

COMFORT FOR LOSS

A GOD WHO KNOWS PAIN

GOD has not kept himself distant from human suffering. Jesus Christ came to show us God the Father (Luke 10:22). He took on human flesh and became Immanuel ("God with us" Matt. 1:23). He did not have to come down and suffer, but he did; he chose to share in our pain. He allowed himself to become vulnerable and experience loss and grief. He went to the cross for us, and in doing so, he revealed the immeasurable love of the Father. It was through the Son's suffering, that God's love for us was demonstrated (Rom. 5:8).

JESUS

- ✦ WHEN Jesus saw Mary and the others weeping for Lazarus who had died, Scripture tells us that Jesus was "deeply moved" and wept with them (John 11:32-35).
- ✦ Jesus wept for Jerusalem, knowing the destruction that the people would soon face (Luke 19:41-44).
- ✦ Just before Jesus was betrayed by Judas, he went to the Garden of Gethsemane and told his disciples, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death" (Mark 14:34). He prayed to the Father saying, "Abba, Father... everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:36). "And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44).
- ✦ In intense suffering on the cross, "Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' (which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?')" (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34).

"[Jesus] being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!"
—Philippians 2:6-8

"The cross is a one time, visual representation of God's grief over sin." —Dean H. Harvey



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Five Myths about Grief

- Myth:** "The Bible says that Christians should not grieve because our hope is in God."
Fact: In 1 Thessalonians 4:13, Paul writes, "Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope." Paul does not say that believers will not grieve; rather that our grief does not need to be grief without hope. We can feel the pain of loss and also have hope in God at the same time.
- Myth:** "If I avoid the pain long enough, it will go away. Time heals all wounds."
Fact: We need to give ourselves time to heal, but just trying to wait it out will not bring recovery. Ignoring our feelings just prolongs the grief.
- Myth:** "Grief is an orderly, predictable process. Everyone grieves the same way. I should be over it by a certain date."
Fact: Though some feelings and stages may be anticipated, no two individuals' journey through grief is experienced the same. Although we may not know what lies beyond the next bend in the road, we can trust in God that he will guide us every step along the path (Prov. 3:5-6).
- Myth:** "I should try to get over my loss as soon as possible."
Fact: Often people never can (or should) "get over" significant losses, such as the death of a loved one. The pain may always be with you in some capacity. Although much of the sharp pain of sorrow goes away in time, you may always have a sense of the loss. The grief process is not about getting over it, but about learning how to live with the reality of the loss.
- Myth:** "If I stop grieving, then it means I no longer care about the person I lost."
Fact: Some people think that moving forward with their lives shows a lack of love for the person they lost. Coming out of the grief process does not mean that you forget your loved one. You still remember and love them, but your situation changed, and your future and day-to-day living should reflect this change.



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Comfort for Loss

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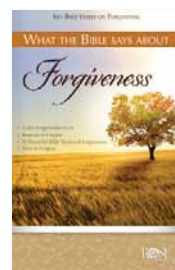
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