

## Grief

He knows you, He loves you, He grieves with you.

Everyone grieves in different ways, and everyone deserves time to grieve. But your grief will not define your life.

My life turned upside down when I lost my best friend to cancer. It's hard to find words to describe the hurt I felt on the morning when I found out he went to be with our Heavenly Father. I felt betrayed. I asked God, "Why?" more times than I could possibly count. We prayed, we did everything we could here on Earth, yet it still was not enough for him.

Over the next months, I fell into a deep, dark place that I couldn't understand. My misunderstanding of God's intentions for my sweet friend sent me into a place of confusion, depression, and despair. This wasn't the way things were supposed to turn out. Anger and impatience became my world. For the time that he was sick, I was hopeful that someday he would get better. I never knew how bad he was until the very end. I witnessed his suffering first hand, and in the time after his death, I blamed myself for not being a better friend while I still had him here with me. I held myself accountable for not being at his house every time he asked, or not visiting the hospital often enough. Most importantly, I turned from God in the time I needed Him most. I faced more issues with my family during this time than I ever have. I made choices that didn't reflect who Jesus says I am. I didn't find my trust in God, because I thought he didn't heal when I asked him to.

Over time, I learned something that changed my life: God heals in more than one way. I prayed for Earthly healing, but God gave my friend something far better: an eternity where he is not suffering, where he is whole, where someday, I will see him again.

### 1. He knows you

Jesus knows your heart. His plan for us is so much greater than anything we could ever hope for. Know that He placed you here in this moment for a good and perfect reason because He does not call the equipped, He equips the called. Every day that you walk in grief, Jesus lays the groundwork for you to daily overcome it. Your grief is not in vain, it has its purpose in the life He has laid out for you, for His glory. Nahum 1:7 - "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him."

### 2. He loves you

His grace is boundless. Even when our backs are turned from Him, He desires our hearts. He is the God that leaves the 99 sheep to find the one that has gone missing. His nature is love and his character is good. His love never fails and is absolutely unconditional, and no matter the mistakes we have made in the past, no matter the time we have spent rejecting him, he will always be waiting for us to come home. He is a God that meets us where we are; he is a God that actively seeks us out when we find ourselves to be lost. Romans 8:37-39 - "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

### 3. He grieves with you

In everything, God is with us, not against us. He feels our pain and He heals our broken spirits. It's so important to remember that He has not turned His back in our times of greatest despair. He has taught me that there is never a time when He is closer. He is a God of mercy and though we stumble, He will never let us fall. In the worst times of our lives, our Jesus is faithful. He sees you.

Psalms 34:18 - "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Matthew 5:3-4 - "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Joshua 1:9 - "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

It's been almost 4 years since I lost my best friend, and there are still days when it hurts so badly. I miss him today more than every previous day combined. But the difference is that I can now boldly say that He has written this into the plan for my life. Last summer, I visited the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus spent his last night before his crucifixion. In the garden, surrounded by olive trees, there's a plaque that has the verse Matthew 26:39 which reads: "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." Jesus spoke these words to God in the hours before his death. Under the verse, it says "O Jesus, in deepest nights and agony You spoke these words of trust and surrender to God the Father in Gethsemane. In love and gratitude, I want to say in times of fear and distress, 'My Father, I do not understand You, but I trust You.'"

I pray everyday that I could do the same. Through the worst trials, I know that Jesus will carry me. When we lay down our trust at his feet, his presence becomes tangible. Through it all, He is good. We won't ever understand why we have lost someone we care about, but in putting our trust in the Father, we surrender to his plan. He has never failed to keep a promise, and He promises that grief does not define us, He does. He knows us, He loves us, He grieves with us.

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