

Dealing With the Death of a Loved One

- I. Saying goodbye is hard.
 - A. The disciples were sad when Jesus told them that He would be leaving them. **JOH 16:5-6.**
 - B. The brethren wept when Paul left and would see them no more. **ACT 20:36-38.**
 - C. Mary and Martha were filled with grief when their brother died. **JOH 11:32-33.**
 - 1. They were deeply saddened even though they knew that he was in heaven and that they would see him again. **JOH 11:23-27.**
 - 2. Jesus Himself wept when Lazarus died. **JOH 11:33-35.**
 - D. When you love someone, it's painful to let them go. **JOH 11:35-36.**
 - E. This pain is absent where there was no love. **2CH 21:20; PRO 11:10.**
- II. There is a time to weep and mourn. **ECC 3:4.**
 - A. Mourning is good, necessary, and helpful. **ECC 7:2-4.**
 - B. Jacob mourned the loss of his son Joseph many days. **GEN 37:34.**
 - C. Israel mourned the losses of Aaron and Moses for 30 days. **NUM 20:29; DEU 34:8.**
 - D. The disciples made *great lamentation* when Stephen was killed. **ACT 8:2.**
- III. Mourning the death of a loved one often goes through five stages.
 - A. Denial.
 - 1. People who learn of a terminal illness or the loss of a loved one, especially if it happens suddenly, will use denial to numb their emotions.
 - 2. They will tell themselves, "This isn't happening" or, "This can't be happening."
 - 3. They hide from the facts to avoid the pain.
 - 4. This is the first stage of the grieving process.
 - B. Anger.
 - 1. After denial has subsided and reality begins to set in, the next stage of grief is often anger.
 - 2. People will often be angry at God for allowing their loved one to die. **JOH 11:21, 37.**
 - 3. They might be angry with the doctors, family, friends, or even the lost loved one himself for leaving them. **1KI 17:18.**
 - 4. These feelings are often irrational and cause the grieving person to feel guilty, causing them to be more angry.
 - C. Bargaining.
 - 1. Another stage of grief is bargaining by making statements such as the following:
 - a. "If only I had sought medical attention sooner..."
 - b. "If only I had gotten a second opinion..."
 - c. "If only I had spent more time with him..."
 - d. "If only I had been nicer to him..."
 - 2. This causes guilt as mourners begin to believe that there is something they could have done differently to save the loved one.
 - D. Depression.
 - 1. This usually happens after the funeral is over and reality sets in.
 - 2. Reminders of the loved ones during quiet times alone bring sorrow to the heart as we remember times we had with them and how much we miss them.
 - 3. This stage requires time to heal.
 - E. Acceptance.
 - 1. By allowing yourself to feel the grief as it comes over you, you will begin to

- accept the loss and move on.
2. Resisting grieving and acceptance will only prolong the pain and will impede the natural healing process.

IV. Tips on mourning.

- A. Don't avoid it; this will only prolong the pain. **PRO 14:13.**
- B. When commenting on times to weep and mourn, Charles Bridges in his commentary on Ecclesiastes said, "These are God's times. Beware of changing them."
- C. Don't bottle it up inside: cry it out.
- D. Take time to think of the loved one you lost, and weep over them.
- E. After you have done this, then begin the process of moving on with your life.
- F. During a time of mourning, often times the best thing that we can say to console the mourner is nothing. **ECC 3:7; JOB 2:13; GEN 37:35.**
- G. Often at these times, hugs, listening, or giving space are far more helpful than words. It may be best to just "...weep with them that weep" (**ROM 12:15**).
- H. "A time of sorrow also must be mentioned as a time of restraint. Precious words are often wasted at this season. The time of silence is more soothing. We had better restrain our words, till the waters have somewhat assuaged. A voluble comforter adds to the trouble he professes to heal. He is rather a sore than a balm. Great wisdom is required to know when, as well as what, to speak." (Charles Bridges, *Ecclesiastes*, page 60-61)

V. There is also a time to laugh and dance. **ECC 3:4.**

- A. Once you have mourned sufficiently, it's time to move on with your life.
- B. It's not wrong to feel happy again after a loved one has died. **ECC 3:4.**
- C. You need not feel guilty for being happy. **PHIL 4:4.**
- D. Being happy after the death of a loved one doesn't mean that you don't love and miss them.
- E. David mourned and begged God to spare the life of his baby while the baby lived. **2SAM 12:15-17.**
- F. But once the baby died, David stopped mourning, went to church, and moved on. **2SAM 12:18-23.**
- G. David then comforted his wife afterward. **2SAM 12:24.**

VI. Don't mourn as those that have no hope. **1TH 4:13.**

- A. The loss of a loved one must never cause us to despair and lose our faith. That would be an *inordinate affection*. **COL 3:5.**
- B. We have hope that we will see our loved ones again because Jesus Christ has conquered death. **2TI 1:10; 1CO 15:51-57.**
- C. Jesus is coming back to raise His people from the dead. **1TH 4:14-18.**
- D. We will see our loved ones in Christ again.

VII. The Lord knows what you're going through.

- A. Jesus was a *man of sorrows*. **ISA 53:3.**
- B. Jesus suffered all of the sadness, mourning, and pain that we do. **HEB 4:15-16.**
- C. Cast your cares upon Him for he careth for you. **1PE 5:7.**
- D. Take your cares to Him in prayer, and He will give you peace which passeth all understanding. **PHIL 4:6-7.**
- E. The Lord is nigh unto those who are of a broken spirit. **PSA 34:17-19.**
- F. Weeping will endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. **PSA 30:5 c/w MAT 5:4.**