

4. Grief and Loss



The previous lesson talked a lot about emotions and how we handle emotions as men. And now in this lesson we looked at some of the emotions that are most difficult to handle, grief and the anger that frequently comes with it.

As was explained in this lesson, grief comes when we lose something that was very important to us. That might be the death of a loved one, a failed relationship, or other difficult events. How we respond to that loss can have a very significant effect on our well-being. Once again there are stories in the Bible that we can turn to for insight and guidance.

In the Bible, in a book called “Ruth”, we can read the story of a woman who went through tremendous loss, but turned to God for help in getting through it. Naomi was a married woman with two sons who were also married. But then we read that Naomi’s husband and both of her sons die, leaving her with only her two daughters-in-law.

Though Naomi was Jewish, at the time of the death of her husband and two sons they were living in a foreign land, so Naomi decided to return to her homeland, back to her original family, and one of her daughters-in-law (Ruth) decided to return with her. We know that Naomi was still dealing with a lot of grief over the tragic events that had happened to her because she blamed God for her misfortunes and she was still very bitter over them. We don’t have enough space here to go through all of the details of how God took care of Naomi and Ruth, you can read that for yourself in the book of “Ruth” in the Bible. But God provided for their need for food, and also provided a new husband for Ruth. And that’s not all. We also read that God had a bigger plan in all of this, a plan Naomi and Ruth could not have possibly imagined. We read that Ruth had a son named Obed, who then had a son named Jesse, who then had a son named David. This is the same David you read about in lessons 2 and 3, who was one of the greatest kings in the whole history of Israel. We also know from several other passages in the Bible that David was one of the human ancestors of the Lord Jesus! God had it all worked out according to his good plan.

So what can we learn from this, that we can apply when we go through difficult times?

First, realize that difficult times and loss are a natural and normal part of life, everyone goes through those times. It may seem strange that a powerful and loving God would allow suffering, but he does know what is best for us.

Second, remember that God wants to help you in those difficult times. You’ve probably heard of the apostle Peter. The Bible contains a letter he wrote to a group of people that were going through some serious difficulties to encourage and teach them. He wrote, “Cast all your anxiety on him (that is, on God) because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7).

Third, when we go through those difficult times we may try to deny that we are struggling, and may feel very alone in that struggle. But we are never alone, we have a God that cares about us.

Fourth, in our grief we may blame God for what has happened. After all, if God is so powerful then he could have prevented what happened, couldn’t he? But at the same time we need to remember that God’s love and wisdom is greater than we can possibly imagine. No matter how big your concept of God is, he’s much bigger than that! Instead of being angry at God we need to find comfort in knowing that he is our heavenly father and he ultimately knows what is best for us; just as you, as an earthly father, will always want to do what is best for your children.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Questions for thought and discussion:

- a. What have been some of the most devastating losses in your life and how did you handle them?
- b. What stage are you in right now? Are you still grieving over it? Are you angry at God or someone else?
- c. Why did the Lord allow Naomi to suffer grief and loss? What was the primary purpose of her difficulties?
- d. What are the four steps mentioned in our study to hand grief and loss?
- e. How will you apply them in your life?