different Relationships

People all have different relationships with each other no matter how much we like to think they are the same.

- Some parents have a close, deep spiritual relationship with their children and yet others might have a more friendship-based relationship.
- Some grandparents take on the greater responsibilities of a grandchild and others might be aloof.
- Some of your friends are very close to you and others might only be acquaintances. Some people have a friend that is even closer to them than anyone in their immediate family.
- Some people have cousins that are more like brothers or sisters and yet others are the closest to their siblings.
- Perhaps a sibling is deeply close to another because of a common struggle at a particularly rough time in the childhood. Perhaps they were not close until adulthood because of the same factors.
- Perhaps someone’s relationship had recently gone sour without the time to mend or perhaps it has been sour for decades and full of missed opportunities.

Different Stages

Where a loved one dies in relation to the stage of life shows much variation.

- Some people die at the beginning of their life leaving a permanent perspective of a child with a missing future.
- Some die in the prime of life leaving people to ask “What if only he would have lived?” Perhaps he would be remembered as the person of missed potential.
- Some die in the longevity of life well-embedded in patterns and practices that clearly defined to the better or worse in the minds of the survivors.

Different Factors

- Some people die suddenly with no time to prepare and others might take the course of years before they succumb to a disease.
- Some might have died from a heinous crime and other of natural causes.
- Some die without closure on issues and others might have been completely at peace.
- Some people die not in a saved relationship with Jesus Christ and yet others may have died faithfully in the LORD.
- Some people might have left behind a list of unfulfilled dreams and goals to be attained while others might have done all they wanted and aimed for.

4) God really understands your grief.

God knows what it was like to lose someone close, for He lost His Son, His Friend and Comrade all at one moment. Jesus and the Father were always one in power, purpose and planning.

The Father was with Jesus in the eternal past.

Before there was the creation, the Father and the Son were together. *Ephesians 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.*

The Father was with Jesus in the Creation.

God the Father said in Genesis 1:26 “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...” Who was the “Us” and “Our”? It was Jesus that was right there with the Father, carrying out the creation as spoken.

- John 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.
- Hebrews 1:2 “...His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.
- Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

The Father was with the Son from a young earthly age.

God was with Jesus from the time He was in the manger. It was God that arranged for shepherds to pay a rejoicing visit the night of His birth in Luke 2. It was God that was with Jesus as a two year old in the path of a murderous madman named Herod in Matthew 2.

The Father was with the Son at the beginning of the earthly ministry.

While being tempted following the forty day fast, God was with Jesus. It was the repeated word of God the Father that disabled the workings of the devil on that day and it was the angels of God the Father that came to the Son’s aid thereafter (Mt 4:11).

The Father was with Jesus during the earthly ministry.

When angry Jewish leaders wanted to plot against Jesus, he responded in John 10:30 “I and the Father are one.” While in meditation in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus perspired sweat like drops of blood over the anguish of this separation from God by becoming sin for us. *Hebrews 5:7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.*

The Father is with the Son in the eternal future.

- 1 Peter 3:21-22 “...Jesus Christ, ²² who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.”
- Revelation 21:22-23 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Jesus called Himself in *Revelation 22:13* "...the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end..." because He was with the Father from BEFORE TIME, THROUGH TIME, BEYOND TIME, except for that one time...the crucifixion.

As Jesus suffered on that cross, while taking upon Himself the sins of all mankind, including yours and mine, God had to turn His back on His Beloved Son. *Matthew 27:45-46* Now from noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.⁴⁶ About three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?", which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When Jesus bowed His head and gave up His spirit, under complete darkness of mid-day, the veil of the temple tore from top to bottom, the earth quaked and tombs ripped open in protest! The halls of Hades were shaken to the core at the reaction that God the Father was for the first and only time separated from His perfect and precious Son!

Don't you ever say God that He does not understand what you are going through, because He is the only One who can. He is able to say with all confidence to you today "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*" *Matthew 5:4*). He is there waiting for your tears to fall on His shoulder if only you will surrender it to Him.

5) We must be prepared for our own death.

Barring the immediate return of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will all be placing our loved ones in the position of grieving our loss.

- James 4:13-15 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."¹⁴ Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.¹⁵ Instead, *you ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

It could be today after leaving the church building or tomorrow while driving to work. It could be ten minutes, ten hours, ten days, ten months or ten years from now, but the effect will be the same. Someone we love will be left behind to mourn the loss of us. What really matters is if we are in the will of the Lord or not.

In Closing:

That is the question: Are you with Jesus or are you not? Take the first step in the pre-grieving process by preparing your soul for the day that your loved ones won't have you here anymore. Commit your soul to Jesus today and make it easier on everyone tomorrow in the grieving process of their future.