



CONNIE CAREY

Life lessons & laughter.



## Going Deeper With a Friend Who is Grieving

When a grieving friend has questions about God and her loss, we want to give biblical answers rather than myths or hunches. We tread reverently and gently here, knowing that in the excruciating process of grief, it may take some time before being ready to digest these truths. In God's timing, may this serve as a resource for ministering biblically to those walking through the valley.

**1. Pray. Ask God to give you wisdom and compassion as you talk with your friend.**

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who generously gives to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (James 1:5)

"The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary." (Isaiah 50:4)

**2. Weep with those who weep.**

"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." (Romans 12:15)

**3. Encourage your friend to cast herself on the Lord, reminding her that He will strengthen her for the hard days ahead.**

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

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am Your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

**4. Tell her that others may not fully understand how she feels, but God does.**

He does not just know *about* our suffering. Rather, he knows through Jesus' experience what suffering is.

John Stott declares in his book *The Cross of Christ*, "I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?" Think of our God,

choosing to hang on a cross for you and me. “That is the God for me! He laid aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death. He suffered for us. Our sufferings become more manageable in light of His.”

“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:3-6)

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have One who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:15-16)

**5. Tell her that we don’t know why God allowed this loss in her life, when He could have prevented it.**

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God...” (Deuteronomy 29:29)

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.’” (Isaiah 55:8)

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him and all things.” (Romans 11: 33-37)

**6. Tell her that our world is fallen and that satan is a roaring lion, but he is a “lion on God’s leash”. He is under God’s control.**

Randy Alcorn explains in his book *If God is Good...Faith in the Midst of Suffering and Evil*, “Scripture always describes satan’s power in the context of God’s absolute sovereignty. Satan remains under God’s authority at all times.” These verses show us how satan has to ask permission from God before acting.

“One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them...The Lord said to Satan, ‘Very well, then,

everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” (Job 1: 6, 12)

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:31-32)

**7. In the midst of gut-wrenching grief we can still have hope because of our confidence in the goodness and sovereignty of God who rules and overrules all things, including sin and a fallen world.**

“God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then it was not you who sent me here, but God.” (Genesis 45:7,8)

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” (Genesis 50:20)

“The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.” (Job 1: 21)

“Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?” (Job 1: 10)

“Then Job replied to the Lord: ‘I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.’” (Job 42: 1-2)

“Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come?” (Lamentations 3:37)

“Though He brings grief, He will show compassion, so great is His unfailing love.” (Lamentations 3:32)

“I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.” (Isaiah 46: 10,11)

“His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.” (John 9:2-3)

“Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus,

whom you anointed. They did what Your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.” (Acts 4:27,28)

Take heart in the following verse from the poem *God Moves in Mysterious Ways*, penned by William Cowper (1731-1800).

“Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust him for his grace; Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face.”

May God bless you as you minister to your friend.