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JOSEPH: "WEEPING MAY LAST FOR A NIGHT." (Genesis 50:14)

...Today is a day when sorrow often finds us. We weep and grieve for those we have lost. But some day, as John told us in Revelation 21:1-7, our tears will only be a distant memory. They will be gone forever. What a day!
...Now life seems more like the changing seasons. There are times of Spring, when life buds and beauty fills the eye. Summer has its sweet days of warmth, and Fall brings the glory of the colors. But Winter also comes when death and sorrow happen upon us. Yet, this does not last. It too will end and life will seem to sprout new again.
...Joseph had grieved deeply and long for his father. But the day finally came when he returned to Egypt and his life seem to start up again. The time for grieving had passed.

TWO INSIGHTS HELPING US MOVE FROM THE GRIEF OF LOSS ONTO LIFE AGAIN. "Joy comes in the morning." (Psalm 30:5)

I. It Helps Us To Know That There Are Stages In The Process of Grieving.

...this is not "hard science," but they do seem common to many of us.

- A. The SHOCK of Death. This is a time of turmoil with conflicting emotions.
 1. There may be fear. C.S. Lewis tells of this when Joy died.
 2. There may be anger. Wives may be angry at husband for leaving them.
 3. There may be guilt and usually bewilderment....These feelings will pass, and the emotions will settle down, but it takes TIME.
- B. There is NUMBNESS. This is the time when nothing seems quite real and one withdraws. C.S. Lewis tells of this, "there is a sort of invisible blanket between me and the world..."
...The grieving person is aware of what is happening but is detached from it. A wound healing...
- C. There is RENEWAL OF ACTIVITY.
 1. This is an attempt to get back into things...the routine of life.
 2. This is what Joseph was doing in returning to Egypt. (50:14)
...the time came when he left Canaan and his father's grave.
- D. The last stage is ADAPTATION.
 1. It becomes obvious to us as grievers that life will never be the same as it was formerly, but there is acceptance of this and recognition that there are still good...
 2. Early distorted and simple thinking now gives way to Biblical truth...
 3. You can come through the grief process and find life enriched with the close presence of God and the joy of serving Him again.

II. Scriptural Principles That Help Us In Our Grief. (Elisabeth Elliot's writings)

- A. "Be still and Know that God is God." (Psalm 46:10)
 1. In this Psalm, everything that was thought dependable in life is now gone. What a great comfort to know that when all seems to be shaken, God is not.
 2. At such times, be still and take a long look at Christ. You will find your bearings.
- B. "Give Thanks." We are to give thanks "always." (1 Thess 5:18)
 1. There is much we cannot be thankful for: death itself, grief, and loneliness...
 2. But we can give thanks for the promise of God's presence through the valley. (Psalm 23:4) For in the face of life's terrors, God is still in charge!
- C. "Refuse Self-pity." This is selfish and self-focused. This is very destructive and parallelizing...
 1. Self-pity must be resisted and can be. When sorrow comes, we want to think it is a burden greater than anyone has ever had. It is not. Death and sorrow are common...
 2. Don't imagine "I don't deserve this." Don't think that we deserve anything.
- D. "Accept One's Loneliness." This is hard, but it has many uses and graces of its own.
 1. It is a stage when we are aware of our own helplessness...
 2. It is a stage when we become increasingly aware of God's presence and drawn to Him...
- E. "Offer Your Loneliness To The Lord." Since God has given it to us, offer it back to Him to use and transform us as He wishes. Think how many have been helped by Elisabeth Elliott's.
- F. "Do Something for Somebody Else." Not only grief, but most of the troubles of our lives would be utterly transformed if we would only learn to think of others first and serve them then...
...Hear again, Elisabeth Elliott's words...

LESSONS FOR OUR LIVES:

1. Remember... today... life has its seasons... and at times it is winter... we grieve!
2. Grief, like dying, is a path that one treads alone!
3. Take heart... our Savior goes with us... through the valley.
4. Use the times of grief to draw close to the Lord...
5. If not saved... may the love of God draw you to salvation today!