

33.3 Practical Pointer for Grief Part 2

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV):

¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Greetings, Patriots, this is Perry Greene with GNA and today we are going to continue our practical pointers for grief. Last time we emphasized that in times of grief we need to reflect on our grief. We need to allow ourselves the luxury of weeping in the times of our grief. I know that is hard for us, especially when we have heard that adults, especially men, aren't supposed to cry. But we really need to lean into grief and not fight it. In the long run we will be healthier if we allow tears when we need to.

There are more things we can do in our response to grief. We can be **proactive** in the face of grief. Abraham did not stop in his grief with his tears. He took the intentional step of buying a place to bury Sarah when she passed. Notice his actions in **Genesis 23:12-16 (NKJV):**

¹²Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; ¹³and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you will give it, please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take it from me and I will bury my dead there."

¹⁴And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, ¹⁵"My lord, listen to me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver. What is that between you and me? So bury your dead." ¹⁶And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants.

If we aren't careful our response to grief can paralyze us into inactivity. We can just sit and stare or wait and weep. God has made us for more than that. Even in times of grief, as hard as it may be there is a time to act.

We must be careful, however. It is possible that we may act, but we may act irrationally. I read the story of a goat with a birthmark that sparked some irrational behavior from some grieving people.

That goat had fans of the late racing star Dale Earnhardt flocking to a farm 50 miles south of Jacksonville, Florida. The attraction was a nine-month-old Nubian goat that was born with white markings which resembled the number "3" on her right side. That was the number on Dale Earnhardt's racecar.

The goat's owner, Jerry Pierson, says, "It's weird. I've seen people take pictures and get tears in their eyes."¹

Who knows all of the emotions people were feeling. For some of them, their grief made them act in an unusual, somewhat irrational manner. When we are proactive in our grief, the things which might sabotage our feelings are less likely to get the better of us.

Intentional actions do more than distract us. They renew us. Those intentional actions may even be something in the arena of service to others. For instance, I think about how Jesus went to a place of solitude in **Matthew 14** after His cousin, John died. While in that place a very large crowd came to Him. He would wind up feeding 5000 men plus women and children.

A normal person might have responded in the same manner as Jesus' disciples in **Matthew 14:15 (NKJV):**

"This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

¹ Parade Magazine, December 29, 2002, pg. 6.

Jesus overruled their plan. Instead He responded with intentionality. Notice **verse 16**:

¹⁶ But Jesus said to them, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

Jesus was doing more than distracting His disciples in their grief. You see, John was important to them, too. Some of them had been among his disciples before following Jesus. Jesus gave them actions of purpose in feeding the hungry.

This event was a proactive engagement. People were fed by Jesus and this reminds us of to whom we go in our times of need. It was also a **productive** event.

We see it once again in the grief of Abraham in **Genesis 23:17-20** (NKJV):

¹⁷ So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded ¹⁸ to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

¹⁹ And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. ²⁰ So the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.

Abraham had a breakthrough of personal accomplishment in the midst of his grief. He honored and buried Sarah. He also increased his holdings. He also had a sense of personal service to Sarah and her memory. The truth is, we often get help by giving help. This is a purpose in funeral services. We help the dead by providing a resting place for their bodies. The deceased don't care about such things but the living do. It becomes a comfort to us.

The encouragement of friends to a grieving person is likewise a help to others. One thing about giving comfort is that one day we may be in need of receiving comfort. The law of sowing and reaping says that we will get what we give.

Rabbi Norman E. Singer tells the story of a woman whose only son died. In her grief she went to the holy man and said, **“What magical incantations do you have that will bring my son back to life?”** Instead of sending her away or reasoning with her, he said, **“Fetch me a mustard seed from a home that has never known sorrow. We will use it to drive the sorrow out of your life.”**

The woman set out at once in search of the magical seed. She came first to a splendid mansion, knocked at the door and said, **“I am seeking a house that has never known sadness. Is this the place?”** They told her, **“You have come to the wrong place,”** and began to describe all the tragic things that had befallen them.

The woman said to herself, **“Who is more able to help these poor people than myself, who has also known great sorrow?”** She stayed on and comforted them, then went on in search for a home that had never known sorrow. But wherever she turned, in hotels and all other places, she found one tale after another of sadness and misfortune. She became so involved in ministering to other peoples' grief that she forgot about her quest for the magical seed, never realizing it had in fact driven the sorrow out of her life.

The biggest challenge at the loss of a loved one is to live the remaining life with purpose. You have a purpose and you can be productive. Act as you can and have the opportunity.

Keep The Light of Purpose Burning!