

Finding Hope for Tomorrow

Psalm 40:1-3, 17

Introduction:

Have you ever noticed that everyone else has the answer to your struggles?

- *You just need to snap out of it!*
- *Time heals all wounds ...*
- *If it were me, I would ...* (my favorite ☹)

Truth: **grief is as complicated as each of us is complicated.** Those who think grief can be reduced to a simple definition, or timeline with phase completion dates — have never ridden the roller coaster of emotional pain. It's not as "easy" as some want you to think. It takes time ... and it takes God. Yet even then, we sometimes wonder if we'll ever make it through the maze of personal pain ...

Discussion:

I. When Will I Get Over This?

A. **It's a simple question with a complex answer** since grief is unique. Examples: The grieving process for a family losing a grandfather to Alzheimer's is different from a wife who loses her husband in an accident. And her grief is different from a marriage breakup or a patient diagnosed with cancer.

1. While common denominators exist, each is individual. And even though you never "get over it," with God's help, you can move past it.
2. However, if you think all you must do is read the Bible and pray — and *Poof!* — the nasty disappears — think again. First, you never forget the person for whom you grieve. Second, there will be days you take two steps forward and three back. Often the slightest nudge from your past uncovers raw emotions you thought were left behind. Normal? Yes.

B. Two facts you must know:

1. *There is no completion date for the grieving process.* We don't want to hear that because we want things to be orderly and organized. Even the various stages of grief are not a "check-off" list.
2. *Men and women handle grief differently.*

**Grief is a private journey — which means ...
you will always be a work in progress. Be patient.**

II. "Help...I'm Stuck!"

A. It is amazing the number of people who get "stuck" — and it happens regardless of the tragedy. Thus, life grinds to a halt as every conversation and activity relates back to the accident, diagnoses, divorce, etc. As a result, some live in a perpetual time warp as "The Tragedy" comes to define who they are.

B. There are stages of grief ...

1. _____ - usually doesn't last long. Because we have to eat and make a living, life has a way of moving us forward. While this stage is the birthplace of grief, it cannot be the resting place (**Josh.1:1-2; 2 Sam.12:16-23**)
2. _____. In divorce, we may lash out at our spouse or in death, we may even lash out at God. While this is a normal emotion, it must be short-lived (**Eph.4:26-27**). The greatest opportunity we can give Satan is to harbor anger.
3. _____. Here is the pit of overwhelming hopelessness (**Ps.119:25**). Some of God's greatest servants did battle here (**Ps.88:1-6**). Thus, if the "greats" of the Bible had their "down time," then why are we surprised when we suffer the same? Depression is emotional super-glue — and it's easy to get "stuck."

Some need medical help. *Sometimes we view physicians who treat the mind as "suspect." Thus, "Read your Bible and pray" is the quick and easy cure-all to every problem. While it is the ultimate cure-all, there may be more needed. It's the same reason we don't tell a man with a broken leg to "Read your Bible and pray." He needs to read his Bible and pray but he ALSO needs medical attention.*

III. Elijah — 1 Kings 19

A. Depression, how did it happen?

1. *He stopped _____ clearly, vv.1-3a.* Fear is debilitating. Laying prayer aside, he focused on fear.
2. *He separated himself from his _____, vv.3-4a.* The human tendency is to get discouraged and seek isolation. Depression, however, feeds on loneliness (**Ecc1.4:9-10**).
3. *He fell into the trap of _____ - _____, v.4.*

IV. 4 Things God Did to Help Get Him “Unstuck”

- A. **He prescribed _____ & _____, vv.5-6.** It’s amazing how better you feel when you take care of your physical self. Life-survivors are not super men and women, but people who believe that in spite of the tragedy, life is still worth living.
- B. **He communicated _____, vv.11-13.** It wasn’t, *Get on your feet you stumbling prophet ... And quit your belly-aching!* God knew Elijah needed calm reassurance. As a result, God did not speak to him from the wind, or earthquake, or fire, but in the sound of a “gentle blowing.”
- C. **He made him feel _____ again, vv.15-16,18.** *You are valuable to Me ... You are still in My plans ... By the way - you’re not the only one ... There are 7,000 waiting to hear My word — from you!* God gave Elijah every reason to live. And while you may not have 7,000 depending upon you, there is probably someone — and several someone(s).
- D. **God gave him a precious gift — a _____, v.19.**

Conclusion:

Life is filled with defining moments that are often painful. Those defining moments, however, are not interruptions on the path of your progress — they are the path of your progress! And you can become bitter or better. It’s a choice God gives to each. Here it is: Even though life is hard, don’t give up on God. For some reason, He isn’t finished with you as yet (**2 Cor.1:3-5**). You available?