

# portraits of GRIEF

## THE PROMISE

*At some point on your journey,  
something or someone you love will be lost.*

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. *Romans 12:15*

## FRIENDS WHO MADE A GOOD START

When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. <sup>12</sup> When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads.

<sup>13</sup> Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was. *Job 2:11-13*

## WHAT NOT TO SAY

- "How are you?" • "It'll be ok." • "It'll be fine." • "You'll get through this."
- "You'll have to move on." • "Thank God you have other children."
- "You can have other children." • "They're in a better place."
- "At least they're not suffering." • "God doesn't give us more than we can handle."
- "I know how you feel." • "I'm here for you. Call if you need anything."

## UNDERSTAND THAT...

- *comforting those who are hurting is hard work.*
  - *those grieving are overwhelmed.*
  - *hurt people hurt people.*
  - *words and advice usually don't help (and can hurt).*
  - *you don't need to defend God.*
  - *the first year is hard.*
  - *this is their journey. You can't take it for them or make it go away.*
  - *they won't get over, around, or under this.*
- But they must go through it and find a NEW normal.*
- *you will need patience, presence, and persistence.* ■ *prayer has power.*

## THE DISCIPLINE OF PRESENCE & THE LIMITATION OF WORDS

Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: <sup>2</sup> "If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? But who can keep from speaking? *Job 4:1-2*

## DON'T...

- *pressure them to get over it and "Get on with life."*
- *push them to get rid of the loved one's belongings.*
- *be afraid to talk about the person who died.* ■ *offer easy answers.*

- *correct theological error.* ■ *blame.* ■ *tell them how they should feel.*
- *share your story.* ■ *give unsolicited advice.*
- *be impatient and/or judgmental.*
- *expect them to be polite, make sense, and/or behave "godly."*

## THE COMFORT OF CHRIST

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. <sup>5</sup> For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. <sup>6</sup> If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. <sup>7</sup> And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. *2 Corinthians 1:3-7*

## WHAT TO SAY

- "I'm sorry for your loss." • "I love you so much." • "I'll be praying for you."
- "You're not alone." • "The person we lost was special to me because..."
- "Is there anything specific I can do for you?"

## DO...

- *listen. Let them talk.* ■ *hold a hand. Touch. Embrace.*
- *share memories and look at photos.* ■ *help with day-to-day tasks.*
- *learn about grief.* ■ *ask for something specific you can do.*
- *be patient with them.* ■ *pray for and with them.*
- *call or visit (especially AFTER the first month).*
- *get them out of the house.* ■ *share a meal.*
- *remember holidays and anniversaries*

## A PRAYER FOR MY GRIEVING FRIEND

*Holy Spirit, someone I love is hurting.*

*I'm not sure what to say or how to help. Give me courage and patience.*

*Allow me to be the comfort of Christ to them.*

*Help me be their friend as I listen patiently, remembering what has been lost.*

*Let me be slow to speak with correction, advice and opinion.*

*Show me how to walk alongside my friend. Give me grace to simply be with them. Remind me that this is their journey and although I can't take away the pain, I can share in it for a while. Bring them the comfort, healing, and clarity which only comes from You. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## NEXT STEPS

*For Further Study and Reflection (\* available at JW Bookstore):*

*\*The Problem of Pain -- C.S. Lewis*

*\*A Grace Disguised -- Jerry Sittser*

*One Thousand Gifts -- Ann Voskamp*

*A Grief Observed -- C.S. Lewis*

*Confessions of a Grieving Christian -- Zig Ziglar*

*GriefShare Small Group -- Monday Night in JW Fireside Room*

*GriefShare Seminars -- November 19 and December 17 (3rd Saturday)*

*October 22/23, 2011*