

Coping With Loss - part one

by
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Introduction:

There are many thoughts that we humans like to purposely avoid because of stress—and because of fear. Some never visit hospitals, or funeral homes, as if avoiding or ignoring these situations causes them to be less real. Regardless of what we are willing to think about, or not, life has its moments of loss. Mortal life is a series of greetings and partings. I have to admit, at a fairly early age in life, I thought I had "the departure part of life" totally figured out. I had been attending funerals since I was a child: That is what is involved in being part of a big family; part of an aging congregation; and, especially, my Dad being the preacher, made funerals a part of my reality. I had witnessed departures, and I believed that my heart understood the situation completely—in fact, I had become quite comfortable with that reality. Then April 20th, 2014, with the sound of a phone ring, all of my comfortable understanding was shattered. In one moment, by five words, "Sean, your Mom has died" my life was turned upside down. Loss tore through my heart, all I could think was that I wanted the situation to not be true, and I wanted that feeling to stop. I can remember literally running away from the living room, as if I could get away from the news I was hearing—but it was real, there was no running away. In that moment, anything that I may have imagined "that day" being, was nothing compared to the place, in which, I fell. I needed help to find my way back. God's revealed will concerns "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Death is certainly part of life and God offers the proper advice, comfort, and a plan for healing, when we face loss. Let's consider what we can gather from the Scriptures to help us cope.

Turn to God:

God is aware of human loss. God knows our nature, and that our mortality means we will face departures. From the time man was driven from the Garden, physical death became a known reality for us, "...for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:17-24). Mortal life has both a

beginning and an end: Psalm 90:10, "The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." This life is temporary, fragile, and fleeting (Ecclesiastes 3:2; James 4:14). Jesus, while on earth, showed us the Father, as He said in John 14:7-10, "If you had known Me you would have known the Father also..." Jesus was compassionate to our loss in death: He raised the man of Nain, to ease the suffering of his widowed mother (Luke 7:11-15). He wept over the passing of His own friend Lazarus (John 11:35). Even in the time of His own death, He provided for His earthly mother, by giving John the responsibility of a son toward Mary (John 19:25-27). We are told that the Father, Himself, is moved by our death: When the faithful die it is "precious" to Him (Psalm 116:15). However, God finds "no pleasure" in the death of the unrighteous. His desire for them to turn from their sins is rejected and made impossible by their mortal death (Ezekiel 18:31-32). God desires to comfort you (2 Corinthians 1:3). Express your heart to God: Prayers, supplication, thanksgiving, and requests—make your needs known to God (Philippians 4:6). Prayer: speaking to God, expressing what you can express. Supplication: The deep-earnest pleadings of your heart. Thanksgiving: Even in moments of life in which we cannot find much to be thankful for we can approach God, appreciative of His care. Requests: Appealing to God, in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16). Trust His care: When it seems like our world is falling apart, we must trust what David said in Psalm 11:3-4, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? The Lord is in His holy temple, The Lord's throne is in heaven..." As David, in Psalm 23:4 says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." As Jesus did, in Matthew 26:37-39, "And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Difficult days cannot separate us from God, if we are willing to turn to Him and trust Him (Romans 8:31-39). Turning to God brings comfort through the knowledge of His care, an understanding that life does go on—and hope, beyond this moment in our life, still remains.

(to be continued)