

The Long Mourning



It had already been an emotional morning -- revisiting another grief, decades old. But isn't that the way of grief? Sneaking into ordinary days that begin the same as every other? And now, scrolling social media, I find myself stilled by a photo: My beautiful daughter's sparkling soul of a smile grabbing my heart and squeezing more tears. Her deeply loved family preparing to settle far from here. And even as I trust the Lord's directing her path, I'll feel every mile as a slow gouge across my heart. I'm so wrung out with goodbyes...

Standing in the kitchen sometime later, it dawns -- life is *the long mourning*.

Aching as my children moved away. Each visit too brief, each time to go chaffing the wound of the first goodbye. Grieving hopes deferred, relationships broken, friends moved on, passed away, or caught up in devastation. Season upon season of loss and change with lives and issues demanding attention now, leaving no time to process. Just move. Do. Now.

Everyone's journey with loss etches differently, but is no less real. Despite this truth, I often diminish my own pain as pale in comparison to your pain, or their pain, or suffering of global proportions. In doing so, my grief is shamed into a dark corner. No comfort, no tears, no truth to lead it back to life and hope. The weight of it, a silent shackle to joy. By deciding my hurts don't matter, I am in effect saying I don't matter. This revelation brings a grief all its own.

With all these midlife days are stirring up, my default is to run and hide. But healing requires revisiting storms past and owning the new issues swirling. Though the wind of it all messes with my emotions, these things need light, honesty, and a level of brave that has me stretching for faith. A longing has grown to be set free of these griefs deferred. To take hold of everything for which Christ has taken hold of me. To press on.

God has redeemed me and calls me His own -- deeply loved, forgiven, accepted. I do matter. It's His voice beckoning me to this heart-tending, infinitely patient in my struggle. Amidst the storm He will bring quiet, turning gusts to refreshing breezes as the Spirit bears truth and healing. So, despite the desire to run away, I'll lean into Jesus, then lean into the wind, and keep on walking. Sometimes pressing on feels more like being pressed, but I know I'm safe in Him, in the mess of this long mourning.

Because of the LORD'S great love we are not consumed, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ~Lamentations 3:22, 23

Even with these insights, there came a time in this journey where I hit a wall of depression and finally got honest about the depth of my struggle to those close to me. Having experienced the benefits of counseling decades ago, I prayerfully made the call to *Genesis Institute* where I've found compassionate, Biblical counsel... someone to listen, to lean in with me, pray for me, and give me tools for the road. I'm still on the road, but I am healing. And I am so thankful the Lord led me to *Genesis*.

-- Bernadette DesChamps, a Genesis Institute client, has been married 36 years and is aka: mom, grandma, caregiver, worship leader, writer, and friend. This article was edited from her original post, *The Long Mourning*, at onlifeandlaughter.blogspot.com