

GRIEF PROVERBS FOR HOSPICE BEREAVEMENT GROUPS ----- ELLIOTT #2013

Especially since the Vietnam War, whose Washington memorial is grief in black stone, Am. publishers have produced a flood of books, pamphlets, and articles on grief. In all this bibliography, the only thing missing that I know of is the category this thinksheet makes a contribution to, viz, proverbs on grief. What specifically has motivated me to making this list is that Goodwife Loree is deep into starting and ministering to Hospice bereavement groups, a service to those left behind by the death of Hospice patients....My selective criterion could be, and is not, proverbs expressing my personal convictions about grief. Rather this: These sayings express pungently, memorably, views of grief worth thinking and talking about--including talking about in groups, where the proverbs can be spoken both about and from ("from" in the sense that participants can dive off a proverb into their own feelings and stories)....The numbering has no other significance than the providing of easy reference: no order of valuation is intended....Unlike quotations, whose wording should not be changed except when noted as "adapted from," proverbs' wording can honestly vary with the speaker. I have adapted some of the following to our modern sensibilities (eg, inclusive language) and tastes (eg, simplicity)....While almost all the proverbs are from books of proverbs and my 3x5 collections of "Grief" and "Bereavement" and "Separation and Loss" (the title of a course I taught) and "Sorrow" and "Betrayal" and "Tribulation" and "Woe" and "Distress" and "Pain" and "Heartache" and "Distracted" and "Broken-heartedness" and "Deprivation" and "Destitution" and "Death" and "Mortality,"*a few are my own inventions (which probably means in most cases that I've forgotten the source). And a few, instead of being proverbs in the strict sense (such as you'd get by checking your dictionaries), are bits from hymns and other non-anonymous literature....*+ "Mourning," "Regret," "Lamentation," "Weeping," "Suffering," "Sadness."

1. I've been robbed! (The words "rob" and "bereave" have the same root: my beloved has been stolen from me. One element in bereavement-grief is the sense of having been unjustly treated, whether or not one has been.)....2. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted (Matthew 5.4)....3. God may bring us grief, but his love for us is sure and strong (Lamentations 3.32)....4. Laughter may hide sadness; but when happiness is gone, sorrow is always there (Proverbs 14.13)....5. A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53.3; and vs.10: "he has put him to grief")....6. My eyes are worn out with weeping; my soul is in anguish; I am exhausted with grief-(Lamentations 2.11)....7. Godly grief produces repentance, worldly grief produces death (2 Corinthians 7.10)....8. He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows (Isaiah 53.4)....9. Do not grieve as do those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4.13)....10. I will not leave you bereft; I will come back to you (John 14.18)....11. There will be no more mourning or sadness (Revelation 21.4)....12. The disciples were sleeping for sheer grief (Luke 22.45). ...13. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy (John 20.2)....14. Come to me, all who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest....I will put only a light load on you (Matthew 11.28-30; the word "grief" is from the Latin word meaning "heavy"--so our "heavy-hearted")....15. Comparison makes you happy or miserable: your choice....16. If you'd not been so happy then, you'd not be so miserable now; so would you rather have been less happy then?....17. Throughout our lives, sadness and gladness tumble over each other....18. Sorrow is at parting if at meeting there be laughter, but who is so foolish as to prefer not to meet?....19. When good cheer is lacking, our friends will be packing....20. Grief pent up will break the heart. ...21. New grief awakens the old....22. The greater the grief, the harder to speak....23. When a sorrow is really past, its memory is joyful....24. No weal without woe....25. No coming to heaven with dry eyes. ...26. You cannot prevent sadness from flying around your head, but you

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can prevent its building a nest in your hair....27. Weeping we enter the world, weeping we are left in the world, weeping we leave the world. ...28. Of your sorrow be not too sad, of your joy be not too glad....
 29. Misery loves company and solitude....30. Two in distress make sorrow less....31. Time tames the strongest grief....32. Patience is a remedy for every grief....33. A sorrow is an itching place that is made worse by scratching....34. God will wipe away all tears from their eyes (Revelation 21.4, including "no more death, no more grief or crying or pain")....35. Bereavement is a nail on which a picture hung: take time to decide whether to hang another picture or pull out the nail....36. The Lord gave, and now the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1.21)....37. Heartaches, taken them all to Jesus; / He will take your heartaches all away (refrain of a gospel song)....38. Bereavement is the same for everybody, and also utterly different for each....39. My pain, the world's pain, God's pain: may I have wisdom, now, to relate the three for the glory of God and the joy of the earth. ...40. Wanting to alleviate one's own pain without sharing it is like wanting to save a child from a burning house without the risk of getting hurt....41. Happiness is important, but pain gives importance....
 42. All living creatures need pain to avoid death; we humans need it also to achieve depth....43. This faith can shine through deprivation: God never takes anything away without offering you something better....
 44. I only know I cannot drift beyond God's love and care (hymn line). ...45. Death is an undeniable defeat (as in Jesus' death) and can be an undefeatable victory (as in Jesus' resurrection)....46. Other refuge have I none, / Hangs my helpless soul on Thee (hymn line)....47. Bereavement is announcement: my beloved's death announces mine. I am suffering two deaths at once....48. All good is taken up into God, none of it is ever lost....49. My bereavement can help me sit a little lighter to the world and a little tighter to God....50. In the presence of death, life is a daily surprise and joy. May my sorrow not quench the joy....
 51. Birth and death are correlative. I too must die, but I was born not to die but to begin. What, now, shall I begin?....52. Apparently the Lord has a little more work for me to do here before calling me home....53. Being bereaved includes being bereft of one's "normal" ways of denying death: one's grief includes sorrow for the loss of the evasions by which one has screened oneself off from facing death....
 54. The green leaves have turned brown, a new time has come. The brown leaves, instead of meaning only that the old time has gone, mean also that a new time has come....55. You live twice: once one this side of birth, once on the other side of looking death in the face....56. Faith and love are so entwined that the death of a loved one is, for many, at least temporarily, also the death of God. For now at least, the bed and the universe are both empty....57. Sorrow learns how to speak to sorrow. To whose sorrow is my sorrow to speak?....58. Death is the actuality of corruption and the possibility of regeneration and transformation....59. In my beginning is my end, / In my end is my beginning. ...60. If life were programmed to go wrong, suffering could not be--as it often is--a blessing in disguise....61. Demand fairness and you may get bitterness: affirm life as gift and you will get grateful joy....
 62. Those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak (Isaiah 40.31)....63. Bereavement is a marathon: hurt, pain, agony, pleasure....64. The reward of suffering is experience....65. Suffering exists in order to make people think....66. The greatest leap of faith is to believe that suffering can have vicarious value....67. No one can take from me the freedom of and responsibility for the attitude I take toward what has happened to me....68. No pain, no gain; no cross, all loss....69. The One who suffers the sparrows' fall asks us to suffer more than our own pains.