

## Dealing with grief and difficult times

We live in a fallen world, and it's unfortunate, but we will all or have suffered loss at some point in life. We aren't immune to this, but there are ways we can overcome all the difficulty and the grief we face after these times.

We all face difficulty and hardship. One of the differences is mine might be a lot more recent than yours.

We need to continue to act in a way that is godly even when we are hurting. We do not have an excuse to be mean and rude toward others because we are hurting. How we feel should not be a reason we use to hurt others.

Jesus suffered grief. He was sad that Lazarus had died. He then went on to raise him up from the dead. Fortunately, He also gave us that power. He used to raise Lazarus from the dead. We can do the same. Matthew 10:8 **"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give."**

These few points can help stop or avoid the destruction that grief causes.

We have been given authority to turn our mourning into dancing or victory!

### A. Momentary.

a) 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; Every problem we all face is momentary. It has an expiry date and will one day come to an end."*

- i) If death is temporary—a temporary separation, we should not despair so much. One day we will get to see our loved ones that have departed to go be with the Lord according.

- ii) If someone is a problem, has an expiring date. All problems and challenges do pass.
  - o 1 Thessalonians. 4:13-14, 18 *“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”*
    - We can sorrow, but not as the hopeless world. The sorrow of a believer is different. He sorrows for loss, but on the flipside, he has hope.
  - o These scriptures produce comfort. Death doesn't mean it's completely over. It's a temporal separation.
  - o Death is bye see you later, not bye never see you again.

## B. Support and fellowship.

- a) Isolation is something you want to avoid at all costs. Get some support from friends and family. Do not buy into self-pity. The positivity and life from others will destroy the negative effects of grief. Do not let Satan get you in some corner by yourself. He is setting you up to be eaten for dinner. Fellowship with other folks and build yourself up.
  - i) Predators love to isolate their prey before they pounce on them. Don't become prey by isolating yourself.
  - ii) Expel and remove from you all the naysayers—all the negative professionals. You don't need that right in such a moment.
- b) Hebrew 10:24-25 *“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”*
  - i) This verse is admonishing us not to forsake the assembling of brethren. Not to forsake fellowship and company of others. This can be achieved through church.

## C. Eternal perspective

a) 2 Corinthians 4:18 *“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”*

i) We have to learn to put things even tragedies in perspective because if we do, the negative impact of those tragedies is greatly minimized. When things are put into the right perspective, it greatly diminishes the negative damage it could have caused.

o Paul said it was far better to be with the Lord (Philippians 1:23).

ii) What you focus on becomes bigger and bigger and what you neglect or don't focus on shrinks in value, significance and it becomes very manageable.

#### D. Don't blame God.

One of the greatest temptations you will encounter after some sort of loss or tragedy is to blame God for it or question His goodness and integrity. Do not accept that temptation. Do not get mad at God. God is not and has never been your enemy. He has always been for you even when you did not do all things well. *Have you been in a situation where someone hurt you, yet you got mad at the wrong guy?* This is what happens between Satan and God. Satan hurts people and because of ignorance, they get mad at the wrong person (God) and end up resisting Him and even hurting more.

a) *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. — John 10:10*

i) This verse is very clear who is responsible for the tragedy in your life. It's Satan, NOT God. Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy. Jesus comes to give life, not to take life. If Jesus is the one who is behind taking life, then why or how could He die for the same lives He destroys. That thinking does not make sense.

ii) If in your mind God is behind this or is responsible for it, it is going to be harder for you. God is not the one who is responsible for this mess happening and if He

is, who are you going to go to for comfort. He is the comforter. He is the one that comforts us, heals our hearts and binds our wounds. I beseech you to change your perception of God. He is a good God. God does only Good.

b) Is this the man?

*“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?”—Isaiah 14:12-17*

i) These verses talk about Lucifer who is well known today as Satan. These verses clearly show that Satan or Lucifer is the one responsible for the evil and tragedy happening in the world.

It says:

- o He made the world a wilderness
- o Destroyed cities
- o Imprisoned people (Spiritually and physically).

ii) This flies in the face of those who say God is the one who causes evil and tragedy. These verses clearly say that it is Lucifer (Satan), NOT God.

c) Acts 10:38 says *“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”*

E. Common unto men

a) 1 Corinthians 10:13 *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”*

- i) Satan loves to convince people going through a difficult time that their situation is unique. Your situation is not unique. It is common unto men. I'm saying these things to help you. Satan lies that it's only you who are going through this. Not true! That deception is designed to isolate people and get them destroyed by their grief.
- ii) Knowing that many other people go through the same things you go through could be comforting. Why? How? It helps you to stay encouraged, keep believing and keep hope alive knowing that your situation is not isolated and therefore helpless and hopeless. Sometimes when you hear what others are going through, you get hope and courage knowing that your situation is not as bad as you initially thought.
- iii) Not only do other people go through what you are going through, but it is also a common experience among people. In other words, it's nothing new.

## F. God is with you.

You need to remember this in the midst of the difficult times just as the good times. God has never been the variable. He is always constant.

a) Hebrews 13:5 *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”*

- i) Most of the time when we go through difficult times we forget that the Lord is with us even in those difficult times.
  - o The Lord is with you and you can draw on Him for strength, comfort, direction, and hope.

- ii) He has promised to NEVER leave us not FORSAKE us. This promise is coming from God. His will is not to forsake you.
- b) Isaiah 43:1-2 “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.<sup>2</sup> When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”
- i) God knows you by name, which means He knows you personally. There will be times that you will go through hardships. He never said those times will never come, but when they come, He will be with thee. Your hardship will not drown you, and you shall not be burnt because He is with you.
  - ii) Fear not, **God Almighty** is with you. This alone should make you rejoice.

#### G. Encourage yourself in the Lord.

- a) 1 Samuel 30:6 *“And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.”*
- i) There is nothing wrong with having other people encourage us, but we also must come to a place where we learn to comfort and encourage ourselves in the Lord. Sometimes, we might need the encouragement of others, but we have to learn to rise up by just encouraging ourselves.
  - ii) David had just gone through one of the most difficult and very devastating times of his life. His life was being hunted by Saul, and he had just been plundered by the Amalekites. They had taken all his wives, children, and the city was burnt with fire but not only was his family taken but the families of his 600 men. This was quite a tragedy. They wept until they could weep no more. He was greatly distressed and to add more salt to the wound, his men were about to turn against him and they were talking of stoning him. It was bad!

- iii) David took God's Word, and he encouraged himself and as he was seeking the Lord, God spoke to him and gave him direction and instruction. But this only came when he chose to encourage himself in the Lord. When you choose to encourage yourself in the Lord, God will speak to you and you will come out on top. Will you take responsibility to encourage yourself in the Lord?
- iv) Encouragement comes from God's word and His promises to us. As you begin to dig in and discover those promises, you will be encouraged out of whatever pit you are in.

## H. Give thanks.

This puts things in the right perspective and causes you to become positive—rather than negative. You begin to see differently and what you have, not what you are missing.

- a) 1 Thessalonians 5:18 *"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*
  - i) I know this is the last thing that most people would consider or even want to in this time but it's one of the best ways to rise above this storm of destructive grief. I do understand that it could be quite challenging and difficult in such a time but it is doable, and that's why this verse tells us to do it.
  - ii) Things could have been a lot worse than they are. If you are to look around, you will find something good to thank God for. We must look for reasons to be thankful even in the midst of tragedy because they are present, but we will not see them unless we look for them.
  - iii) This verse is not saying that you thank God for the tragedy or hardship but to be thankful even in the midst of it. How do you do that? You should look for the good things around you. An example I can use; if you have lost your spouse, you can thank God that you are alive. If you have children, you can thank God for your children, thank the Lord for your salvation and your mates. I mean you must

start focusing on the good surrounding you to be able to be thankful. If you can't find a single thing to thank God for, then go ahead and thank Him for my life and how he is reaching you through me. That's a reason to be thankful for. We should be looking for the positives all around us and begin to give thanks.

## I. Pray

- a) James 5:13 *Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray.*
- i) Afflicted means undergoing hardship and suffering.
  - ii) Prayer takes the focus off of you back to the Lord. This is also true of thanksgiving.
  - iii) Prayer is a sign of dependence upon God. When we pray, we are relying upon God which in return releases His power, wisdom, and guidance in our lives.