

A Time to Mourn – Lesson 5

Cry of Surrender

*“The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth,
and delivereth them out of all their troubles.”
Psalm 34:17*

Bargaining is Rationalizing

- Bargaining is the third of the “five stages of grief”, following denial and anger.
- During this stage, the mourner tries to make sense of the loss, why it happened and how it could have been prevented.
 - “Bargaining is a defense against the feelings of helplessness experienced after a loss. It happens when people struggle to accept the reality of the loss and the limits of their control over the situation.” – Dr. Sabrina Romanoff
- In this stage, mourners will try to “negotiate” in many ways, such as:
 - With themselves, telling themselves that if they behave a certain way or do a certain thing then they will be allowed to feel better.
 - With fate, considering how “what ifs” could have been made to prevent the loss.
 - With God, promising to live better or give something to feel better.
- Characteristics of this stage include feeling guilty or ashamed, being insecure or anxious, dwelling on “what if” situations, assuming the worst outcomes for the future, or holding oneself accountable for the loss.

The Christian Response

- As a Christian, we believe that the Scripture teaches that God is in control of all things – Isaiah 45:6-7, 55:10-11; Romans 8:28
- When we bargain in grief, we give in to two erroneous ideas:
 - That we have ultimate power over events and situations - see Psalm 8:3-4, Isaiah 55:8-9
 - That our *works* can sway God – see Isaiah 26:12, Ephesians 2:8-10
- Kelleman writes that instead of bargaining, a Christian should *cry* to God.
 - He defines *cry* as “a faith-based plea for mobilization in which I humbly ask God for help, based upon my admission that I can’t survive without Him.”
- Through crying out to God, we empty ourselves and allow Him to move – I Samuel 30:6
- The difference between crying and bargaining is the difference between surrender and continuing to fight.

Victory Through Surrender

- The key to overcoming the bargaining stage is to surrender to God.
- When we surrender to God, we stop trying to affect things by our own works and instead rely on our faith in Him. – Proverbs 3:5-6
- Instead of bargaining or worry, we can rest in His care – Matthew 6:25-34

Helps for Overcoming Bargaining

- Understand your own mental fallibility during this time. Things may seem to make sense at this time that will not later when you continue processing your grief.
- Be careful in contradicting someone who is in the bargaining stage.
 - They are holding on to what hope or control it gives them.
- Get rest and exercise.
- Decide not to make any major decisions for a period of time to allow time to process grief.
- Express your “bargains” to God.