

Scriptures and Doctrine :: prolonged grieving

prolonged grieving - posted by free, on: 2005/7/8 10:45

I am sure there are many among us who have lost loved ones and have grieved for a long time. I lost my mother 11 years ago and I'm still grieving. The wound is still very raw at times. That, by anyone's account, is morbid grieving, I know. I've prayed long and hard over this. I had 11 years to do that.

Does anyone know what the Bible says about such prolonged grieving. Is it a sin?

Re: prolonged grieving - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/7/8 11:09

No, prolonged grieving over the loss of a loved one is not sin. The bible has plenty of grieving in it.

You can't measure the duration of grief...it's related to many factors. The worse thing is to believe God is impatient with your grief. Just the Psalms by themselves demonstrate that deeply hurt and broken humanity is the safest in the presence of God. It is important to be patient with yourself and your unique reactions to the loss. Certainly with time, certain feelings can lose intensity overall, but it is to be expected that significant dates, holidays, or other misc. reminders will stir up feelings related to the loss.

Grief isn't abnormal or unspiritual in this fallen world. It helps to remember that we stand outside of heaven presently...Let's gently remind one another that this place is not forever though...

"Then I saw a new Heaven and a new earth...And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' - Revelations 21:1-4"

MC

Re: prolonged grieving - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/7/8 11:51

Quote:

-----Does anyone know what the Bible says about such prolonged grieving. Is it a sin?

We lost a son by drowning 6 years ago and wept at his graveside this morning. The grief however no longer crushes. I have sometimes asked your same question; how long should this last? It was Jacob's testimony that he never expected to recover from the experience. Gen. 37:34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

Gen. 37:35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him. I think he was wrong to refuse comfort, but he clearly expected to bear the pain of loss for the rest of his life.

There is an adjective which comes to mind; 'inordinate'. It implies 'beyond the ordinary' or in other words 'excessive'. There is a sense in which only those who continue to mourn for their sin can be assured of comfort; Matt. 5:4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. This is literally the mourning ones. This is not an incident of mourning but a disposition. I think true grief lasts forever but we are not to be brought under the power of it.

Re: - posted by free, on: 2005/7/8 13:18

Philologos,

My heart goes out to you. To lose a son by whatever means is one of the most wrenching things in the world. Somewhere it says God puts our tears in a bottle. I also lost a younger sister (age 36) to leukemia two years ago.

Yes, it was inordinate grieving that I had for my mother. 11 years is too long to grieve. At prayers the other day, I confessed and asked the Lord to forgive me for making an idol out of my grieving. Is there such a thing?

There are moments of Joy to be sure, right in the middle of suffering. But on the whole, I should be able to do better than that.

Re: - posted by mloaks, on: 2005/7/8 14:01

My brother, 47, was murdered in a drug deal last Feb.

My oldest nephew, 21, OD'd on heroin in 2001.

My closest Grandpa died at 92 in 1999. He had abused my Grandma...

my battle has been in avoiding the feeling that they had it coming! I am truly vial and wretched...

Also, wondering what I could have done. nothing...

At 5, my oldest son got caught in a riptide and the lifeguard and I almost drowned getting him out. It hurts me to think about that as much as the above deaths.

What keeps me going between the guardrails is knowing we will cast our crowns by the lake, and there will be no tears in the mansion. Such joy! But...

I still grieve. :-o

Re: prolonged grieving - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2005/7/8 14:17

You guys have posted some sensitive stuff, may God be hugely gracious towards you.

Re: prolonged grieving - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2005/7/8 21:09

My father died of AIDS virus when I was 14, and my grandfather, who was my favorite character, died five years ago. Father-in-law just recently.

Death is always awkward, but it is more sure than anything in this world. If my daughter died, I can't say I would stay strong, or not grieve, so my heart goes out to anyone in that situation, as well as all those who have lost loved ones.

I must believe that the closer we allow our selves to be consumed by God's fire, the more we will understand death. Those who wait for us in heaven will join with us in His marvelous glory, and there will be tears, but God will wipe them away. Those who see the second death must receive judgment. I grieve about that. Sometimes I cry for those lost people I've never met. That is so sad to me. I don't want anyone to go to Hell. Sometimes I just sob over the lost.

I can't speak for everyone, while my heart goes out to everyone, but I try to focus on saving the spiritually dead, and this helps. This is a sad world, but there is a heavenly mansion that I'll be given by Jesus, and I'll see all the other saints, and you guys who are saved.

I try to focus on God, though it's trying. Helping others with their problems sometimes helps me forget mine. I pray the Comforter would be with you all.

Re:prolonged grieving - posted by free, on: 2005/7/15 14:26

Thank you all for responding to my message. Most of you have more reason to grieve than I do and I am quite ashamed. Seeing other people's strength in adversity gives us encouragement not because misery likes company but because we know that we are understood and are not alone in our suffering. It may be hard to believe me at this time but all your responses have helped me tremendously. May someone help you the way you have helped me.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/7/15 18:01

Quote:
-----Seeing other people's strength in adversity gives us encouragement not because misery likes company but because we know that we are understood and are not alone in our suffering.

I was talking to an older sister who had some major dental work scheduled for the next week. She was a little anxious. I said "There is grace for it, but it won't arrive until next Wednesday. If you try to carry it before Wednesday, you're on your own". :-) To any who have read this forum and feel frightened let me assure you that the grace that comes with the crisis is extraordinary. One translation of Hebrews 4's last verse is 'grace in the nick of time'. Always, just in the nick of time.

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/7/15 20:12

Corrie Ten Boom tells the story of a church that she had to speak at where they were suffering martyrdom and they were afraid. She explained how her dad used to say if he was going to have her go to another country by train that he wouldn't give her the resources to go until it was time. She shared that with that church (that's just a brief part---the whole letter is somewhere on this site). I believe weeks later the entire church had been martyred. That story is etched in my mind as a reminder of the present grace in our time of need.

Re:, on: 2005/7/15 23:33

One night I was just desiring God fully, and had the 'gift of healing' on my heart (during that time, every once in a while I'd pray for it for 6 months). And I started praying really hard, fast, tongues, just flowed with God. and I looked up at my bible (I was reading on fasting (Is. 58) earlier) and I read this.

Is. 57:18-19

18 "I have seen his ways, but I will heal him;
I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners,
19 Creating the praise of the lips
Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near,"
Says the LORD, "and I will heal him."

Now, I read 19 first, and re-read it again. The Lord spoke to me 'I've given you the gift of healing'. But, I'm not boasting about this, but stating something else.

Look back at vs. 18 "I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners," Ever since that day. Hearing stories, looking at disabled people, just seeing some people, I wanted to burst out into tears. Maybe the 2 come together, I haven't figured it out yet. But I mourn for people who are hurting in the inside more than anything.

After reading this, I felt a little 'hurt' inside. And my heart goes out to you, and I hope that the Lord's Love will fill each and everyone of you.

***A side note** Thanks for doing that, I kinda thought it was a sin, but hearing some scripture that helped me understand this a little more.

Re:, on: 2005/7/17 14:02

Yeshua,

Thank you for your post. It makes much sense to me and helpful to hear the scripture expounded by one who has been spoken to by God through it.

Quote:
-----I think true grief lasts forever but we are not to be brought under the power of it.

Thank you for this too. I feel I don't know much about 'true grief' but, I understand something of loss through God's call to Adam 'where are you?'

Am very touched to hear of all the losses expressed in this thread. Confess I'm only on the edge of learning something about how to face those who grieve and, to have any real resources with which to comfort you, them.

Re: prolonged grieving - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2005/7/17 17:34

Have you read C.S. Lewis' A Grief Observed? It's a very personal writing -- like a journal of his thoughts, because of how personal it is -- and written after his wife, Joy, died. Though it's written around his grief for his wife, it's proved really helpful for people grieving the loss of family members, too. Lewis just lays things out in a way that hits home, and helps you work through your grief.

Re: prolonged grieving - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2005/7/17 19:49

Free, you have got a lot of very good responses on this thread. Now, I would like to share my own testimony.

Ten years ago the Holy Spirit led me to study the book of Job. Up to this point I disliked the book because I believed those guys' speeches were so redundant, always going in circles. I want people to say what they think and then shut up! Anyhow, this time the book made a lot of sense and I absorbed the concepts although I did not wade through the entire book. But studying it prepared me what was to come a few months later.

Shortly thereafter, our daughter was diagnosed with glioblastoma - brain tumor, the worst kind - and succumbed over a year later. Now, how did I cope having our only daughter die? I loved her dearly and now even as I type, I battle tears. She was married with two small children.

When I was told she was terminally ill, I cried hard for two days. I could not cope and knew if I were to survive, I had to have it out with God. So one evening after putting my granddaughter to bed, I spent a lot of time ALONE with God and His Word. The Bible tells us if we have the faith as small as a mustard seed, he will grant our request. I told the LORD I did not even have that much faith. In any case after talking to the LORD a while I felt at peace knowing his will will be done and whatever happens He will be there. And he was. Now this is another story....:-)

How do I cope now? I know she is with the LORD and I would not want her back. (Knowing this I can not understand why anyone would want to have their loved one resurrected to live in this world!). I look forward to dying, being with my loved ones and above all to see the One who died to redeem us. The bottom line is that God has comforted me. I have made peace with tears. I am not ashamed of them. Sometimes I will tear up and other times I won't. Simple as that! I am very comfortable around those that cry their hearts out...and I may even join them in their cry.

Perhaps you would like to share with us why you find your mother's death so difficult to handle? We will listen....

ginnyrose

Re: difficulty - posted by free, on: 2005/7/18 4:09

Dear Ginnyrose,

Thank you for the words of comfort and your boldness to tell us all of your own personal grief and loss. My tears flow for you and I can only imagine the confusion at the time. Thank God for your faith which saw you through this dark period and obviously has made you a much stronger person. I remember watching on TV an interview of someone whose young daughter died in the Kobe earthquake. She was there to preach the gospel!!! The parent said "God loves her more than I do". I never forgot that.

I know it is difficult for people to understand why I have taken so long (11 years) and grieved so very very hard for the death of my mother who after all was 69. I think I now know why. It was the way she died. I have never talked about this to anyone and even among my family members we have not discussed this. It is just so wrenching.

Since you ask, I will tell you. I'm sorry that this may be offensive to hear. And graphic. My mother had metastasized cancer and for weeks before her death she could not empty her bowels. At the moment of her death, everything that was inside her spilled out through her mouth. It spilled out with such a force that it was poured over all of us watching her, on to the walls, bed, floor, everywhere. It was like a horror of horror movie, except it touches our every sense.

I kept this inside of me and this image never went away. It haunted both my waking and my sleeping hours. I told no one, not a friend, not my own family who were not at the deathbed. This is not an easy story to listen to. Some people might actually feel "defiled". After 11 years, I finally told my son and daughter.

I now understand that whatever you suppress, you give it power. My son sent me a radio program about people with prolonged grieving. The advice is to find a therapist and tell the story. Record that and play it over and over again to desensitize yourself. I don't have the courage to do that. But that I'm typing this, is already a step forward. It was so all consuming I couldn't even go into the details with God. Who knows, if it was not Him, showing me this website that I might find healing.

Thank you for listening. My prayers are for you this morning as you took the time to share your story and to wonder about mine.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2005/7/20 0:21

Free,

I am so sorry you had such a dreadful experience. That would be awful! But you can rest assured that your mother was not aware of this happening since you said it happened after she died. I am also told when a body expires, muscles relax and body wastes leave the body. Gross, yes, but God made it this way and why, I do not know.

It appears to me you are still grossed out by what happened to your mother, right? I do not know what to say other than to unload your feelings to God about this matter. He is a great healer..and comforter. If it means crying and getting grossed out all over again, so be it. God knows you better than you do and does care intently about you! :) Perhaps He allowed this so He can demonstrate his power to you? Just wondering...

If you feel like sharing more, go ahead...we will listen.

God bless you,
ginnyrose

Re: - posted by free, on: 2005/7/20 6:55

Phil wrote

"I think true grief lasts forever but we are not to be brought under the power of it."

I understand that very well. In fact, I understand also that it is not "doable" on our own.

I am a very determined person and generally speaking a rather proactive type. But I come to understand during the years how crushing in a certain way, the above statement by Phil can also be. And I mean it in a good sense.

I used to think that if I have got Jesus on my side I can fight any Goliath. That was before I came face to face with a Goliath too big for me. Now, I am just watching Jesus, my David, do battle for me. I also know that Jesus is not on my side. I have to be on His side. My struggle is to be that bystander.

Today at prayers I thought of a picture. Sometimes this happens and I sketch it in my journal. I was in front of a closed door and I knew it wasn't a door I should open but just to pray for whatever is happening behind it. I believe that's an allegory of my Christian walk. That there are doors behind which are mysteries too complex for my simple mind to comprehend. And unless Jesus opens them, they shouldn't be opened at all. Did not Jesus say - What I am doing now, you do not understand, but you will....(sorry I'm only good at paraphrasing).

Suffering is one of the many inevitables in the human condition. The Buddha is right. He said Life is suffering. And the entire Buddhist philosophy is on how to deal with this suffering (8 fold path). This consists of a series of self denials and especially the death of all passion. However, Jesus knows we cannot live without passion. But what he requires is a passion rightly placed in Him. So I'm not going to say life is an illusion (as the Buddhists would say). All the pain is real. Pain is still a problem but I need to understand that Jesus bore my pain and there is a purpose for everything. We do not understand it now, but later....

Thanks again, Ginny