Sorrow NOT!

Winning Over Grief And Sorrow

KENNETH COPELAND

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Tulsa, Oklahoma

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EXPOSING THE DEADLY NATURE OF GRIEF

It comes disguised as a simple "healthy" emotion. Then, little by little, it drains you dry. It is devious and destructive, and it's the constant companion of death itself.

SINGING THE BLUES. It's one of humanity's favorite pastimes. Everyone does it in one form or another. Drunks balance on barstools and blubber about how hard life is. Christians clutch their hymnals and sing mournfully about the same thing.

They all think they're doing it because they're sad. But they're not. They're doing it because, in a peculiar kind of way, they like it.

I first realized that years ago before I met Jesus when I was singing in nightclubs and bars. It seemed that no matter where I went, some guy would come stumbling up to me and ask me to sing "Melancholy Baby"—not so he could forget about his sorrows but so he could burrow more deeply into them. So he could really, *really* get into the blues.

On the surface that may seem strange. But, the truth is, you've probably done the same kind of thing yourself. We all have.

Why would we actually choose to feel sorrow? Because sorrow has an emotional kick to it. It offers a surge of feeling that, in the beginning stages, is almost intoxicating.

The great blues singers have made their living off folks that wanted to feel that rush of emotion. But it's interesting to notice that the really great blues singers don't usually live very long. Take Billie Holliday, for instance. People begged to hear her sing because the spirits of grief and sorrow within her were so intense that they just seemed to reach out and grab you when you heard her. Yet those same spirits that made her blues so gripping drove her to destruction.

Grief and sorrow are dangerous things. I know that because a few months ago, God started jerking the wraps off them and unveiling their true nature to me in a startling way. He showed me that they're not the innocent emotions we've thought they were. They are actually spirit beings sent by the devil himself to kill, steal, and destroy.

In fact, they were part of the devastating, satanic barrage Jesus took on Himself when He died on the cross. Isaiah 53 says so. *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.* That phrase, "griefs and sorrows," can also be translated sickness, weakness, and pain. But any way you translate it, they're all pieces of the same puzzle.

Grief and sorrow are part of the devil's game. They are the ever-present, shadowing companions of death. Jesus bore them on the cross, so we wouldn't have to. Yet countless Christians are still shouldering them today. In doing so, they're ignoring the direct command that's given in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, for there we are clearly told to "SORROW NOT!"

Let's read that scripture.

> *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again....*

I want you to stop there and notice that according to those verses, sorrow is only for those who have no hope, for those who don't believe that

Jesus died and rose again.

So, obviously, it's not for you! As a believer, you *do* have hope—not just where physical death is concerned but in every other circumstance as well. In order to partake of sorrow about a particular situation, you're going to have to reject the hope that you've been given through Calvary concerning that situation. You can't have hope and sorrow at the same time!

"But, Brother Copeland," you may say, "aren't grief and sorrow just natural emotions?"

Yes, they are. That's what makes them so dangerous. We've seen them as such a natural part of life that we haven't even questioned them. As believers, we've just opened up the church door and let them come right in.

Most people don't realize it, but those sorrowful old hymns we've sung on Sunday aren't much different from the secular blues songs I used to sing years ago. It was a shock to me when I first came out of the beer joints and into the Body of Christ and heard church folks singing songs that had been written by guys I'd known in my earlier days.

Those guys, by their own admission, didn't know Jesus and didn't plan to know Him. But they sure knew how to write sorrowful, gut-wrenching music. So they threw in a few Bible phrases, called it gospel music, and started peddling it among believers.

We *bought* it too! We swallowed it hook, line, and sinker. We didn't even question the source. It just seemed natural.

There are even believers who will fight you for the right to be sad. I met a woman like that in Oklahoma once. She was grieving over the death of one of her children. Although it had been several years since the child had died, she was still in deep sorrow and grief when I met her.

At the time, I was teaching a series of meetings on prayer. After one of the sessions, she came up to me to tell me how she'd prayed and prayed over that child and it hadn't done any good. She was crying as she spoke. Again and again, she sobbed, "My baby died...my baby died...."

When I opened my mouth to reply, the Spirit of God came on me and I said to her, "God didn't take your child. You let the devil beat you at the

game of life, and he's still whipping you today."

Suddenly she was furious. She wasn't about to let me or anyone else take her grief away from her. Her husband had to take her out she was so mad.

The next night, however, she came back with a smile on her face. Something had obviously changed. "Brother Copeland," she said, "please forgive me. How can I ever thank you? For all these years I've been so caught up in grief that I've failed my family. I haven't been a wife to my husband or a mother to my children.

"When I got to thinking about what you've been teaching on prayer, I remembered all the unbelief we cried and prayed over that baby. We thought it was prayer, but there wasn't any real prayer to it. We just all agreed she was dying and kept hollering about it. We didn't release any faith to keep it from happening.

"I did let the devil beat me back then, and he's been beating me ever since. But I'm telling you this: I will never let him do it again."

If you've ever been seduced by grief, like this woman was, you've experienced an addictive kind of agony. You've found that even though the

sorrow hurts, there's something in it that makes you reluctant to let it go.

Webster defines *grief* as "a heavy emotional weight resulting from loss." That's how it feels, isn't it? Like a heavy weight on your heart that's aching for release. When you give in to it, there's a rush, a wave of emotion that rolls over you and the tears overflow. It feels good. Your friends nod and pat your back and say, "Go ahead...just let it all out." So you do and the pressure lets up for a while.

Then later, when all the mourners and the back patters have gone home, that grief comes rising up in you again. This time with an almost overwhelming pain of loneliness that is almost unbearable.

That's the agony that woman in Oklahoma had been through for years. People had probably told her that time would help. But it didn't, because once she allowed these spirits of grief and sorrow to get inside of her, they just kept on doing their deadly work.

Contrary to popular belief, grief and sorrow don't come to help you. They come to hurt you.

They're deceivers sent for one purpose: to choke the Word of God out of your heart.

In Mark 4:18-20, Jesus warned us about that. He told us that the devil would come to steal the Word from our hearts, and He said that one of the ways he would do that would be through *the lusts of other things entering in.* Most of us have assumed that phrase referred only to sex and pleasure. But the Holy Spirit has shown me plainly that the spirits of grief and sorrow fall in this category.

If you'll look up the word *lust* in the dictionary, you'll find that it literally means "applied pressure." Sorrow comes when the devil applies pressure to our emotions. He pressures us to give in to the fleshly tendency to grieve. He pressures us to lust after and long for that emotional flood and release that sorrow initially provides.

So what should we do about all this? If grief and sorrow are not inevitable—if, in fact, they're part of the devil's bag of misery and death—how do we get rid of them?

Isaiah 51:11 says, *The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head:* ***they shall obtain***

gladness and joy; and sorrow and [grief] shall flee away. Did you hear that? It said sorrow and grief will run from us!

As a believer, you've been redeemed from the curse of grief and sorrow by the blood of Jesus Christ. You don't have to put up with them any more than you have to put up with sin or sickness or disease. So, if you'll follow the instructions in James 4:7 and resist them, they'll have to flee from you!

Psalm 107:2 will tell you how to do that. It says, *Let the redeemed of the Lord SAY SO!* That means when sorrow and grief start bearing down on you, you say, "Oh no you don't! I'm the redeemed of the Lord. I've been delivered from the likes of you. So you just get right on out of here."

God started teaching me about this personally several months before my mother went home to be with Him in August of 1988. Every time He'd show me something about it, I'd put it into practice. (You ought to do that with anything God is teaching you. Start practicing it now, and you can walk in it when the time comes!)

So, eight-and-a-half months before my mother

left, I began standing against grief and sorrow. I made a decision to "sorrow not." Immediately the devil began to attack my emotions.

But I'd say, "No. I won't receive that. I take authority over these feelings in Jesus' name. I've given my body as a sacrifice well-pleasing unto the Lord, and I won't partake of anything but His joy." Then I'd start speaking the Word and praising out loud. "I sorrow not. I'm the redeemed of the Lord, and I'm not going to tolerate grief, you understand? I rejoice; I rejoice in my Momma's home going! I release her unto you, Lord Jesus!"

Once I did that, the spirit of grief would go away for a while. Then it would come back and try again. I went through three rugged days of that and each time I resisted it. The last time that spirit came at me, he was whimpering. "Please?" he begged. I just said, "Nope. Get!" After that he was gone.

What I'm telling you is this. You're going to have to stand against grief and sorrow. It doesn't belong to you. It's not from your heavenly Father. But the devil's a scoundrel. He'll put it over on you if you'll let him get away with it.

We've let him saddle us with grief and sorrow for too long. It's time we put a stop to it. Once we do, some incredible things are going to happen.

Let me tell you about an incident in our family that will show you clearly what I mean. It happened last year when Gloria's younger brother Stanley went to be with the Lord quite suddenly in a car wreck. His departure took us all by surprise. Nobody was prepared for it.

When we got the news, the spirit of grief attacked like a flash, trying to get a foothold. I walked up and down my den floor fighting it in the name of Jesus. Every time my emotions would try to rise, I'd say, "No, no, no! I will not partake of sorrow. I partake of joy and gladness." Up and down I walked, praising God until it was whipped.

Once I got grief and sorrow out of the way, I began praying for Gloria's mother, Mary. As I prayed, the force of compassion came up on the inside of me so powerfully that it just gushed up through me, and when it did, I had a vision. I saw Stanley in heaven. I saw him just as plainly as I've ever seen anyone.

To fully appreciate that vision, you have to

understand that Stanley was a brick and rock mason, a very powerful man physically, and he used to cut the sleeves out of his shirts. He worked hard with his arms, and you just couldn't get him to wear a shirt with sleeves in it.

When I saw him that day, he was running across a pasture. (Yes, a pasture! Heaven's not made out of clouds, you know. The earth is a spinoff of heaven, so the two look a lot alike.) Anyway, he was wearing a robe, a good-looking robe, and life was all over him. The wild thing was, that robe didn't have any sleeves in it!

Now isn't that just like Jesus to give Stanley a robe without any sleeves in it? When I saw him, the Lord spoke to me and said, "Tell Mary I snatched him out of that truck before the collision. He never knew anything about it."

Here's what I want you to see. If I'd let grief and sorrow come in and take over the way they tried to, I wouldn't have been able to receive that wave of compassion; I wouldn't have been moved by God's power; and I certainly wouldn't have seen Stanley. I wouldn't have seen anything except grief and sorrow.

Those kinds of supernatural experiences don't come to you when you're squalling and bawling, yielding to the devil's henchmen. They don't come to you when you can be bought off with a two-bit rush of emotion called grief. They come to you when you're willing to fight the devil and live by faith, yielding to the Holy Spirit. They come when you refuse to give in to sorrow even when the devil puts the pressure on. Can you see how we've been robbing ourselves by playing the devil's deadly game?

Several months after Stanley left, when Gloria and I were in a meeting, a woman who had a prophetic ministry came up and spoke to Gloria. "I don't know what this means," she said, "but a fellow told me to give you this message."

Then she explained that she'd been praying and interceding recently when, in a vision, God had caught her away to heaven. There she saw a huge dining room, and she was standing in it having a discussion with someone. Their discussion had nothing to do with Gloria and me. Yet while she was there, a young man who had been setting places at the big table nearby came over to her. He said, "Tell Gloria, Stanley wasn't in

the car."

Do you see? This stuff is real! REAL, you understand? It's a lot more real than this death game we've been playing!

My friend, we can't afford this devilish game of grief and sorrow anymore. It is killing us, it is stealing the real and powerful experiences God wants to give us, and it is destroying us in a far deeper way than any of us have ever imagined.

So don't do it anymore. When the devil tries to burden you with grief and sorrow, resist him. You may have to walk the floor all night long. But instead of worrying and crying, walk the floor and quote the Word until that sorry spirit leaves and the real rush and overflow comes—the joy of the Lord which is our strength.

Remember who you are. You're the one who shall obtain gladness and joy. You're the one sorrow and grief shall flee away from. You've got no business singing the blues. You're the redeemed of the Lord. Don't you think it's about time you started to say so?

Prayer for Salvation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Heavenly Father, I come to You in the Name of Jesus. Your Word says, *"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Acts 2:21). I am calling on You. I pray and ask Jesus to come into my heart and be Lord over my life, according to Romans 10:9-10—*"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* I do that now. I confess that Jesus is Lord, and I believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead.

I am now reborn! I am a Christian—a child of Almighty God! I am saved! You also said in Your Word, *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: HOW MUCH MORE shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"* (Luke 11:13). I'm also asking You to fill me with the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, rise up within me as I praise God. I fully expect to speak with other tongues as You give me utterance (Acts 2:4).

Begin to praise God for filling you with the Holy Spirit. Speak those words and syllables you receive—not in your own language, but the language given to you by the Holy Spirit. You have to use your own voice. God will not force you to speak. Worship and praise Him in your heavenly language—in other tongues.

Continue with the blessing God has given you and pray in tongues each day.

You are a born-again, Spirit-filled believer. You'll never be the same!

Find a good Word of God preaching church, and become a part of a church family who will love and care for you as you love and care for them.

We need to be connected to each other. It increases our strength in God. It's God's plan for us.

About the Author

For more than 32 years, Kenneth Copeland has led countless believers on a journey to maturity in the principles of faith, love, healing, prosperity, redemption and righteousness. Through the *Believers Voice of Victory* broadcast—one of the top five Neilsen-rated inspirational programs—and BVOV Magazine, he has brought revelation knowledge on the truths of God's Word. He has taught Christians everywhere that they can conquer the problems and challenges life brings through faith in God's Word.

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