

Grief - continued

sins (Romans 10:17, 9, 10; Acts 2:38).

- Daniel was grieved by the implications of certain of his visions as they related to the future punishment of his people (Daniel 7:15).
 - Paul was grieved by the trouble that was being caused by the sayings of a demon-possessed woman (Acts 16:18).
 - Corrupt Jewish religious leaders were grieved by the gospel preaching that was done by the apostles (Acts 4:2).
 - The godless civil officials, Sanballat and Tobiah, were grieved that Nehemiah had come to restore Jerusalem “for the welfare of the children of Israel” (Nehemiah 2:10).
- [Note: Along with Jacob’s example in Genesis 37:35, these last two examples prove that emotions are not a safe guide. In these cases grief was the result of bias and misinformation. As I will more fully explain later in the article, this is what happens when grief becomes a pretext for blaming God for things that He did not and does not do.]*
- Parents are grieved by the foolish and rebellious behavior of their children (Proverbs 17:25).

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- Christians experience grief as a result of being persecuted (1 Peter 2:19). Of course, those suffering persecution must remind themselves of the great rewards of faith. Grief turns to joy when we remember that suffering for righteousness sake aligns us with Christ and with others who similarly suffered in His name (1 Peter 4:13, 14; Matthew 5:10-12).

- Tim Haile -

Warfield Blvd. church of Christ
290 Warfield Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37043

Website
wbcoc.org

Assembly Times
Sunday: 9:30 am, 10:30 am, 6 pm
Wednesday: 7 pm

Everyone Is Welcome!
For More Information Call
(931) 647-1324

Published and Edited By
Chris Reeves
(615) 389-3250
chrisreevesmail@gmail.com
TheGoodTeacher.com

THE WARFIELD BULLETIN

August 7, 2022



For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Guest Article: Dealing With Grief - Part I

Grief is a feeling of deep sorrow. It is experienced in response to the loss of something that is very important to us. Since people prioritize things differently, this might be the loss of one's good health or of a friend's health, a job, a pet or some valued possession. One might also experience grief as a result of being mistreated or harmed by other people. Typically however, grief is most strongly experienced in response to the loss of a loved one. Jacob was so grieved over the loss (presumed loss) of his son Joseph that he *refused to be comforted* by his family members and said that he would *go down to his grave* mourning the loss of his son (Genesis 37:35). This demonstrates how powerful grief can be as an emotion.

Humans eventually experience grief for one reason or another. Grief is an inevitable fact of life. Most people will actually experience many periods of grief over the course of their lives. The important thing is how we deal with our grief. Sadly, many people allow grief to turn into depression which affects their personal relations with others, including their spouses, children, parents and friends. They become withdrawn and unproductive. Some turn to alcohol or other illicit drugs. Some commit suicide. King David's servants were reluctant to tell him that his newborn son had died for fear that he might "*harm himself*" (2

Samuel 12:18). Some people even blame God for the cause of their grief. Prolonged grief can make people bitter and irrational. Grief serves a necessary purpose but failure to control it can have disastrous results.

People should not think it strange that they occasionally encounter periods of grief. Even God grieves over various conditions and we are creatures made in His image (Genesis 1:26-27).

God grieved because of the sinful condition of humanity in the pre-flood era and He even regretted having "*made man on the earth*" (Genesis 6:6). He later grieved over Israel's sinful behavior that resulted in the wilderness wandering — "*It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways*" (Psalm 95:10; Hebrews 3:10). Jesus was grieved over the hardness of men's hearts (Mark 3:5). He was also put to grief by the cruel treatment of others and by being rejected by His own people (Isaiah 53:3, 10). Jesus "*groaned in His spirit*" when He saw Mary weeping after the loss of her brother Lazarus. He wept when He saw Lazarus' tomb (John 11:33, 35). We know that the Holy Spirit is capable of experiencing grief, for we are warned to "*grieve not the Holy Spirit of God*" (Ephesians 4:30).

Some Causes Of Grief

The death of loved ones is perhaps the most common source of deep grief but be-

fore examining that subject let us consider some other sources and reasons:

- Job had "great" grief because of his own physical illness (Job 2:13). Many people experience this type of grief, whether on account of their own serious illness or because of the illness of a loved one. The book of Job proves that ultimately, it is not the words of our friends that can help us the most, but the words of God that are translated into strong faith (Romans 10:17).
- David grieved because of transgressors who refused to keep God's word and who rose up against God (Psalm 119:158; 139:21). Christians today experience this sorrow. They know what the Bible teaches about the consequences of sin and they want people to take those consequences more seriously. They want them to "*do the will*" of our Father in Heaven (Matthew 7:21).
- David was also grieved by *his own sin* (Psalm 31:9, 10). Note that David's grief was relieved by his own repentance and by God's forgiving him (Psalm 32:3-5). We today are not under the same spiritual law that David was under, but the principle remains the same under the gospel era — we need to meet God's conditions of salvation if we wish to free ourselves of the grief of being lost in our