

# Helping people who have experienced a tragedy

## Things to know:

1. **God will comfort:** (2 Corinthians 1:3-5) “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. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.”
2. This life will soon be over for all of us and **there is an eternity coming, there will be no suffering.** (Revelation 21:4-7) “And **God shall wipe away all tears from** their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”
3. **It is good to go into mourning:** (Ecclesiastes 7:2) “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and **the living will lay it to his heart.**”
4. **All things work out for good:** (Romans 8:28) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”
5. **We don't know everyone's heart,** but we can know that **God will be fair.** (Genesis 18:25) “That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”  
(2 Timothy 2:19) “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **The Lord knoweth them that are his.** And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”
6. **God is a refuge and will strengthen us.** (Psalms 46:1) “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.”
7. **Troubles last for a while, but our God is eternal.** (Psalms 48:14) “For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.”
8. **God sees the death of one of his own as precious.** He is tender and compassionate. (Psalms 116:15) “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”

## Things to do:

1. **Be there.**
2. **Enter into where they are. Empathize.** Be where they are in body soul and spirit. (Romans 12:15-16) “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, **and weep with them that weep.** Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but **condescend to men of low estate.** Be not wise in your own conceits.”

## Life of Christ:

**Tender and compassionate:** (John 11:35) “Jesus wept.”

**Humble mind of Christ** (Phil. 2:4-10) “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;”

## Know scriptures and turn to them at the right time:

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that **ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we **which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.** Wherefore **comfort one another with these words.**”

## David and his son: from despair to hope and recovery (2 Sam 12)

1. Confessed his sin to God.
2. He would not be comforted by his officers, nor would he rise from the ground, prayed that his son would not die.
3. Son died on the seventh day of David's fast.
4. Servants did not know how to tell David that the boy had died, but he saw the whispering and perceived that his son had died.
5. Then David rose, washed himself, changed his garment, and ended his fast.
6. Went to the house of the Lord to worship, then went to his own house, and when he was ready to eat the servants gave him food and he ate.
7. See verses 21 and 22. David and the servants discussed their different perspectives on the death of the child. David prayed for his son when he was alive, but said, “Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, he shall not return to me.” Servants had this part backwards.

David had to pay for the consequences of sin for the rest of his life, but God gives him credit for being a **man after God's own heart**.

### **Elijah** (I Kings 19:4-8)

- Actually asked for the Lord to take his life!!
- Need for sleep, food, drink, then the Lord blessed him and he followed God. But he became discouraged and thought he was the only one who was still serving God. God showed him that there were many more like him. In every tragedy, we may think that our case is the only one like it, but when we have done the steps above we realize when we're thinking clearly that there are many others who have the same problem if we seek them out, or if we find someone who knows of a similar situation. We must be open to God. Every situation is different.

### How can I make this tragedy a **defining moment in my life?**

Regardless of the tragedy, you can decide right now to make this event a defining moment in your life. It may not make sense and you may feel angry or deeply saddened, but making this decision can direct the course of your life in a more positive way. The simple **decision to proclaim** that this event will be a defining moment can be enough to make a huge difference.

### **Things not to do:**

- Job's "friends": (Job 1:20 through entire book.)
  1. Talking when time is not right.
  2. Tried to figure out why these things were happening to Job.
  3. Went from friend to accuser. (That's the job of Satan. Rev. 12:10)
  4. Tried to speak for God.
  5. Stopped grieving, and started to go through everything they could think of as reasons for Job's current plight.
  6. When Job's pride was exposed, and he let God speak to him, then he prayed for his friends and God restored him and all he had.
  7. Job never cursed God or laid blame for his trouble. He did cry out for help. **We took the good times, we'll take the bad too.**
- Wait for person to respond before speaking.
- Don't start by quoting verses, stay calm, learn to say I don't understand, but I care. Then, Listen, listen, listen!!! Try to feel where they are without speaking. A hug goes a long way. When you are about to leave, pray for and with them, remember not to accuse or to preach in your prayer. If they're ready, assure them that God loves them and He cares. Keep in mind the tenderness of Jesus at the grave of Lazarus when "Jesus wept" (John 11:35).