

Grieving With Grace

Grief touches everyone of us in this life. We must each walk through this valley at some point, or watch our dear ones go through it.

I recently had a friend ask me to write a blog post about what to say to someone going through a life trial. I eagerly set out to do so, but I have come to realize that I am not an authority on what to say when someone grieves. I feel the same loss of words when watching a loved one battle something. We do not live in a culture that dictates exactly what garment to wear, whether or not to cry, and how long to cry. Thankfully, we know the One who created man and knows what is in man. He gives us some Biblical principles to guide us:

1. It is very helpful to know that EVERYONE grieves differently.

What helps one person may totally offend another. For example, some just need to hear, "I have been there. I know what you are going through." But if you say this same exact thing to another griever, they cry out, "You have no idea what I am going through! My situation is totally different from anything you have gone through." Others love to have friends and family surround them with love and support. But try to do surround others grievers with love and support and they ask you to please stop visiting. They need solitude. Some want you to cry with them and others are uncomfortable if you cry.

A Biblical example of this is found in [John 11](#). We see two sisters grieving over their brother. These sisters shared a common family, culture, and faith; and yet they handled their grief in two incredibly different ways. I'm so thankful the Lord included this account in His Word for us, because it shows us that He came to both sisters. And so it is with everyone who grieves. No matter how they are handling their grief, the Lord will come to you.

The other fascinating thing about this story is that the Lord never commends one griever over the other. You do not find Him reprimanding Mary saying, "Why couldn't you run to me with your grief as your sister did?" Or yet on the other hand reprimanding Martha with, "You should have more peace and sit in the house like Mary knowing I have everything under control."

The Lord made us each unique. Rest assured, He understands how you are grieving ([Psalm 103:14](#)), and He is touched with what you are feeling ([Hebrews 4:15](#)).

2. There are some Biblical guidelines we can use to help those going through the valleys of life.

* Try to match your response to the one grieving ([Romans 12:15](#)). If they need someone to cry with them, do so. If they need someone to laugh about the wonderful memories they have, do that. If they need someone to pray with, pray with them!* Comfort with the comfort you have been given ([II Corinthians 1:4](#)). This is not to say, "Oh, I've been through that," but

"Christ brought me through when and I know He will do the same for you." Reminding them of the victory we have found in Christ encourages them!* Pray for them. Don't just say that you will, stop and bring them before the Lord. It is an incredible thing to feel the strength that comes from God's people praying for you.

* Avoid speaking foolishly ([Proverbs 18:13](#)). How you see a person grieving at any exact moment is not the whole picture. Social media has allowed us a more public forum to express our grief, but a griever's one post is not the width and breadth of their grief. You do not need to write them and tell them they are not grieving enough or they are grieving too much. You are just seeing a snapshot of their grief. If you see them shortly after the tragedy, this principle stays the same. Do not try to commentate on how they are handling a matter.

This leads me to final observation:

3. While you cannot control how people choose to comfort you, you can control your reaction.

"I shouldn't have to," you might think. "I am the one hurting." In a perfect world this might be true, however, the devil is always looking for an advantage in our life. He wants to add to your pain bitterness, anger, pride, and his other poisons. A hurting person is easily hurt, so recognize that you are more vulnerable and need the Lord's aid to respond correctly. We can do this by keeping our mind on the Lord and His Word ([Isaiah 26:3](#); [Psalm 119:165](#)). Remember that our consolation comes from God. The Comforter is all-sufficient to help you through your grief. If you are placing unrealistic expectations on people to bring you through your grief, you will be disappointed. You can find comfort in people, but they are not the comforter God sent to you. He alone can console you as you need to be comforted. Praise the Lord that He will, if we let Him!