

“RECOGNIZING AND PROCESSING GRIEF . . . AGAIN . . . A PERSONAL ACCOUNT”

“RECOGNIZING PAIN . . . PULL OVER OR KEEP ON DRIVING”

Recently, I (Jerry) was having a particularly difficult time connecting with the heart of God, as well as with my own heart. I still sensed His heart and His direction for those we were meeting with in our counseling times, but when I personally tried to connect with Him, I felt numb. I know myself enough by now that when I experience a significant change in my emotions—whether that is in the direction of being mad, sad, fearful, or numb---it is a signal for me. The picture that comes up is a flag man on a road construction site directing me to “pull over to the side of the road of life” and stop until the “emotional roadblock” begins to clear. Historically, these have been times when I have invited the Father in to show me more about the condition of my heart. So, since I know this about myself, you would think that I would have immediately pulled over and pursued the Father. Right? Not exactly. I ignored the signal and “kept on driving” a little longer. Finally, I decided (due to a growing anxiety within and also due to the “urging” of Denise) to pull aside and invite the Father into my anxiety on one level and my numbness on another. The way that works best for me is to write to the Father and to allow Him to write back.

“RESPONDING TO PAIN . . . MOVE TOWARDS IT AND INTO THE FATHER”

As I wrote to Him, I shared what I knew to be true about myself at that time. Here is some of what I wrote:

It has been too long since I came to You in this way. That is not right. I know this, yet I still do not come to You. Lord, why do I not do this? Why do I still run from You after all of this time? Do I not believe what I say and what I write? What is the payoff for me to run to other things versus running into You? Do I believe that You will meet me when I come to You, or do I—in my heart—not believe that You are that type of lover . . . that type of father? Whatever the reason, I know that I need Your help. You have blessed me with so much and yet I do not respond to those blessings . . . that love for me . . . the way that one would expect. Lord, it is an issue of my heart and I ask You to open up the rooms of my heart. Do not let me keep You out of any rooms. I don't want rooms that are sealed off. They must all be open. I am not aware of a particular room that is closed, but I invite You to reveal to me if that is the case. I want to feel more. I want to love more. I want to love myself more. I want to receive more of Your love . . . of Denise's love . . . and respond to both of you the way it should work . . . out of a natural flow. Connect me, Father, to my heart and to Yours. Forgive me again for running away from You.

ALLOWING GRIEF TO SURFACE AND RE-VISITING IT AS THE FATHER DIRECTS

At this point I stopped writing and just waited, and shortly thereafter I sensed the Father saying “look up.” When I did, I took note of a painting that we have of Jesus holding a little child, and almost immediately I sensed a great deal of sadness and tears beginning to come. I then wrote the following:

Thanks, Father, for opening up my heart. I didn't think it was possible . . . at least today. Lord, I guess I am sad and I am not acknowledging my sadness . . . my grief. But why should I be sad? Why should I be grieving? What losses have I still not dealt with?

And within a minute or two I began to write what I sensed the Father speaking to my heart:

It is not that you haven't grieved your losses, but some of these come back up again and you must allow yourself to acknowledge them. Your heart is dynamic, not static, and thus you will feel things that you have felt previously. When you do not allow this, you lose that part of your heart and I do not want any part of your heart to be left behind.

It was then that I realized the source of the pain and grief that I had been pushing away. I continued with my writing to the Father:

Lord, I grieve the absence of a son or daughter in our lives. I don't want to live in the past, but if I am totally honest, I miss the joy—and the pain—of having a child that I can father. I have much in me that You have given me, and I have never been able to share that with a son or daughter. Yes, I have shared some of this with those You have brought to us, but it isn't the same and never at the depth that it would be with my own child. Christmas is the time when we would have met our son. It has been 20 years ago since then. I wonder if there is a part of my heart that has never been fully restored from that loss. Please meet me there. Please help me to meet YOUR Son this Christmas.

HOW THE FATHER DEALS WITH OUR RESISTANCE

I have shared this very personal account with you because I felt it might help you to understand the dynamics that often surround the issue of processing pain and loss, especially when we feel that we have already dealt with that issue. I also share this to help you realize that even though I “resisted” opening up my heart, the Father continued to be available to me—standing at the door of my heart—and was more than willing to respond to my invitation and help. He didn’t “punish” me for my resistance and my running, yet he didn’t force His way in. He allowed me to choose and in response to that yielding (finally), He began to reconnect me with my own heart and with His.

ACKNOWLEDGING GRIEF DURING THE HOLIDAYS . . . AND A TIME OF DEEPER JOY

What I had not realized in the recent days was that I was beginning to feel grief over the loss of our only child in utero over 20 years ago, and the day that this child was to be born in 1990 was Christmas. Even when we “forget,” or get busy with life, our heart and spirit may still remember significant times and events. If we consciously ignore the changes in our hearts and in our emotions, we lose a part of our heart and have less available to connect with the Father and with those around us. As He shared with me, He does NOT want that to occur. So as we come upon this Christmas season—a time of joy—don’t be afraid to acknowledge if there is a place within that is feeling a bit of loss or grief. The holidays often bring these things up, and if we are able to allow the Father into those places, it can open the door for an even greater connection with His love and a deeper joy as to what He has done for us . . . bringing forth the Savior to save us!

Please join us in this prayer . . . *Father, thank You for Your pursuit of us and Your desire to heal our broken hearts and to set us free to love. Help us to see You for who You truly are and to trust You with our pain, our losses, our grief. And Father, help us to be sensitive not only to our own hearts during this season but also to those who are struggling with sadness and grief. You never turn us away when we are struggling. You promise to always be with us. You are Immanuel—God with us. Thank You for loving us the way You do, and for showing that love in the birth of Your Son. We pray this in the name of Your Son, Jesus, Amen.*

From the Father's Heart,

Jerry and Denise Basel