

WHAT TO SAY, WHAT NOT TO SAY

INSIGHTS ON GRIEF
FROM PASTOR GREG



HARVEST MINISTRIES

A Note From Pastor Greg

When my son Christopher died unexpectedly, I have to say it was the worst day of my life. I was completely overcome with grief. How does a person get through such a dark and difficult time? I'll tell you what helps me: thinking about Heaven. The more I think about Heaven, the better things often are.

I know Christopher is in Heaven, not because he was my son, but because he put his faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ. I want to pass on a little advice about what to say and what not to say when someone loses a loved one. I've also included a few quotations which have brought my family comfort. It is my hope that this guide will help you navigate addressing grief and loss with your loved ones when the unfortunate time arises.

Greg Laurie

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Laurie', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

What TO Say

When Someone Loses a Loved One

Sometimes, the best thing to say is nothing at all but to just be present. Tears are a normal and proper response in times of mourning. It is good to weep with those who have experienced loss.

Keep It Simple.

"There are no words to say."

"I'm so sorry."

"I love you."

Let Them Know They Are Not Alone.

"Thinking of you today."

"We've been praying for you, and will continue to pray."

Tell Them You'll Be There For Them.

"If there's anything I can do, no matter how small, I want to help."

"If you ever want to talk, day or night, please call me."

Offer Hope.

"I look forward to being with her again."

"He's a bigger part of your future than he was of your past."

Don't Avoid Talking About Their Loved One.

"He was such a good husband and father."

"I always admired how sweet and kind and forgiving she was."

Reminisce.

"I remember a time when just she and I got to talk about . . ."

"I'll never forget the day he pulled that funny prank on me . . ."

What NOT To Say

When Someone Loses a Loved One

Sometimes, when we don't know what to say, we say the wrong thing. It's better to be silent than to cause further grief or annoyance.

Don't Compare Their Pain With Your Own.

"I know just how you feel."

"My grandmother died too, so I understand."

Don't Rush To The End Of The Grief Process.

"You'll get over this soon."

"Time heals all wounds."

Don't Try To Explain God's Actions.

"God always picks the prettiest flowers first."

"God must have needed to have her close to Him."

Don't Substitute.

"Let's be thankful you still have other children."

"It must be a comfort to you that your other grandfather is still living."

Don't Theologize.

"All things work together for good; God will bring good from this."

"God never gives us more than we can handle."

Don't Be Fatalistic.

"It must have been his time to go."

"This was obviously God's will."

Encouraging Quotes

"It takes time to digest grief, so be patient with yourselves and with the Lord. Jesus saves the best wine for last." — **Warren Wiersbe**

"God never promised He would inform us all about His plan ahead of time; He's just promised He has one. Ultimately, it's for our good and His glory. He knows—we don't. That's why we shrug and admit, 'I don't know' . . . But I do know this: The death of His Son was not in vain; Christ died for you; and if you believe in Him, He will forgive your sins, and you will go to live with Him forever. You'll have heaven and all the blessings of it. I do know that. It's a tough journey, getting there. Full of confusion, struggle, shrugs, followed by a lot of 'I don't know.' But when the heavens open and we're there, hey, there will be no more shrugs, and you'll be able to say, 'Now I know!'" — **Chuck Swindoll**

"Eternal life means enjoying forever the finest moments of life on Earth the way they were intended. Since in Heaven we'll finally experience life at its best, it would be more accurate to call our present existence the beforelife rather than to call what follows the afterlife."
— **Randy Alcorn**

"As God's children we live on promises not on explanations . . . When we arrive in Heaven we will hear the explanations, accept them and say, 'May the Lord be glorified.' Meanwhile, we continue to walk by faith, asking God to help us comfort others, lest our own tears be wasted." — **Warren Wiersbe**

"If we come to see the purpose of the universe as God's long-term glory rather than our short-term happiness, then we will undergo a critical paradigm shift in tackling the problem of evil and suffering." — **Randy Alcorn**

"When tragedy strikes us, the first question we often ask is 'why?' Why is God letting this happen to me? Though there is nothing wrong with asking 'why,' perhaps the better question is 'what,' as in, 'What does God want me to do?' He wants me to turn to Him. At times like these, there really are no words, but there is the Word. There is no manual, but there is Emmanuel. He that stirred up the storm is the hiding place in it." — **Greg Laurie**