

**LESSON SIX: FREE TO GRIEVE, VICTORIOUS LIFE CHURCH- PASTOR WILLIAM A. LEE, JR.**

**STAGE EIGHT: WE RESIST RETURNING**

**John 5:5-9 King James Version**

**5 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.**

**2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.**

**4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. 5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.**

It is difficult for someone who is grieving to know when grieving will be completed. Grief can be an extended process. It has no set timeframe for finishing.

Though the passage of time provides little clue as to whether or not or when grieving will be done, there are several signs that indicate when people are starting to complete the process. One of those is acceptance. Acceptance is often confused with the notion of being “all right” or “OK” with what has happened. This is not the case. Most people don’t ever feel OK or all right about the loss of a loved one. This stage is about accepting the reality that our loved one is physically gone and recognizing that this new reality is the permanent reality. We will never like this reality or make it OK, but eventually we accept it. Another one of those signs is

when we we reach a point in which we really want to return back to our normal activities. It is here that we begin to transition from a sad focus on the past and desire to become re-engaged toward a hopeful focus on the present and the future. It is often at this stage that the grieving finds themselves battling with something inside of us that begins to resist returning. To the grieving person the loss has been unique and something special and we feel like no one quite understands how great the loss was. People go on with their lives, they are talking about other things and it is there that we feel alone in our grief and sorrow. We feel like everyone has forgotten our tragedy but to we who have experienced the loss it is still the number one thing on our minds and the thought of moving on carries with it all kinds of emotions and implications. Somebody has to keep the memory alive and we feel that we must not allow life to get back to normal.

All of us who lose significant persons tend to carry a tremendous amount of loyalty for their lost relationships and resist anything that they perceive will take them away from honoring that lost relationship. They are likely to feel very sad and lost. They are likely to be psychologically oriented towards honoring events that occurred in the past rather than events that are presently occurring, or which they might look forward to under other circumstances in the future. Grieving people may even start to feel guilty when they realize that they are not wanting to remain grieving. They may see their recovery from grief as an abandonment of their past relationship and resist this perceived abandonment. Of course, it is not

disloyal or dishonorable to a lost relationship for grieving people to find new ways to feel happy again – but it can feel that way. In resisting this new norm, at first many people want to maintain life as it was before a loved one died. During the deepest stages of grief, people may feel that there is nothing to live for and that all of life is negative. When we attempt to return back to normal we find it so difficult that we began to feel that it is easier to just stay in our grief.

## **2 Kings 7:2-4**

### **21st Century King James Version**

**2 Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, “Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?” And he said, “Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.” 3 And there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate. And they said one to another, “Why sit we here until we die? 4 If we say, ‘We will enter into the city,’ then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians. If they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.”**

In time the guilt feelings tend to subside too as life continues. In time, through bits and pieces of acceptance we see that we cannot maintain the past intact. It has been forever changed and we must readjust. We must learn to reorganize roles, re-assign them to others or take them on ourselves. Finding acceptance may be just having more good days than bad ones. As we begin to live again and enjoy our life, we often feel that in doing so, we are betraying our loved one. We must resist these feelings of guilt and condemnation and decide that we are going to live.

**Psalm 118:17 “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.”**

While we can never replace what has been lost, we can make new connections, new meaningful relationships, and new inter-dependencies. Instead of denying our feelings, we listen to our needs; we move, we change, we grow, and we evolve. We may start to reach out to others and become involved in their lives. We invest in our friendships and in our relationship with ourselves. We begin to live again, but we cannot do so until we have given grief its' time. Another important sign that grief is winding down includes the slow return of the ability to feel pleasure and joy again, the return of a present or future-facing orientation, and the return of desire for reaching out to others and re-engaging in life. It does not happen all at once. Rather, it occurs in bits and pieces in a back and forth manner. A final sign that grief is ending occurs when grieving people are able to think about their lost person, place or thing more as a happy past memory and less as a painful present absence. They may still feel pain at the loss, but it is not as acute as it once was.

**Psalm 30:5 "5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."**

#### **HOW CAN WE HELP?**

- 1. RE-ENFORCE THE IMPORTANCE OF RETURNING BACK TO LIFE AND BE AVAILABLE.**
- 2. COMMUNICATE GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND PURPOSE**
- 3. BE A SOURCE OF GUIDANCE AND WISDOM**
- 4. LOOSE THEM TO LIVE- (CHURCH)**