

Who has not questioned the reason for pain / suffering in the world? **Some people have become** hardened by their losses, others **have become** softened—**God used their** grief to cultivate in them tender, understanding hearts. **Jesus Understands.** *"A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."* -Isaiah 53:3

"Casting all your care upon him, for he cares for you." -1 Peter 5:7

Characteristics

"We don't want to hear it! We don't believe it! We won't accept it!" While Jesus' disciples didn't **speak** these words **literally**, these sentiments **resounded** in the hearts of His **followers**—esp **Peter**. The **shock, confusion, and fear** of Christ's **impending** death seemed **too great** to **comprehend**. In **John 16:18** they **protested**, *"We don't understand what he is saying."* Despite their **grief**, Jesus **persisted** in telling them the **truth**. He loved His disciples too much to **enable their denial**.

Grief over the **death** of a **significant** person in your life doesn't just **go away** in a **few days, weeks, or months**. **Healthy** grieving can last for **one, two, or even five years**. This is especially true with the **loss** of a **beloved child, parent, or mate**. Everyone grieves **differently**, but everyone **must grieve** in order to **heal**. As you **lean** on the **Lord**, your grieving **gradually lessens** and He **restores joy** to your **heart**. And, **someday**, if **not** in this **life**, then in the **life to come**—like the **disciples**—you will **understand** how God **can take** even the most **unspeakable losses** and **turn them to joy**.

"You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy." -John 16:20

How Do You Know If You are Grieving?

When we **initially** experience a **significant** loss, we can **plunge** into **depths** of **grief** and have **difficulty** coming up for **air**. Then **eventually**, after we **surface**, we are simply **treading water**, not **swimming** toward a real **destination**. The **reason** is called **grief**. When you feel **engulfed** with **grief**, realize that you have a **Deliverer** who will **keep you** from **drowning** in the **depths** of **despair**.

"He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters." -Psalm 18:16

- Do you feel **alone** and **isolated**?
- Do you feel that you are **mechanically** going through the **motions** of life?
- Do you feel **resentful** toward **God** for **allowing** your loss?
- Do you ask, *"Why?"* over and over **again**?
- Do you feel **overwhelmed**, not knowing **what** to do or **where** to turn?
- Do you feel **emotionally** distraught because of your **loss**?
- Do you have frequent **daydreams** about your **loss**?
- Do you feel **angry** or **bitter** over your **loss**?
- Do you have difficulty **forgiving** those who **caused** your **loss**?
- Do you frequently **dream** at night about your **loss**?
- Do you see life as an empty **struggle** without much **reward**?
- Do you feel **helpless** knowing how much others must also be **suffering**?
- Do you **wonder** what kind of God would **allow** your **loss**?
- Do you **view** God as **uninvolved** and lacking **compassion**?

Regardless of your view of God right now, the Bible says.

"The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him." -Nahum 1:7
