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COPING WITH BITTERSWEET MOMENTS

By Richard & Tanya Curren

Most of us know what it means to have a bittersweet experience. It leaves you with feelings of both happiness and pain at the same time. We have found that one of the most intense bittersweet moments is when one of your Christian loved ones passes away. You feel the deep void and sadness because they are no longer here, yet you have immense joy knowing they are in the arms of Jesus.

And, if you are still reeling from the loss of your precious loved one, one of the most bittersweet Scriptures is Psalm 116:15: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Pain and loss do not equate to any precious feelings in our human minds, do they? Yet in God's eyes, it is precious because they have lived a life of purpose and meaning here on Earth and they've left their mark: their fingerprints on this world. Don't ever underestimate the power of those fingerprints, because they continue to live on through you. Their entry into Heaven is also precious because they made a difference while God allowed us time with them here. Now they are with Him in Heaven, celebrating a joyous and peaceful eternity.

How do you cope with your bittersweet moments? Do you cry? Do you isolate yourself or put a wall of denial up around your heart? Do you allow yourself to experience grief, or do you choose to put it on a shelf to deal with at a later time? We want to first start by reminding you that your feelings are normal. So often we think that we have to react in a certain way and feel the same way those around us do. If this doesn't happen, it can cause us to feel guilty or think that something is wrong with us. Whether you choose to focus on the joyful memories or choose to cry and experience great sadness and loss, remember that you and your feelings are normal.

It is important to work through your emotions and allow yourself to grieve. Therapists often use the Kubler-Ross model as they refer to the Five Stages of Grief: 1. Denial and Isolation, 2. Anger, 3. Bargaining, 4. Depression, 5. Acceptance. Do you identify with one of these feelings? Remember, you don't have to feel these in this exact order or even experience every single one. We are all different and we react to situations based on what we can handle emotionally. Sometimes you can go from being in complete denial to utter depression, while other times you can be very angry and then have the ability to accept the outcome. You can

use this model to understand what you are feeling and know that you are not alone, but don't use this strictly as a way to compare yourself to others or put yourself on a specific healing timeline.

We recently experienced a very bittersweet time when Tanya's grandmother entered Heaven. We were very close to her, so the loss we've felt has been deep. There is truly a void that remains in our entire family because she was such a precious Godly woman who loved us all unconditionally. But at the same time we felt incredible joy and peace knowing that she was pain free and with God in her eternal home. It felt oxymoronic to be crying with such sadness and feeling such happiness for her at the same time.

We experienced a variety of emotions, and what we kept reminding each other throughout the process was that we were allowed to feel what we felt and we would heal in our own time. Give yourself this grace also, for this will bring you peace. Peace comes when we keep leaning on God for our comfort and stop comparing ourselves to anyone else or their timeline. Sometimes peace comes instantly and other times it takes time to feel the deep comforting peace that passes our human understanding. Nothing is wrong with you if you don't feel like someone else! And nothing is wrong with you if you pray and don't feel like God answers you immediately. This is part of the healing process, and God will meet your every need, heal your heart and answer your prayers in His perfect time. Do not feel discouraged and never give up on Him! He loves you more than you can fathom!

If you have lost someone in your life and it has left a void in your heart that makes you feel frozen in time, do not lose hope, friend. You will not feel this way forever, even though it may feel like you will. Psalm 73:26 says, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." God IS the strength of your heart, even when you feel like your strength has failed. Press into God like never before and keep asking Him to give you His Peace, which will calm your soul and allow you to move forward. There is a beautiful song that will remind you to call on His perfect peace by Rush Of Fools: "Peace Be Still." When you have a moment, find it on YouTube and ask for God's peace to wash over you. We shared this song with a friend of ours whose husband had terminal cancer and it brought them great peace as they shared his final days together here on Earth.

There is another song that we used to honor Tanya's grandma in her tribute video that has beautifully encouraging words. It's called, "I'll See You Again," by Westlife. (If you would like to hear this song and see this video, go to our website – www.BoundlessLimits.org - and click on the "Videos" tab. It will be the first video at the top of our YouTube page.) Listen to the words of this song and remind yourself that as a believer in Christ, you will see your loved one again. It feels like our time lasts forever here on Earth, but God reminds us in His Word that time here is like a blink of an eye. He also says in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, "After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to

meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.” What an exciting promise!

The reality is that even though we can choose to focus on the positive and amazing promises of seeing our loved ones again, life will never be the same here without them. This is the very bitter part of losing someone precious to us. Loss is hard and so is change. Incorporating new routines and changing your lifestyle to live without someone you once shared life with can be overwhelming, frustrating, lonely and sad. As you heal and learn to make new routines and discover ways to not only cope with your loss but move forward, know that God WILL sustain you. He promises in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

God doesn’t give to us as the world gives, which is one of the most amazing promises. Sometimes there is no one that can comfort us as we deal with our loss and grief. But rest in the promise that God can and will comfort you if you will allow Him. Don’t be fearful of your future here without your loved one. They would not want that for you. And please do not live in any regret. If you have unspoken words you didn’t say, say them now. Or if you were harsh and wish you could take something back that hurt them, ask for forgiveness and choose to forgive yourself. One big trap that Satan likes to do is keep us locked in regret and sadness from things that we can no longer control. This will be a hindrance to your healing if you do not forgive yourself and move forward with no regrets.

We want to close by saying this: if you are unsure that you will see your loved one again and will be in Heaven with them for eternity, do not wait to make the decision to accept Christ as your Savior. There is no other way into Heaven unless you accept Him into your heart. No other. Don’t wait for the “perfect” moment or a later time. None of us know how many days we have on this Earth and God could call us home at any time. The ultimate Scripture for acknowledging Christ as your Savior is John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He sent His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.” This is your assurance of salvation and the promise of being with your loved ones in Heaven forever!

As always, we are here to pray with you for salvation or for you and your family as you go through a difficult time. We are in this together. This is what the body of Christ and believers do! We support each other and encourage each other as we face life’s difficulties and trials. We pray blessings and God’s unending PEACE upon you now and always.

*In His Love,
Rick & Tanya*

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Richard R. Curren III is the co-founder and President of Boundless Limits International, Live Guilt Free and Best Life Strategies. He is a regular co-host of WATC TV's *ATLANTA LIVE*, an inspirational television show broadcast internationally. He is the co-author of **ON COURSE: Strategies For Successful Living** and its companion **ON COURSE: Life Application Study Guide**. He is also the producer of several inspirational videos including "*IT'S ABOUT TIME!*", which has been broadcast on television worldwide. He is also the developing producer for Scaly Adventures, a positive influential outreach to children using animals and nature to explore the wonders of God's creation. Rick's passion is to speak and motivate others to live to their maximum potential physically, mentally and spiritually. Through their events and publications, Rick and his wife Tanya inspire others and show that every person has boundless potential to change our world. He is a former United States Army Officer. Rick serves on the Board of Directors for the So Help Me God Project as an Advisor and is a founding Board Member. With a passion for health and fitness, he is a 2nd Degree Black Belt in Korean Olympic Tae Kwon Do, and serves as an Associate Instructor for Palmetto Martial Arts School.



Tanya Curren is the co-founder of Boundless Limits International, Live Guilt Free and Best Life Strategies. She is a regular co-host of WATC TV's *ATLANTA LIVE*, an inspirational television show broadcast internationally. She is also the co-author of **ON COURSE: Strategies For Successful Living** and the **ON COURSE Life Application Study Guide**, which has been distributed worldwide. In 2004 Tanya Curren was in a life threatening coma for 8 days as a deadly infection ravaged her body. Given two hours to live, she survived only to face the ordeal of a painful three year recovery. She is the author of **Broken Places, The Proverbs Devotion Guide, Embracing Change & Conflict**, and several other audio CD's. Tanya and her husband, Rick, are developing producers for Scaly Adventures, a positive influential outreach to children using animals and nature to explore the wonders of God's creation. In her conferences and seminars, Tanya shares with others the life-lessons she learned through her journey to restoration. Tanya travels and speaks at local, regional and international venues, and is passionate about guiding others to have a personal, real relationship with Jesus Christ. As an active homeschooling mother, she resides with her family in the mountains of South Carolina.