



CHANGE AND LOSS

September 2016

*The LORD is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

Psalm 34:18

A friend who was experiencing the loss of a workmate she loved, recently told me, “I don’t like change. Change is so hard.” I felt the pain in her words. Simple words to say, but expressing deep emotion—a desire for the things she loved to stay the same. Change often involves loss which in turn produces grief. And grieving is what it means to deal with the pain of knowing that nothing will ever be the same again.

We’ve all felt such losses at various times of our lives. They might have been as tragic as a friend or family member dying. Or we might have experienced loss in other life changes we go through, like divorce, selling the home we’ve lived in for years, retiring from a rich work life, loss of health, loss of a friend. The intensity of our grief depends on how we perceive our loss.

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Some reactions to loss and grief are barely felt. Others involve great pain and are hard to get over.

I've learned from experience that losses and the grief they bring need to be worked through and not avoided. Processing grief will help us cope with the pain. Don't avoid crying if tears rise to the surface. Express your pain. Doing so through journaling or by talking with a good friend is helpful.

Tell your friend about what the loss meant to you. What was good about what you lost? What importance did it hold for you? Though the pain will probably never disappear completely, going through the grieving process will help lessen it.

Pray. Pour your heart out to God, "a man of suffering, and familiar with pain." (Isaiah 53:3) Be honest about how you feel. Be comforted, knowing that He is listening and sympathizes.

King David knew the importance of grieving. We can see it in his many Psalms of lament—excellent to help you through your own grieving process. David knew how important it was to take time to mourn losses before moving on.

Gerald Sittser, tells us that however painful, sorrow is good for the soul. In his book *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows Through Loss*, he wrote "The soul is elastic, like a balloon. It can grow larger through suffering."

But, as the Bible teaches, in the midst of our suffering there is hope. We can look forward to a day when God will fix everything that was broken and restore everything that was lost. What a wonderful promise that is! *'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.*" (Revelations 21:4)

It's a day to look forward to.

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