

ALLOWING GRIEF

By Brenda Spina, M.S., LMFT, LPC

Not too long ago I met with an eleven-year-old girl who was being adopted by her stepfather. Her father had left her mother when she was two months old refusing to have anything to do with them. This she knew only because of what had been passed on through stories from family members. After a few minutes of talking about her experience, she dropped silent, tears running down her face. We sat together for some time in the silence of her grief. Struggling to talk she managed to get out the words, "I have to get through the tears first." The simple wisdom of her words seemed so clear. She was not concerned so much with understanding why, as she was with allowing her grief to be just what it was: grief. We often rob ourselves of an opportunity to experience God's love for us when we try to cover our grief with intellectual analysis, busyness, or plain old denial. The death of my brother parallels this. For seven years I attempted to cover the fact I felt grief. Only after allowing the grief to be present and allowing God to comfort me did I become comfortable with the fact that there was a loss. The understanding that followed centered around the impact this life event has had on my character, personality, and life's work. In time, this eleven-year-old girl may not grieve as hard for her situation. In the meantime her focus is simply to cry and receive comfort.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

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