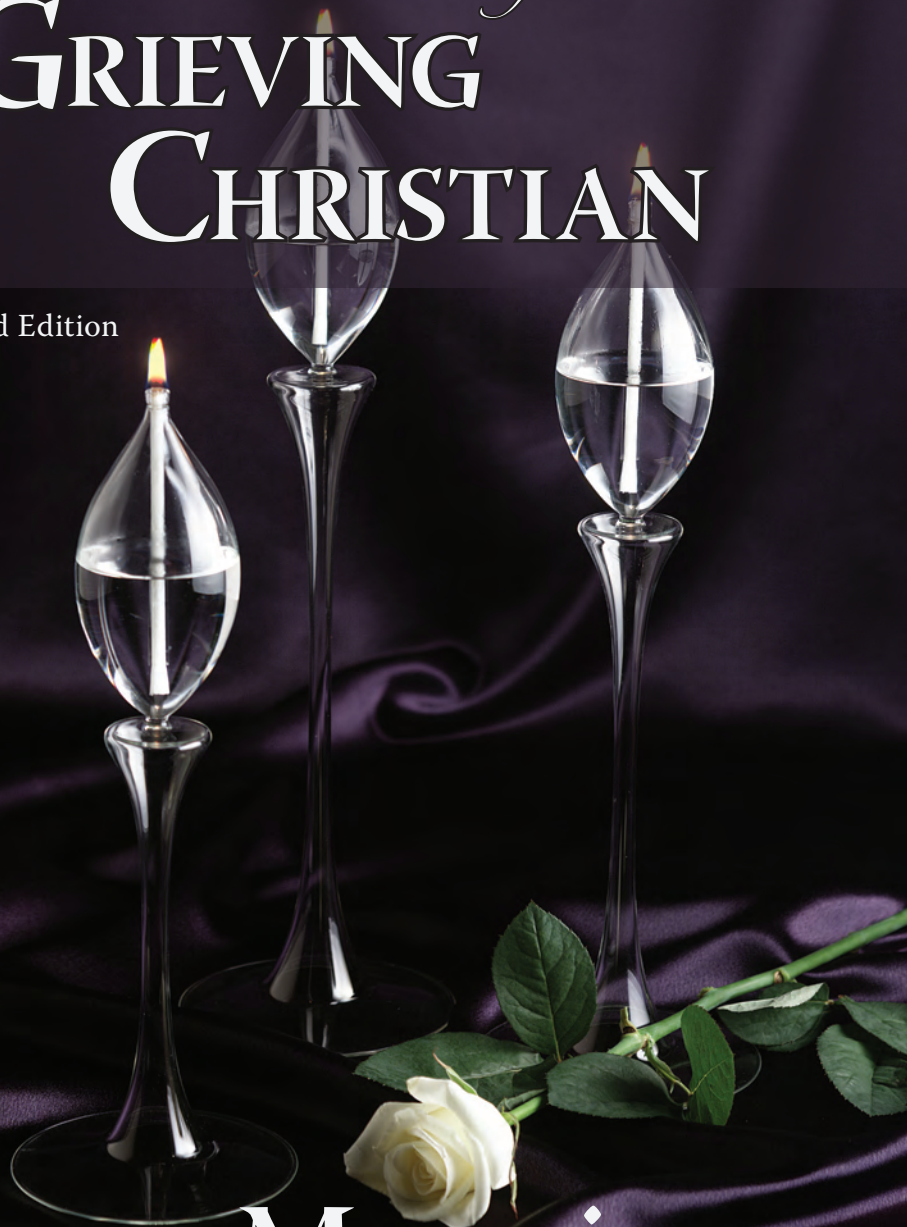


THOUGHTS *for the* GRIEVING CHRISTIAN

Second Edition



Doug Manning

THOUGHTS *for the*
GRIEVING
CHRISTIAN

InSight Books, Inc
Oklahoma City

Thoughts for the Grieving Christian

By Doug Manning

Second Edition © 2015

First Edition © 2001

InSight Books, Inc

PO Box 42467

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73123

800.658.9262 or 405.810.9501

www.insightbooks.com

orders&info@insightbooks.com

Cover Photo: Digital West, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior written permission of the publisher, excepting brief quotes used in connection with reviews, written specifically for inclusion in a magazine or newspaper.

Manufactured in the United States of America

ISBN 978-1-892785-38-1



BOOKS • RESOURCES • TRAINING

Contents

Introduction	7
------------------------	---

Section I: If Faith is the Victory, Is My Pain a Defeat?

Jesus Wept	11
David Ate	16
Faith Has Two Edges	22
Job's Friends Still Live	28
Doing Unto Others	34
Why?	40
Blame	47
The Gift of Choice.	53

Section II: The Grieving Process

The God of Process	61
As Unique as a Fingerprint.	67
Grief's Dark Valley	72
Now About that Cussin'	79
Will it Ever Get Better?	85

Section III: Expectations

Christianity is Addition Not Subtraction	93
Lonely In a Crowd.	97
Fear Even in Faith.	102
Something Happened to My Want To's	106

Section IV: Gifts for the Journey

The Gift of a Message	113
The Gift of an Ear.	119
The Gift of Community.	124
The Gift of Presence.	130
The Gift of Hope	136
 Bibliography.	 14

Introduction

He Spoke in Parables

I have always marveled at the way Jesus taught his disciples. Long before psychology was even thought of, or the theories of teaching were born, He knew how learning happens. He told parables or stories. We have heard these stories for so long and so often that we cannot relate to how difficult it was for the disciples to grasp and understand what He was saying. These were stories with complicated meanings and were hard to understand. They had not heard anything like this before, and the stories left them struggling for insight.

Jesus would tell one of these stories and then just walk away, leaving the group scratching their heads in wonder. “What did he mean by that?” was the most common response. If, at a later time, the disciples wanted to know what He meant they were expected to ask. If they asked He would patiently explain, but He only explained after they had spent time scratching their heads in wonder.

Real learning and growth demands those times of scratching heads in wonder. The most valuable time of His teaching ministry was that period between the telling of a story and the explanation, while they were struggling for light within themselves.

This book tries to follow that same model. I hope to make statements that create thinking and stir up feeling on your part. There will be pauses and a place for your thoughts following each statement or story. We might add a short thought, a poem or a Scripture to aid in your thinking process, but the most valuable part of this book will be those things you discover. If you write them, they become more deeply a part of your experience and can be referred to again and again. I am certainly not Jesus, but together we can apply His great teaching principle to your pain.

Doug Manning

Section I

If Faith is the Victory, Is My Pain a Defeat?



*Write down the thoughts of the
moment. Those that come
unsought for are commonly the
most valuable*

— Francis Bacon

Jesus Wept

One of the things people found most remarkable and, to some, the most despicable about Jesus was his friendship with women. Responding to a woman as an equal was unheard of in that day. It also made Him many more enemies than friends. He did not hold mass rallies for women's rights. He just led by example and openly loved and respected each one He met. Two such friends were Mary and Martha. He seemed to find great peace in their presence and in their home.

Their brother, Lazarus, became ill and Jesus did not arrive until after he had died. The sisters were in deep grief and anger over his death, and even expressed some of that anger toward Jesus. "If you had come in time our brother would not be dead" is a heavy load to place on a friend. Jesus did not express any anger at this outburst. He seemed to accept anger as a normal response to grief. His response to Mary and Martha is a picture of God's acceptance of our anger in times of sorrow; even our anger at Him. They were angry and He loved them anyway.

Then he did a most unusual thing. He sat down and cried. That would not be unusual if He was not Jesus, but that was who He was. That would not be unusual if He did not know that He was going to resurrect Lazarus in a very few moments, but that was what He was going to do. In spite of all of that, *Jesus wept* (John 11:35 KJV).

We all know that He wept. The shortest verse in the Bible is "Jesus wept." We learned that so we would have a bible verse to quote when asked by some Sunday school teacher. We use this verse as a means of pulling a joke on the teacher, but in our jesting we miss the poignancy of those two words. The fact that there are only two words adds to the power of the moment. There is no need for any further explanation. He cried. What else would you expect Him to do? Even though He knew all



About the Author

Doug Manning

Doug's career has included minister, counselor, business executive, author and publisher. He and his wife, Barbara, were parents to four daughters and long-term caregivers to three parents.

After thirty years in the ministry, Doug began a new career in 1982 and has devoted his time to writing, counseling and leading seminars in the areas of grief and elder care. His publishing company, InSight Books, Inc., specializes in books, video and audio productions specifically designed to help people face some of the toughest challenges of life.

Doug has a warm, conversational style in which he shares insights from his various experiences. Sitting down to read a book from Doug is like having a long conversation with a good friend.