

Grief & Growth

Monday, 3/22/10 – Read Romans 8:28-30

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Sometimes we think of grief and our other distresses in life simply as ordeals we have to get through. But Romans 8:28 suggests that, while God does not cause our grief, God can and does use our grief to bring about some good end. In your Bible look at the footnote for Romans 8:28; an alternate reading is: “In all things God works for good ...” Have you ever experienced that? Has God been active in some of your hard times, bringing about something good?

Tuesday, 3/23/10 – Read Romans 5:1-5

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The apostle Paul suggests that our difficulties and struggles in life, even our suffering, can produce personal and spiritual growth. One of the outcomes of our struggles in life is that we can become people with larger hearts and deeper faith. In today’s reading, Paul says that suffering produces endurance (or patience) which produces character (or approval) which produces hope. How have you grown personally and spiritually as a result of the difficulties you’ve been through? How was God a part of that growing?

Wednesday, 3/24/10 – Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Paul speaks of the spiritual transformation of the person “in Christ” as being like a new creation. Think back over your life. Has there been a time of awakening or renewal so deep that it seemed like you’d been made new, like you were a new creation? If you’ve experienced anything like that, remember the experience and make some

notes for yourself about it today. In your prayer today, ask God to reawaken some of the excitement of that experience.

Thursday, 3/25/10 – Read Romans 6:3-11

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: How does it happen, this process of awakening and renewal? How is it that we become a new creation in Christ? ... The imagery that Paul uses to describe this transformation is death and resurrection. In some very real way we die, and God raises us to “newness of life.” ... We experience this in our grieving. When someone we love dies, a part of us dies too. We are still related to that beloved person, of course. But the relationship we had with them before their death dies too. Through the hard and painful experience of grieving, something in us dies. ... And, if we are open to it, God will raise up in us something new. Maybe a new way of remembering that person we’ve loved. Maybe a deeper compassion for others. ... What do you think? Is this hard to accept? Do you think that it might be possible that our grieving could actually move us forward in becoming new creations in Christ?

Friday, 3/26/10 – Read Mark 8:34-38

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Jesus said this in a different way. He said that those who would be his followers would need to “take up their cross.” What do you think he meant? ... We can think of Jesus’ statement in a number of ways, but it also fits for our grieving. When we grieve, something in us is dying. If we resist our grieving -- if we try to “save our life” the way it was -- we’ll lose. But if we embrace our own individual grief -- if we take up our own cross -- then we save our lives, we discover a new way of living. What do you think? Does Jesus’ statement “fit”? Is grieving like taking up our own cross?

My Faith Journal, March 21, 2010
Good Grief #5
Grief & Growth

What do I hear God saying to me today?

What action do I intend to take this week?

Each day this week, take a few minutes. Begin with PRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage indicated on the inside of this guide. WRITE down your own thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.

Saturday, 3/27/10 – Read Galatians 2:19-21

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The apostle Paul says that he himself experienced this transformation which he calls dying and rising with Christ. ... Look closely at verse 20: when he speaks of Christ living in him, he describes Christ as the One “who loved me.” When God raises us to new life, it is a rebirth of LOVE within us! ... The purpose of spiritual transformation is our becoming more loving, more compassionate people. ... Do you experience it that way? In your life does spiritual growth deepen your capacity to love? Does it give you the ability to love more different kinds of people? Jot down some examples out of your own experience.

Sunday, 3/28/10 – Read Romans 8:18-25

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Dying and rising with Christ changes the quality of our living here and now. It also awakens within us confidence and hope for the future -- our own future, the futures of those we love, the future of God’s whole creation. When someone we love dies, we grieve. And sometimes our grieving is hard and painful. But as people of faith, we come to the point where we grieve with hope. Within our painful grieving is the confidence of future “glory,” confidence that those we love are held securely in the LOVE of God. ... Do you experience grieving with hope? If so, how does hope change the character of your grieving?
