

INTRODUCTION

THE CALL...THE DREADED CALL.... It comes to all of us if we live long enough. It may not be a phone call, but somehow the message is delivered. Those words are forever embedded into our brain as if they had been seared into it with a red-hot branding iron: "He's gone." "She didn't make it." "I'm sorry, but...."

In a few short minutes – minutes that seem like an eternity – our lives are unalterably changed. The question then is: Will I let Satan use my grief to weaken my faith so he can snatch me away from God, or will I draw closer to God as a result of this heart-shattering experience?

There is a Bible passage, which has always been meaningful to me. It proclaims the truth that God comforts His faithful Christians when a loved one passes from this earth. As a result, God gives us the strength to pass it on, comforting other Christians in their time of grief. This Bible passage has truly been woven into the fabric of my life:

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God
(2 Corinthians 1:3,4).

Joy in the Morning is not intended to be a listing of all of the stages of grieving, although if you have studied those stages, you will find that I have probably gone through most of them. Nor am I a counselor, psychologist or psychiatrist. If you need more help

than this book can offer, please seek it at the earliest possible moment.

By seeking psychological assistance when you are struggling emotionally, you are no less a Christian than you are by seeking physical assistance when you are physically ill. Realizing that you must get help when you have a 105-degree fever does not indicate that if your fever is below 105 degrees you are in perfect health. So please don't say to yourself, "Well, I can get out of bed in the morning, and I don't cry all day, so I don't need medication or any type of therapy."

Certainly we can never heal completely without the help of the Great Physician. As we study God's Word we learn that Jesus "...was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus is our High Priest who "ever liveth to make intercession" for us (Heb. 4:14, 7:22-28, especially v. 25). God the Father is the one to whom we pray. We do not "tell it to Jesus alone," as the words of one song might indicate. Our Father hears and answers our prayers.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

Paul further illuminates us:

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:20).

As an older brother might plead our cause to an earthly father, because he has gone through a similar situation, Jesus likewise intercedes for us to our

Heavenly Father. Jesus understands what we are going through. He pleads our case because we are His adopted brothers and sisters. When Lazarus died, and our Lord saw the sorrow Lazarus' sisters were experiencing, "Jesus wept" (John 11:11-46). He genuinely possessed human emotions.

We are deeply saddened when a loved one is no longer with us. Some deaths bring a short-lived pain. We soon recover with only a tear in our eyes at times when we think of the person who had been a part of our lives.

Other losses cut us so deeply that recovery feels like a person is taking a needle and thread - using no pain killer - and slowly, excruciatingly, sewing stitch after stitch in our broken flesh. This is the pain I have been suffering. While the wound is healing, the tissue often throbs. Although occasionally I realize the aching has stopped for a period of time, I know the scar will always be there. There will never be a day in my life when I don't miss my beloved daughter, Angie. But as the time goes by, there will continue to be fewer tears and more joy.... Joy for the blessing of having had Angie in my life for 33 years.... Joy for the blessing of Sophie, her daughter, being a part of my life.... Joy for the blessing of being able to share this experience with you in the hopes that you, too, will find peace in the truth that....

.... weeping may endure for a night, but
joy cometh in the morning (Psalm 30:5).

Your night may be short or long. Hold fast to God's unchanging hand, and He will bring you to **joy in the morning**.