

"Grieving"

Losing a loved one is one of the hardest times of life. Does Jesus Care? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're exploring what happens when we grieve and how God can help.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God loves us dearly and gives us the way of hope and comfort. Our God is the God of all comfort. And He's the source of life, new life, abundant life, and eternal life. We can trust Him to walk with us through the valley of death and sorrow. And we can cast our sorrows and cares upon Him, because He cares for us. Nothing hurts more than the loss of a loved one, but God is able to give us the comfort, strength, and courage to face our sorrows. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

Hebrews 9:27 says that, "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." Yes, we'll all face the day when our lives are over on this earth. We face the loss of grandparents, parents, siblings, and other important relatives, our friends, and sadly even our children. Each loss gives us cause to grieve. Ecclesiastes 12 and verse 7 says that, "the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." Death is that time when our spirits return to God who made us. We die to this life under the sun, yes, but our spirits live on.

On the cross, you'll remember, Jesus told the thief, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). The Lord clearly says that we'll survive and be conscious beyond this life. The Lord expected to see the thief in Paradise that very day. There is an inner spirit that survives death and is conscious. Now life here and now is not all there is. For the Christian there is the promise of life with God forever, and that gives the faithful comfort.

Now we offer this study on Grieving free! And if you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have many free programs and materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song. We'll read from 2 Corinthians 1:3 to 5, and we'll see the love of God when we grieve.

Our reading today comes from 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verses 3 to 5 and here the apostle Paul is talking about the comfort that he receive even in times when he was afflicted.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

That's true even to this day. This is God's word. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for the comfort that we receive from Your hands. And we're thankful Father that Jesus Christ was willing to die for us on the cross that we might have the forgiveness of sins. We're thankful that You raised Him from the dead so that we might have life beyond this life. Father we pray that You will help us always to do Your will and to trust in You. In Jesus name, Amen.

Hebrews 9:27 does says that "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." James 2:26 explains, "For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." Now our fleshly bodies die, but our spirits continue on. 2 Corinthians 5:6 to 8 reminds us,

“Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body (that) we are absent from the Lord— for we walk by faith, not by sight— we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”

Jesus, as we’ve said, told the thief on the cross, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” Now the word Paradise is used three times in Scripture, and each time refers to the heavenly realm where the righteous go after death. In 2 Corinthians 12:2 to 4 Paradise is equated to the third heaven, the place where God dwells. When Jesus died Jesus went to that unseen place of righteous spirits where God dwells. In Revelation 2 and verse 7, the Paradise of God is where the tree of life is. And if Jesus’ soul was not abandoned to Hades but He went to Paradise, then Hades must contain a place where righteous souls are comforted. When a righteous loved one dies he will go to Paradise. And we have no reason to mourn for them and their situation. It is right for us to mourn for ourselves and our own loss. And that’s what we do. We’ve lost someone precious to us and it’s right to mourn.

Paul explained that death for the Christian is not bad. He wrote in Philippians 1:21 to 23, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better.” Now there are many things worse than death for the Christian. Being in Paradise is “very much better” than anything that we know in this life. Paul could say in Romans 8 and verse 18, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” We may have a rough time now, but the glory that we will have with Christ will make it all seem as nothing to us.

When we belong to Christ, we’re no longer ours. When we belong to Christ, He will care for us not only in this life but also the life to come. Romans 14:7 to 9 informs us, “For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.” So whether in this life or in the life to come, our relationship with the Lord Jesus matters. So when a faithful loved one dies, we can have comfort that he or she is in the hands of a loving and just Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now do not think the Lord doesn’t know the pain that you’re suffering right now if you’re grieving the loss of a loved one. Don’t imagine that He’s far removed from you and doesn’t care. If you’re a Christian, you’re a child of God and a follower of Jesus. And nothing escapes His notice. The Lord Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 10:29 to 31, “Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.” God knows and God cares for you.

The Lord Jesus knew what it was like to suffer the loss of a loved one. And when Jesus heard Lazarus was ill, He slowly left the place where he was staying across the Jordan for Bethany to the home of Mary and Martha. Jesus was especially close to this family. John 11:33 to 35 says, “When Jesus saw her (that is Mary) weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” (then he says) Jesus wept.” One lexicon says that Jesus “burst into tears.” Jesus grieves when the people He loves grieve. He felt Mary and Martha’s pain, and I tell you the Lord feels your pain too.

The Scriptures record numerous times that people grieved over the loss of a loved one. In Genesis 37:31 to 35 we read of Jacob’s grief over what he thought was the loss of his son, Joseph. The Scripture

says, "Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, 'This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not.' And he identified it and said, 'It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.' Then Jacob tore his garments. He puts on sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, 'No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.' Thus his father wept for him." Well the brothers of Joseph lied to their father, but Jacob's mourning was truly a devastating experience.

The Scriptures point to Job as one who suffered but held firmly to his faith in God. In just one day, Job lost all his sheep, camels, oxen, donkeys, and most of his servants. Then he got word of his ten children. Job 1:18 to 21 tells what happened: While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you." Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

The pain of losing all ten of your children at once is indescribable. Job later was afflicted with a painful disease. His friends proved to be miserable comforters, saying that his sin is the cause of all his pain. Though Job was a man, he feared the Lord. Satan was the true cause of his pain and suffering. In the end of the book, God restored Job's losses. And He restored them twofold and he had ten new children. Oh yes, God cared for Job.

Because of David's sin with Bathsheba and his guilt in the death of Uriah, the Lord punished David. 2 Samuel 12:15 to 23 says: So Nathan went to his house. Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was very sick. David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground.

The elders of his household stood beside him in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them. Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to our voice. How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do himself harm!"

But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate. Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food." He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.' "But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

David was filled with remorse and sorrow over his sins, thinking perhaps God would save his son. The child died, but the death of a child means they go to be with God. David's faith was that he would be able to be with his son once again when he passed from this life. David wrote in Psalm 30 and verse

5, "Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning." Oh we weep in this life for those we lose, but we have confidence as Christians of being with them in the life to come.

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:16 to 18, "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." Christians have the hope and comfort of the Lord Jesus and a home in heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 to 19 gives Christians hope, promise, and comfort. There is a big difference between the person who follows Christ and the person who doesn't. Paul wrote, "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." One day the Lord Jesus will come for His people and will bless them eternally. Ephesians 2 and verse 7 tells us that God has planned for our eternal home in heaven. In the ages to come He will "show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Our hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ. We can find comfort in Christ alone. Because Jesus arose from the dead, we too can rise up one day and be with the Lord forever. Do you belong to the Lord?

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for the promise that You give to us through Your son Jesus. Since He rose from the dead. And Father we pray that we will serve Him and love Him all the days of our lives. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Some people are what sociologists call "don'ts." Don'ts are people who don't believe in God, don't know whether there is a God, or don't care whether God exists. Now don'ts really have nothing to offer a dying person. They have nothing to offer a grieving family. When God doesn't matter, all hope and meaning are in vain. Because God raised Jesus from the dead, we know there is an afterlife and a Judgment Day. Because Jesus will one day raise the faithful who obey Him, we can have hope of eternal life. But those who have no relationship with the Lord have no such hope.

The Christian who loves, believes in God, and follows Christ can find comfort, even in death. Facing death, Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:6 to 8, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure (that is death) has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Do you love the Lord? Do you believe? You know to get right with the Lord you must love and believe Him. Now believing in Him means you believed He died on the cross for your sins and rose again from the dead. You believe that He is Lord, and so you must repent of your sins. You're willing to confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and to be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). When you do, God will wash away your sins (Acts 22:16) and He'll give you freedom from sin and newness of life (Romans 6:3 to 7). Oh won't you come to the Lord today and be saved?

Now we hope that today's study about grieving has helped you see its value and to turn away from the lies of men. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now there's a schedule of our programs and a map of churches that in your area at www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! We ask that you subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and then as you're watching be sure to like the programs. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now there's more than one. And we also have personal bible studies. Now if you take one of them we'll be happy to send them to you. They are free. But don't worry, we're not going to ask for money. We're not here to ask for money we're here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that show God your love by worshipping at church. You need a church family. And if you go and you visit you'll find wonderful people who will care about you. If you can attend, don't neglect worshipping at church. We know that some can't, but you might be able to. There's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So we ask that you keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. And as always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.