

Life Hurts Q&A; - John and Joann Ashley

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[0 : 00] All right. If you wanted to ask a question, you haven't asked a question, you can feel free to do so. So far, I only have like four, so I'm going to be making up all the rest unless you all come up with some. Brother, come on up here, Brother Ashley.

If you've enjoyed him today, say amen. Amen. I put out a Facebook post already recommending his ministry. You might could either send that one of mine out or others, and maybe this message would you get other places.

Come on. Thank you again, Pastor. Pastor, I want to thank you so much for allowing us to be here. The schedule got changed, but I think it was ordained of God that we're here now rather than back in May.

I just want to thank you for your hospitality. We had a great afternoon with Pastor and Sister Betty and just enjoyed our fellowship. And we are grateful, so grateful that you've allowed us to be here today.

We're going to go to two places in Scripture. Galatians chapter 6 is where we're going to start. And then we will go to Job chapter 2. We're going to start in Galatians 6.

[1 : 01] And then we're going to go to Job chapter 2. One of the things that the deaf community was always up on top of was technology for communicating.

They used to have what was called a TTY years ago, where it was actually you would type on the phone. It was a typewriter that would be by your phone. You could put the receiver by it, and you'd type messages to somebody, and then you'd wait.

And then it would scroll across the screen what they were responding to you to. Then it went to the pagers, if anybody remembers what a pager was that you could actually leave a message on.

And then the BlackBerry. The BlackBerry came out, and that had the nice little keyboard on it. And then now, you know, text messaging. Because for the deaf, I mean, you know, it was obviously nonverbal communication.

So you would go back and forth with text messages. Now, Johnny had a phone that we finally got him a phone. He got mad at us one time because we didn't come home on time.

[1 : 59] We got home late, and he was worried about us. We got yelled at. It was just like coming home to your parents late. I thought you were in an accident. I thought you were in an accident. You're wrong, wrong.

He was so mad at us. So we got phones that we could text back and forth with. And after Johnny went to be with the Lord, I was going through his phone. And our oldest son, Bob, that a lot of you know, lived only a few miles.

This is after he moved from Georgia back to Michigan. He only lived a few miles away. And he borrowed my lawnmower. And he was returning my lawnmower, and my wife and I were out. And he texted Johnny.

I found this text on his phone. I didn't know that this had transpired. But they texted back and forth. Now, Johnny, in some ways, he was bright.

In other ways, you know, he couldn't understand some things. And you'll pick up on this in just a minute. So I saw this conversation on the phone. I thought I'd share it with you. Bob, texting Johnny first.

- [2 : 56] It says, I'm on my way to your house. I'm dropping off that lawnmower. Johnny, or Bobby, 11 minutes later. Hello? Bobby, 8 minutes later.
- Hey, I'm at the front door. Can you open it and let me in? Johnny, hi, I'm good, busy, clean room, okay, right list, movie, film, tired, bored. Bobby, I'm at your house.
- Come to the front door and let me in. Johnny, okay, okay. I soon maybe two weeks, two or three, mall, FYE movie. Bobby, come to the front door.
- Let me in. I'm here right now. Johnny, okay, good night. Bobby eventually went around back, I guess, and got Johnny's attention and got into this so he could return the lawnmower.
- But that's how Johnny was. It was always an adventure. But tonight, it's going to be a little bit more of a teaching time, a little bit more of a, less of a preaching time.
- [3 : 57] I say that, but I always end up kind of preaching anyway. But I want to give you the benefit that the Lord has given my wife and I of being on both sides of caregiving.
- We were caregivers, but yet at times we were ones who had to offer and help to others as they went through trials, as they go through hard. We've seen the good, the bad, and the ugly, amen, of trying to help people or trying to be a help to someone or someone trying to help us.
- So tonight we're going to start in Galatians chapter number 6. And this is really where we're going to just jump off. Like I said, we'll spend most of our time in Job. Galatians 6 verse 1, the Bible says, Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such in one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
- Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he has nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another.
- For every man shall bear his own burden. Tonight I want to bring a message, bearing one another's burdens in spite of our own. Let's pray. Father, we come to you now, and Lord, we thank you again for all that's gone on today.
- [5 : 16] Lord, we thank you for the fellowship that we have in Christ. Lord, we thank you for the word of God that you've given to us that we can learn. Lord, not only how to be saved, but how to walk with you, how to know you.
- And Lord, yes, how to help one another. So Father, I pray that you would just speak through me tonight. Help those that are out here that are hurting, and those that under the sound of my voice may want to help someone but are not sure how.
- So Lord, I just pray that you would speak loud and clear. Father, might we respond in a way that would honor and glorify you, and we'll thank you for it. In Jesus' name, amen. Now, the Bible is clear that you and I are going to go through trials.
- We talk about that. Again, I'm the trial preacher. I'm the one who's going to tell everybody all the problems you're going to have in life. But it's the fact of life, and it's what we go through. But in Galatians chapter 5, it even says, For every man shall bear his own burden.
- Luke chapter 9, verse 23 says this, our ministry verse, And he said unto them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.
- [6 : 22] Luke 14, 27 says, And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. So the Bible's clear that we're going to have our own trials.
- We're going to have our own crosses. We're going to have our own burdens that we're going to bear. But the Bible also says, While we bear our burdens, to go ahead and bear other people's burdens, other brothers and sisters in Christ's burdens.

That's what it says in verse 2, Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. We've got to ask ourselves, All right, what is the law of Christ? Well, the law of Christ is the law of love. It is the law of love.

John chapter 13, verses 34 and 35 say, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.

So, the identifying mark of a child of God is that they have love for the brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen. All right, Jesus said, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.

[7 : 27] That's the commandment of Christ. That's the law of Christ. And the law of Christ is the law of love. Now, friend, you need to remember one thing. Love is more than emotion. Love is more than just a word.

Love is an action. It is an action. 1 John chapter 3, verse 18, the Bible says, My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.

So, if we're going to say that we love someone, we show it by our actions, not by just our words. God proved His love to the world by His action, did He not? For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Romans 5, 8 says, But God commended His love toward us, or demonstrated His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. So, the Father showed His love by sending His Son to Calvary.

The Son showed His love to mankind by going to Calvary, by dying on the cross. Jesus said in John chapter 15, verse 13, Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

[8 : 39] You and I prove our love to Christ by our actions, by our obedience to the Word of God. Jesus said, If you love me, keep my commandments, in John chapter 14, verse 15.

So, our love for brothers and sisters in Christ must be demonstrated. It must be shown. We can't just say, I love you, brother. I love you, sister. And leave it at that. If we're going to love one another, we have to show it by our actions.

The proof of our love is that, according to Galatians 6, verse 2, is that we bear one another's burdens. In spite of whatever it is we're going through as we follow Christ, we willingly take on someone else's in spite of.

We willingly take on someone else's burdens. I want us to take a look in Job chapter 2 now and see the example that Job's three friends set for you and I.

Say, what? Job's three friends? They were wicked. Job even said they were miserable comforters. Yeah, but I want you to see something here that they started out right.

[9 : 47] Job chapter 2 and verse 11. The Bible says, Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came, every one, from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Namathite.

For they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept.

And they rent every one his mantle and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights and none spake a word unto him for they saw that his grief was very great.

They started out right. Job's three friends were aware of what had gone on in his life and they made his burdens a priority over their own.

You know, a lot of times we read these passages of Scripture and we think life had to be so much different back then. Well, I'm sure Job's three friends had their own problems. They probably had their own family issues.

[10:52] They might have had financial problems. Amen. Who knows? Who knows whatever they might have been going through. But whatever it was, they set everything aside to go and to help their friends.

Job's burden became their burden. I want us to see how Job's friends reacted to his trials and see how that might benefit us as we try to help others that are hurting.

First of all, they were available. They were available. Again, in verse 11, Now when Job's three friends heard of all the evil that was come upon him, they came, everyone from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Namathite, and I'm so glad we don't name our children that stuff anymore.

For they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. Job's friends came to be with him in his time of need. And if you and I are going to bear one another's burdens, we need to be available for those that are hurting.

We need to make ourselves available. You know, most times, people that are in pain and grief feel very isolated. They feel very alone. No one knows what they're going through.

[12:03] And chances are, it could be that no one does really know what they're going through because you haven't shared with anybody. But, friend, if you know that someone's going through something, you need to be there for them.

It is so invaluable. You know, when Johnny was first born, we had our church family, we had our extended family, we had a lot of friends, and they all rallied around us because they had heard that things didn't go the way that they were expected.

And they came, but one by one, people's lives go back to normal. Amen? I'm not faulting anybody. It's just the way life is. You know, it's like a funeral. People come, and they support the family who's lost a loved one, and they're there, and they support their, and maybe two days, maybe two weeks, maybe two months, but everybody goes back to their life.

And the people that are grieving, the people that have lost someone that's close to them still feel the grief, but everybody else has gone back to their life. And again, it's no one's fault. It's just how life is.

It's just how things go. It takes a concentrated effort for you and I to be there for somebody. It may mean making an appointment like Job's friends did.

[13:12] In my mind's eye, I picture them getting together. Oh man, did you hear what happened to Job? And yeah, yeah, it was terrible. It was awful. All the tragedy of losing everything, losing his family.

Can you believe that? Hey, next Wednesday, let's get together, and let's go and visit him, and go and be with him, and see if we can help him. Now, you need to know the Hebrew to get all that out of that passage, but believe me, it's there.

No, I'm just kidding. But you know what, friend? You know somebody that's hurting? You may have to make an appointment. You may have to take some time out of your life and say, you know what?

Tuesday evening, I'm going to visit so-and-so. I want to be available. We've got some dear friends that we've been friends with ever since high school. We double dated, my wife and I, with them.

I went in the Navy with my friend Bob, and at Johnny's funeral, he came up to me and said, man, let me know if there's anything we can do. And I knew, I knew what we were about to face, and I grabbed him by the shoulder, said, Bob, in another week or so, everybody's going to be gone.

[14 : 15] And man, we're going to need some friends. We're going to need some fellowship. Would you please just get together with us? Make sure you stay in touch. And you know what? We made an appointment a month later, started going out to dinner with him, and been doing it for five years every month, making an appointment.

But at first, it was so therapeutic because we had someone we could talk to. We laughed, we cried, but we were able to spend time one with another. You know, you may need to make an appointment.

Spend some time with one another. Proverbs chapter 27, verse 17 says, iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. You know, paying a visit to the hospital is a good way to be there for somebody.

Johnny spent over two years of his life as an inpatient in the hospital. Not all at one stretch, but down through the years. And there were times where it'd be days before we'd see anybody that wasn't wearing a set of scrubs or a white coat.

And then when somebody would walk in that we knew and it was a familiar face, it was such a blessing to us. Now, I'm not saying you go and you camp out at the hospital all day, but you go and you spend a little time.

[15 : 26] You have a word of prayer. You don't know how much that helps somebody. Now, you've got to be careful because there are people that don't want you coming to the hospital. I know during COVID, this is kind of a pipe dream right now.

I get that. I understand that. But when things start to open up, friend, try to go visit them. But some people don't want you coming. Amen. When I pastored, there was a lot of ladies that would go, Pastor, don't you show up when I have my surgery.

All right, I won't do that. I'll pray for you. But I won't do it. A lot of times, ladies just don't want you to show up because they're not their best. But be sensitive. Be sensitive about that. Just going and having a word of prayer with somebody is such an incurred.

Respite for a caregiver. Whether you know it or not, most of you that are in this room right now will someday be a caregiver.

It may not be for a disabled child, but it may be for a spouse. It may be for an aging parent. You're going to be a caregiver sometime. And can I tell you something?

[16 : 29] Caregivers are tired, friend. They're tired. And if you know somebody that's a caregiver, and you could just give them a little bit of respite, a little bit of your time to let them just get away and have a little bit of normalcy, go to the store, whatever it may be, it's such a blessing.

There was a lady in our church that came and sat with Johnny. She knew some sign language, and she said, look, on Wednesday nights we always tag-teamed. Joanne and I never went at the same time, especially when Johnny was younger, because someone had to be home with him and take care of him and watch over him.

But she said, what I'll do is I'll come on Wednesday nights, I'll sit with Johnny so the two of you can go to church together. That was such a blessing to us. Such a blessing to us. There's a church in Cartersville that has what's called an angel ministry.

Called angel ministry, and the angel ministry has what they call their respite day. And on this day, it's usually this month, usually in November, and again with COVID, I don't know how it's going to work out, but they will have medical professionals there, they'll have teenagers, and you can be a one-on-one, and they invite the whole community to come and bring their children with disabilities, and they'll watch the children with disabilities for three hours while the parents can go and do whatever it is they want.

What a blessing. One lady came back and they asked her, said, so you had three hours to go and do whatever you want. What'd you do? She goes, I went home and took a nap.

[17 : 59] Probably hadn't had one in years, but she went home and she took a nap. Friend, if you know someone that's watching somebody that needs your help, you could help them and sit with their parents, sit with their loved one, it would be such a gift to them.

There was that same lady that watched our son, Johnny, on Wednesday nights would take and ride to doctor's appointments with Joanne. Just be in the car so she could have a conversation as they went.

Some doctor's appointments were well over an hour away, and it was such a blessing to her. It's important that those that are facing trials and grief know that we are there for them.

But you know what? If you're going through trials, you're going through a difficult time, and you know Jesus Christ is your Savior, you do realize you're never alone, right? You're not alone.

You are not alone, my friend. The Lord is there with you. And at times, you need to encourage yourself in the Lord like David did. Just going to have to say, Lord, I need your help.

[19 : 03] I need you to speak to my heart. You know? And then those that are going through a difficult time, you should have no expectation of what other people should be doing for you. That's a tough one.

Sometimes we're going through trials, man. You get down. Start thinking about all the stuff that people should be doing for you. You throw a pity party, you send out the invitations, and no one shows up.

It's such a disappointment. Amen? In order to be a burden bearer, we must be available. Then, we see Job's friends that they were vulnerable. They were vulnerable.

Look at verse 12. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept, and they rent everyone his mantle and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. Job's friends opened themselves up to emotions.

They wept. They mourned with Job. They entered into Job's feelings. feelings. The reason a lot of times why many people are not available is because they don't want to be vulnerable.

[20 : 03] They don't want to open themselves up to emotions. Not only the emotions of the person that's maybe grieving or going through a difficult time, but sometimes their own emotions.

There may be some things that are buried deep down in our hearts that if we go and try to minister to somebody else, it's going to drag up all these emotions that we haven't dealt with, that we need to deal with, that we need to deal with.

Emotions run high at a time of trials and grief, and that's okay. Ecclesiastes 4, or chapter 3 and verse 4 says, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

Bearing one another's burdens involves being touched by their pain, by their feelings. You know, many times when we're trying to help somebody, it's a physical thing.

In other words, they may need money, they may need some help moving, they may need some food, or they may need some clothes, and we can physically do something and help them, but most of the times, bearing one another's burdens is an emotional work.

[21 : 10] We've got to open ourselves up to emotions, and that's not our favorite place to be. Romans chapter 12, verse 15 says, rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Again, Jesus wept at the graveside of Lazarus.

He entered into Mary, and Martha, and all the mourners' feelings, didn't he? The Bible says Jesus wept at the graveside. Isaiah chapter 53, verse 3, speaking with the Lord, says, he is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

And we hid, as it were, our faces from him, and he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Hebrews 4, 15 says, we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

When people fade away from those that are suffering, many times it's because they don't want to be vulnerable, and that especially goes for men. We don't do feelings well sometimes, amen?

We don't do emotion a lot. You know? But I got to tell you, men, you can help another man grieve where a woman can't.

[22 : 17] And it's not just, well, man up. Pull yourself up by your bootstraps. Get over it. Move on. No, men need to grieve.

And they need to grieve properly. Suppressing grief is unhealthy, and it extends the grieving process. You know, PTSD is a big thing now.

It's a big thing from men and women that are coming back from the service that had seen some horrible things go on. And I believe a part of this, this is my opinion, is that they never had a chance to grieve.

They used to call it shell shock when they came back in World War II. But it's because you're fighting a battle, man, you're fighting a war, and you may see someone dear to you, a close friend, get killed.

And you can't stop and say, wait a minute, wait a minute, I have to take the time now to grieve this loss. They got to keep going and keep going forward and never face their grief. And then they come home and life starts trying to get back to normal and they're still carrying all that grief that happened while they were in war.

[23 : 25] Friend, you need to help people grieve. Other times people will fade away because they don't want to stir up the grieving person's emotions. They don't want to make them feel sad.

I got news for you, friend. They're sad already. You're not going to stir anything up. They want you to help. They want you to talk. It's okay.

We need to allow ourselves to be available and vulnerable. Then we need to be audible. Job's friends were audible. Job chapter 2 and verse 13 says, So they sat down upon the ground seven days and seven nights and none spake a word unto him for they saw that his grief was very great.

In chapter 3 verse 1 it says, After this Job opened his mouth and cursed his day. Job's friends sat in silence for seven days and seven nights waiting for Job to speak.

They didn't get in trouble until they opened their mouths. Amen? Until they started doing the talking. If you want to help someone that's going through trials, be a listener.

[24 : 30] Be a listener. People need to talk about their grief. To speak about their feelings. How they feel about their situation. How they may even feel about God.

Need to be willing to sit down and listen to someone. James 1.19 Wherefore my beloved brethren let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. Bearing one another's burdens means that we need to be a person that will listen without the need to speak.

Have you ever talked to somebody and you know that they're not listening to you anymore because you said something that just sparked a story that they're waiting to tell.

And all they're waiting for you to do is inhale so they can jump in and tell you whatever's on their mind. They're not listening to you. That's not listening friend. That's waiting for an opportunity to speak.

We need to be willing to sit down and let somebody talk and just listen and listen and listen. When Johnny was first born, like my wife said, he was in intensive care for two weeks and then he had a surgery right away and so it was a while before our pastor and his wife finally came over and I couldn't wait because I had a list of questions that I wanted to ask.

[25 : 45] So they came over and we talked about Johnny a little bit, you know, and talked about what was going on and then talked about the tigers and talked about church and talked about the weather and talked about the car and then they left.

And we were sitting there staring at each other like, what just happened? We never had, I never had the opportunity to ask the questions that I knew he probably couldn't answer anyway. But I still wanted to ask him.

I still wanted to be able to let that out. And if you're going to help someone, friend, you need to be there. And I don't fault my old pastor. The problem is us men, we have big egos.

And we want to have all the answers. And we get afraid sometimes someone's going to ask me a question. Hey, thanks a lot, pastor, you're going to do that to me tonight. And I'm not going to have the answers.

But friend, asking the questions sometimes is just therapeutic. You might not get the answer, like I said this morning, you might not get the answer to the side of heaven. But being able to ask the question.

[26 : 51] Many times people fade away because they don't know what to say. Want to help but can't come up with the words. My suggestion is saying nothing is okay. Being quiet is okay.

You know, Peter, Peter was a guy who always put his mouth in motion before he put his mind in gear. Amen? He always had something to say. Remember the Mount of Transfiguration of Mark chapter 9 verses 9 of 5 and 6?

The Bible says, Hey, he didn't know what to say but he still said something.

Hey friend, being a good listener helps people more than you would ever know. It's such an encouragement to grieving people. It may mean hearing the same story over and over and over and over again.

But people just need someone to listen. Be willing to sit and listen. You can't fix someone's grief. You can't fix someone's pain.

[28 : 04] But listening to them will help them. You know, some of you guys going on the mission field are going to be pastors. I don't know, pastor, if this ever happens to you. But I was pastoring a lot of times in counseling sessions.

People would sit down across from me. I'd ask them a few questions about the situation, get them talking. They would identify the problem, come up with a solution, leave my office and think I'm the smartest man in the whole world.

Amen? Because I solved their problem. I didn't solve their problem. I just let them talk. Just let them talk about what was going on in their lives. Those going through difficulties also need to be careful that your problems aren't all that you talk about.

You don't want to suck the joy out of every room you enter into. Amen? You don't want people to go, oh, what a blessing, they showed up. Amen? One experience that all people that have lost a loved one is that they've had is that they had a real need to talk about their grief, talk about their loved one.

Very few people will give more than one opportunity to talk. Like I said, man, it might mean listening to the same story over and over and over again, but you are helping somebody more than you know.

[29 : 22] I went to, shortly after my son died, I thought I was losing my mind. Grief had overcome me, so I went to the doctor and I was talking to him and he was supposed to have signed Johnny's death certificate and I thought he knew about Johnny dying, but he didn't.

And he said, so why are you here? And I said, well, you heard that Johnny died. And he starts bawling. And I'm going, okay, he only saw Johnny maybe twice because Johnny had so many specialists, you know, down through the years.

And then he told me, he said, we had an infant son that passed away. And through the course of the conversation, he said, the thing that hurt me the most was my colleagues at the hospital would see me walking down the hall.

They would stop and turn around and walk the other way because they didn't want to hear me talk about my son anymore. There was an evangelist by the name of Roger Henson whose son wrote many beautiful, beautiful songs.

Brother Roger, his son Micah, got leukemia and he passed away. And I called him and I said, man, brother, what do you do? What do you do? And he says, man, I don't know what to tell you.

[30 : 30] He's get up in the morning, put one foot in front of the other and just try to help people as you go. Then he said this, he said, you know, I go to meetings, brother, and people won't talk about Micah.

They'll play his music at the meeting, but they won't come and talk about Micah. Micah lived. Micah lived. Talk about the one that passed.

Talk about him. Let other people talk about him. Tell stories about him. Those that have been the biggest encouragement to Joanne and I are those that will ask how we're doing and mean it.

You know, no need to put the mask on. Some of you have your church mask on right now. Say, what do you mean my church mask? Some of you know what I'm talking about because you came here today.

You're hurting. You're hurting inside. You put your church mask on. You get all dressed up and you come into church and people say, how you doing? And you lie and say, I'm fine.

[31 : 38] I'm doing just fine. You know, the people have been the biggest blessing to Joanne and I will say, no, no, no, no. How are you doing? Tell me how you are doing.

Those people that are in grief and going through difficult times know how to protect everybody else around them. So they'll lie and they'll say everything's fine.

We have a dear friend of ours, dear, dear friend of ours, her husband passed away in a tragic accident at work. And she says, there's times I'm standing in church singing one of Chuck's favorite songs.

And she goes, and I fight back tears because I don't want others around me to get sad. I said, sister, cry. Don't worry about them getting sad.

Don't let, let it fly, man. If people don't like it, they need to get right with God. Don't accept the I'm fine answer. If you know somebody's hurting, it may be that they really are having a good day.

[32 : 43] But it also may be that they're dying inside and all they're trying to do is to protect you and not talk about those things. Being a burden bearer is listening without the need to speak.

Then be prayerful. Job's friend sat in silence for seven days and seven nights. They didn't say a word to Job, but maybe, just maybe, they were talking to their heavenly father and asked them to help their friend.

James 5, verse 16 says, confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. We won't have the magic words to fix pain, but we can go to the healer of broken hearts and ask him to help those that are going through trials.

I always try to say, hey, intercede for people on the spot. What I mean by that is if you're like me and someone comes up to you today and says, will you pray for this situation?

And you'll say yes, and with a clear heart, you really mean, okay, I will pray for that if I remember. Then next Sunday they come walking into church and you go, I didn't pray all week for that burden, for that thing that they asked me to pray for.

[34 : 00] You know what? I suggest praying for them on the spot. When somebody asks you to pray for them, take them off to the side, take them into a separate room if you need to, but pray for them right then, right when you ask them, because then you'll know at least you prayed once, amen, and chances are you will remember down the road to pray for them the rest of the time, amen, you'll be able to help them.

Romans chapter 12 verses 10 through 12 says, be kindly affection one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another, not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer.

I used to work down in a factory down in Detroit, it was a stamping plant, and there was one main aisle that would go and run back and forth to the shop, and high lows would go up and down, and people were always walking through it, and one day I'm walking down the main aisle, and this guy comes up there, I didn't really know him that well, he goes, hey man, you're a religious guy, aren't you?

yeah, I guess you'd call me a religious guy, he says, hey, you know, I got this problem, can you pray for this situation, I don't remember what the situation was, and I said, sure I can, and I put my hand on his shoulder, I bowed my head, and I started praying, well he's doing this, you know, who's looking at me, who's watching this crazy man pray for me, now I might have done it with a little bit of a bad attitude, I don't know, we'll leave that up to the Lord, but the truth is, the truth is, I knew that if I didn't pray for him right then, I'd forget to pray for him, he never did ask me to pray for him again, I don't know why, but pray for one another, pray for one another, and then be mindful, be mindful, don't preach to a hurting heart, don't preach to a hurting heart, I can be honest with you, there was a time when Romans 8, 28, somebody quote that to me, and it was just like somebody punching me in the stomach, you know, it's like sometimes when somebody's in the midst of a fire, someone's in the midst of a trial, quoting Romans 8, 28, it's like walking up to somebody who's trying to put his house that's on fire out with a garden hose and say, well, it's all going to work together for good, it's going to be fine, everything's going to be great, that's not the words you need to speak to someone when they're in the middle of it, when the middle of it, hey, like I said this morning, looking back,

God worked everything to his good, everything to my good, everything to his glory, maybe a quote from 2 Corinthians chapter 1, about the God of all comfort, we should avoid saying to people, well, I know exactly how you feel, friend, you don't know exactly how anybody feels, a lot of times we don't even know how we feel, my wife and I went through exact same things and we were writing the book, we would write something down or she would write something down and I'd say, I didn't know you felt that way, then later on she goes, I didn't know you felt that way, we felt completely different about going through the same thing, you see, we don't know how people feel, we don't know exactly how one another feels, say I know you hurt deeply, or ask someone how are you feeling about this, and then don't try to be funny, you know, be wise, a lot of times we'll break, try to break tension with humor, you know,

[37 : 38] I mean, I don't know, pastor, maybe you've done the same thing, I've preached before and you could feel the tension in the room, it's probably the spirit of God working in hearts, and then you could feel everybody tensing up, and so say something a little funny, and everybody can kind of relax a little bit, sometimes I think I've interfered with the working of the spirit of God doing that as a pastor, but the fact of the matter is, folks, there's times when people want to interject humor into things, and we're not ready for it, they're not ready for it, just be wise is my point, Proverbs chapter 25, verse 20, the Bible says, as he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nighter, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart, be careful, be careful, don't try to be funny when there's times that humor just does not fit, you know, when Johnny was having one of his open heart surgeries, he actually ended up having two, it was 16 and a half hours, those, they had replaced one of his heart valves, and as his heart relaxed,

I mean, they took him off bypass, they were getting ready to close him up, the cardiologist came in and told us, hey, everything's going good, and they should be done, they took him off bypass, they'll be closing up, he'll be done in another half hour, so he walked away, and we're all, okay, great, praise the Lord, you know, this is great, and then ten minutes later he walks back into the waiting room and says, hey, when Johnny's heart relaxed, some tissue in his heart went over the new valve that they put in, so they've got to go back in, and they've got to cut away that tissue, and they basically do a whole other heart surgery on him, and there was people from, it was such a blessing, there was so much support, so many people, but there was a group of people that were just wanting to joke around, laugh, and have a good time, and cut up, and I didn't know whether my son was going to live or die in the next room, I'm just saying be careful, okay, be careful, be wise, use your head, bearing one another's burdens, in spite of your own, has God laid someone on your heart right now?

Is there someone that you could help bear their burden? Let the Holy Ghost of God speak to you right now. Take these examples of Job's three friends.

Again, they started talking and accused them and things went south pretty quick, but they started out and they were right. What they were doing was good. What about you?

Maybe you're here today and your heart is breaking, and there may just be a few people in this room that know about it. Would you, first of all, ask God to comfort you, but would you be honest enough and tell somebody else what's going on?

[40 : 32] If you're suffering in silence, friend, that doesn't help the pastor help you. That doesn't help anybody else help you. There's people that want to help you. Bible says, bear you one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Don't just say, I love you, brother. I love you, sister, and walk away. be a help. Put feet to your words. Let your love be action.

Bear one another's burdens, my friend, and you have no idea how much you'll be able to help someone else. Father God, we come to you now, and we thank you for this time. Lord, we thank you for the example of Job's three friends.

Lord, we thank you that, Father, you love us, and we're never alone. Lord, there's sometimes where we sure could have a listening ear, somebody to just come and listen to us, and Lord, help us.

Father, I pray for these folks that are here and those that might be watching online, that you would even now put names of people on other people's hearts, that they could help, that they would come and they would pray for that person specifically tonight, make an appointment, be willing to open themselves up to emotion, and then, Lord, to be able to just listen and pray, and Lord, watch you do what no man in their own strength can do.

[42 : 17] Use us, Lord, we pray. Heads bowed, eyes are closed, if God spoke to your heart, why don't you just come on down to this altar? There may be a person that you need to talk, you need to help.

God's put them on your heart. You know who it is right now. God's telling you right now who it is. Why don't you come and pray for them? Pray for them.

If you're hurting today, why don't you come and say, Lord, I need your help. Come, and you do what God would have you to do. Pastor.

I think some of us might be hurting and we need to come lay it on the Lord, be willing to have help. I think others might be praying for somebody.

Why don't you respond? Whatever the Holy Spirit has spoken to you about, would you come do that right now? I really believe he's moved. Let's not go home without anybody else.

[43 : 23] Whenever you finish praying, you can stand together and sing with Stephen as he leads us in a song. my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but holy trust in Jesus' name, Christ alone.

Cornerstone, weak made strong in the Savior's love through the storm.

He is Lord, Lord of all. Lord of all. Lord of all. Lord of all. Lord of all.

When darkness seems to hide his face, I rest on his unchanging grace.

[44 : 42] In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds within the veil.

Christ alone, cornerstone, weak made strong in the Savior's love.

Through the storm, he is Lord, Lord of all. Thank you very much.

You can have a seat. You want to come up with your wife, maybe, both of you, because I think some of the girls, ladies in this room, they're all younger, me, so they're all girls, but I'm sure they'd like to ask, hear your wife's opinion.

They like men's opinions, but not as much as other women's. I don't know why that is. You want to say something, maybe, Miss Ashley, about your grieving process?

[45 : 45] Well, I had a very hard time reconciling Johnny passing away without me there.

Many of you know that, as he said, I was in Atlanta, and when that nun told me God chose you to be his mother, I stepped up, and I was his caregiver, and I was his protector, I was his mama bear.

And, coming to Atlanta, I was telling Betty, I was on the mountaintop Saturday morning, because I was just here to see that little boy right there, Nixon, who had just been born.

And I was taking pictures and flashing them all over Facebook, and I was on the mountaintop. And then at 9.30 in the morning, half hour later, I get the phone call from my husband, and he's crying, and I'm like, oh, something terrible happened in our church.

And he said about Johnny being gone, and I said, what? And he said, Johnny's gone, he passed away. And from that second of being on the mountaintop to crashing like that, it was like a nightmare.

[47 : 03] I said, this cannot be true. It can't be true. I was just with him yesterday morning, and he was happy and he said, not fair, you're going to Atlanta, not fair, I'm going to miss the fun.

And he said, okay, fine, I'll see you on Monday. And that was my last memories of him. And I struggled with, Lord, how could you have taken him when I'm not there?

I was his caregiver for 28 years, how can I not be there? And then when John told me, Joanne, God didn't want you there, and Johnny didn't want you there, Johnny did not want you there.

Johnny wanted you where you were with Jason and Kristen and Nixon, and he wanted me where I was. He said, God spared you from seeing what I saw in our home. My last visions of Johnny, like I said, are smiling at the airport.

I love you, I love you, I'll see you on Monday. And that was my last visions of him. I didn't go through what John went through. He said, be thankful that God did not allow you to be home, because your memories of him are smiling and saying, I love you.

[48 : 17] Again, I struggled. I had a hard time reconciling why that happened, but I know God was in control, and he does all things well, and it is well with my soul.

Ashley, you want to say a word about your grieving? My grief was different than Joanne's. It took me a while. There was anger, not so much angry.

I wasn't angry with God. I was just mad at the world. I was mad about everything. I would drive angry. I would do things, and I was just mad, you know. And it was Jason and I were on a conversation and he said, you know, Dad, he goes, I'm just mad.

I'm just angry. And that's when it hit me. That's part of your grief. You know, I'm trying to counsel Jason's also on your grief, and I'm thinking, yeah, you dummy, you're the one that's going through this.

I mean, I spent a lot of time in anger, and it was hard to focus. It was hard to focus for a long time.

[49 : 25] As a pastor, you know, everybody wants you to get back to normal and get to preaching and pastor in the church, but, that took me a while before I was actually, got my moorings back again and could actually prepare a message and preach again, but I think the thing that helped us, me, was writing that book, and then the fact that we're in this ministry, and we get to talk about Johnny all the time, and being able to do that has helped process a lot of the grief in my life anyway, to be able to speak about Johnny, and then people share their stories with us, which has really, really been a blessing, because we know that Johnny's life, his legacy lives on, but we're helping people through our grief, you know.

One of you tell about the cruise, talk to me about the cruise in six months, tell them what you felt, what happened. A year earlier, we planned a cruise for our 40th wedding anniversary, and it was going to be April 3rd, and Johnny passed away October 3rd, so six months later, John said, well, what do we do with this cruise?

I said, I don't know, how can we go on a cruise? When our son died six months ago, he said, Joanne, let's go on the cruise, we need some healing, let's go on it.

I felt so guilty, so guilty going on a cruise, thinking, how can I even tell someone on a ship that my son died six months ago?

But the Lord, again, did healing on that cruise. We started to pen down chapter titles and things about chapters and what the Lord did for us.

[51 : 19] He spoke to our heart, about the book, and that's when our healing really began, was on that cruise. I wrote the introduction sitting on the bed, waiting for her to get ready to go to dinner one night, introduction to the book, and that's when it just took off.

The Lord just really, like you said, that was therapeutic, it was healing at that point for us. Some people that I know, and some of them may be in the room, they hurt for a long time.

they feel like it should be over. What do you say? Well, first, go ahead, go ahead. I watched Johnny suffer for 28 years, and my life's verse was Romans 8, 18, for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us.

And that was my verse. I went, Lord, he suffered so much, but, and I went to a ladies' event once, and a lady talked about suffering, and I went up to her, and I said, I have a little boy, he's orthopedic, she talked about working with orthopedic children, and I said, he's got braces and wheelchairs and walkers, and she looked at me, and she said, don't let his suffering be in vain.

And he was only 10 years old at the time, and I thought, what does that mean? What does that really mean? So I put that in the back of my mind, and it wasn't until like a year or two ago when the Lord confirmed about this ministry, and he said, see, Joanne, his suffering has not been in vain.

[52 : 55] All this 28 years I have been using to help you guys to minister to others. So the suffering is not in vain. Forever how long?

And, you know, as people hurt and they go through grief, grief never really goes away. As you can see, I mean, it's been five years and we get emotional just talking about Johnny sometimes, but my suggestion to someone that's still hurting and still going through grief is find a way to channel your grief and your love for your loved one and channel maybe it's something different, maybe it's not the loss of a loved one, maybe it's something that you've been through personally that you're grieving, find a way to channel that into ministry and help other people.

Because when you're busy helping other people, the Lord really helps heal you. It really, I believe that with all my heart, we were talking about earlier, you know, 1 Corinthians, or 2 Corinthians chapter 1, you know, he's the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our tribulation so that we can comfort others with the comfort wherewith he comforted us.

And that's what we need to be able to do is if you're grieving, if you're going through heartache, you're going through pain, and you can't seem to get over that hump, what you need to try to do is channel that into helping someone else with the comfort that God has given you.

And you say, well, God hasn't comforted me, well then, friend, you need to spend some time alone with God and allow the Lord to comfort you in that. And he'll help you, he'll help you. We've gone to a support group where there's people who've lost children, that's all that goes to the support group, and they're going to the support group for 15 years, 20 years, and they still don't seem to have any healing.

[54 : 39] And you never get over it, don't get me wrong, you're always going to grieve. But they're stuck. Part of it is they don't have the Lord, but part of it also is being able to channel what you're going through as far as your grief and use it to help others.

I think that really helps, to be honest with you. How do you help and comfort, how do you help comfort and encourage your wife through loss, grief, and sorrow? Ooh, she'd probably tell you I wasn't too good at it.

Because, you know, number one, I was going through the same thing. But I would just suggest that listening to your wife and being sure that she's able to express what she's going through.

You know, women are much more emotional than men. Women express their emotions a lot better than men, and a lot of times they just want to talk. They just want to talk about what they're going through, what they're experiencing.

And I failed. I know I failed miserably. I'm sure I did. But you want to be able to just listen to them and try to encourage them.

[55 : 47] You know, again, like I said earlier, we're not going to have all the answers, guys. We are not going to have all the answers. But let your wife ask the questions anyway.

You know, being honest and saying, I don't know. But letting them talk will help. That'd be my suggestion. Joanne, what would you say as a wife so that there's a couple of men in here whose wives lost their parent?

Time. Time heals. Be sensitive to dates. Know. Kind of know. Okay, the six-month date's coming up.

The one-year date's coming up. Their birthday's coming up. And be aware of that and sensitive to that because that means a lot. that somebody knew that. Approaching Johnny's five-year anniversary is more nerve-wracking than the actual day.

Knowing it's coming up was worse than the actual day. So I would just be sensitive to that. Sir, is there anything specific you did to help your children deal with loss?

[57 : 04] Well, it was so sudden. Like I said, our boys witnessed a lot of intensive care visits and serious, serious surgeries.

So they witnessed a lot of that. And I think in the last two years, I think God was preparing us as a family.

I really do. Because we could see Johnny's desire failing. And I think the Lord was preparing all of us for that.

that. Yeah, well, you know, and maybe Jason could even address it. He probably doesn't want to, I'm sure. But Johnny loved his big brothers.

And they loved him so, so much. They were very, very close. They took them everywhere. They did stuff with them. And, you know, having frank conversations with them about their loss.

[58 : 15] We've been working on a video for our ministry and actually a video to try to help other people. And Jason and Bob talked about losing their brother. And it was amazing to me the things that they would bring up and talk about that.

We did, we had no idea. We had no idea. And maybe we failed them. And I failed them in some way not allowing them to speak about some of the things that they were going through.

But, you know, we've always been a real close family. And, you know, we, even though Jason lives here and we live up in Michigan, we will talk three, four times a week.

And, yeah. Go ahead. I agree, though, because when you lose a child, the focus is all on the parents. And you kind of forget about the siblings. So it was, I agree with you about maybe failing them, not letting them share.

Because our oldest son, Bob, said, I felt I had to be strong for my mom and dad. I had to be strong for my wife. I had to be strong for my kids. Well, I felt bad to hear that because I wanted him to not have to carry that burden.

[59 : 23] It's okay to grieve. Amen. Which one of the boys was his favorite? Which was Johnny's favorite? Tell him that story. We let the cat out of the bag on this.

Johnny used to text his brothers all the time. And he called them both my best brother. He said, you're my best brother. You're my best brother. And it wasn't until after Johnny passed away that they compared notes and go, oh, wait a minute, I'm the best brother.

No, no, you're not. I'm the best brother. And Johnny was playing two ends against the middle all the time. But that was just the way he used to do things. He was pretty good at playing us pretty well, yeah.

Is there anything you did to deal with the grief through the holidays, especially the persons? Thanksgiving was a month and a half after Johnny passed away.

And I mean, my wife, she puts on the dog at Thanksgiving. I mean, you know, the whole nine yards. But that Thanksgiving, we went to a restaurant. And at holidays, we have a candle that's got a picture of Johnny on it.

[60 : 30] And we'll take that. And we'll always set it out and set it out on the table so that everybody, and we'll talk about them. We'll talk about them. I mean, little Nixon, he's not going to remember his Uncle John and his other nephews.

The oldest one remembers them probably more than anybody. But the other ones, you know, so we'll talk about them just so they know. And I know Jason always keeps up telling them. But the holidays are always, they're always a different.

The first, the first are bad, but the second ones are usually harder because you've gone through your grieving process and you're not in shock any longer. And you know they're coming, like Joanne says, the ramp up to that holiday or to that birthday or to that anniversary date, a lot of times it's harder than the actual date itself.

Yeah. I just want you to, I'm prepping the answers because I know what they are because we talked. But you said, it was almost three years before you felt, could you just tell them a little bit about that?

You said you felt empty and because they're grieving. Some of these young people are grieving and it's been too long, quote unquote. And you're going to tell them it's not. So.

[61 : 43] It's not too long. It's not too long. Please, please. Everyone grieves differently. Everybody, there's no time limit on grief. I had a guy come up to my car one time, a neighbor.

I was backing out the door, out the driveway and we started talking and I had my window down and he looks in the back of the vehicle that I was driving and he said, what's that back there? I said, oh, that's just Johnny's wheelchair.

And he said, well, how long has it been? I said, well, it's been about a year. He goes, isn't it time to get rid of that thing? Now, he doesn't realize how many miles I put holding on to that wheelchair, pushing Johnny around.

And I just rolled my window up and said, see you later, buddy. I drove off. But, you know, I'm losing where we were going with this. You told me it was like three years.

Oh, yeah. It took me a year before I could start thinking straight. But don't let other people tell you how to grieve.

[62 : 43] Don't let other people tell you how long you have to grieve. Now, eventually, you're going to have to take a forward step. You don't move on. You don't move on from the loss of a child.

You don't move on from those traumatic issues. You just take the next step. And you're moving forward.

But you're not moving away. And the grieving process is different, like I said, for everybody. Not everybody has all the seven steps of grief or whatever you want to call it.

But for me, it took a long time. Like I said, I thought I was going crazy. But as time went on, I started to be able to start thinking again.

Started being able to put a sermon together without too much pain. But it takes a long time. And it was, you know, like I said, it was at least a good year before I could function properly.

[63 : 42] I would say the hardest thing for us, I think, was identity. Because John and I and Johnny were a family. And I thought we'd be together forever.

You know, for a long, long time. We were one. And so when Johnny suddenly passed away, we just looked at each other like, who are we? I was always Johnny's mom, and he was always Johnny's dad.

Everywhere we went, we caused a scene. We came in a room with a wheelchair. We were signing. And Johnny kind of looked different. So we were always getting stared at.

We were always getting looked at. I worked at the deaf school, so I was always Johnny's mom. And then all of a sudden, that disappeared. And we're like, who are we? And guilt.

Because we started to live. And I don't mean, to explain that is, the last two years of his life, he was on dialysis.

[64 : 41] So it was like we were on an island. We really could never go anywhere. So we were always home, and always home, and always home. And all of a sudden, we had time. So we go, we can go away for a night.

We can go away for a weekend. We can go away. We can do this. We can do that. We can sign up for the retreat. We can. And then that came along with guilt. Because I didn't want to enjoy that part of that, because I would do anything to take care of him again, in a heartbeat.

So that identity was hard for me, getting through that grieving. Feeling guilty. People say, no, now you need a pet. What do you mean, now I need a pet?

You know, you need a pet to something that you can take care of. We've been taking care of Johnny for 28 years. You know, it's time. Now we finally have, you know, the ability to go and do whenever we want, and pick up and go and do.

And people, one lady said, well, if I brought you a cat, what would you do? If I brought you a kitten over to your house, what would you do? I said, I'd chase you down the streets, and I would give you back your cat, say, thank you very much. But I don't want that.

[65 : 52] I mean, you know, we were able to do things like Joanne said, but boy, I'll tell you what, for the first, oh, I'd say year, there was just guilt about every time we were enjoying something that we could do now because Johnny was gone.

And we'd walk in a restaurant, and nobody'd look at us anymore. It's like, wow, we're just two normal people. It took a long time to get used to. One more question.

Well, I've got two, but this will be the last one here. What would you say to help other parents who may have lost a kid or kids, whether in miscarriage, sickness, or tragic accidents?

Well, first of all, losing a child at no matter what stage of life, whether it be in the womb, whether it be at three, whether it be at 28, is an incredible loss, and it hurts deeply.

And I would just say to anybody that's lost a child, no matter what stage of life they were in, my heart goes out to you. And those of you that are, that know people that have gone through that.

[67 : 10] I was counseling a couple one time, and they were having some real marital issues. And then they just, in passing, mentioned that they had lost two children in the womb.

And I talked to the husband specifically, and I said, have you dealt with your wife's grief? Have you allowed your wife to grieve? Have you guys talked about it? He goes, no, he was a football coach.

He said, I just kept on going and coaching football, and life kept going on. I said, well, and I commanded that they go out, go somewhere, and they sit down, and they talk about it.

They talk about it. And when that anniversary date comes up, I told the husband, don't forget. Your wife, your wife has gone through something horrible.

You may have brushed it under the rug, but I can guarantee you she didn't. So it doesn't matter at what stage a person loses. And it carried over into the later years in their marriage. Because here they are, they're arguing about things, and she's, it was like, you know, she's like going, finally someone's saying this, so my husband can hear it.

[68 : 14] And it was like I slapped him upside the head with a two by four. I felt like it for a little bit, but I calmed down. But it was something that that couple needed to address. So you may have lost a child in, again, in the womb.

That doesn't, oh, well, you know, didn't get a chance to fall in love with them. No, no, no, especially for the mother. I think that, that is grief that needs to be, needs to be addressed.

And as a husband and wife talk about it, that's what I would say. Anything either one of you want to say that I, I didn't ask. I know you've preached all day, but maybe you got something else that, that should have been, that should have been addressed.

These folks are going, please let that guy shut up. He's been talking all day. But no, I would like to say thank you, first of all. And I would like to say thank you to all of you that are here tonight, for listening.

And, and I hope, and our prayer is, is that what you have heard today will help you and help somebody else down the road. You know, many of you are in ministry.

[69 : 19] Many of you are going to be dealing with situations like this. And, uh, I hope that our time spent with you will be value to someone else down the road that you can help.

Uh, uh, would you sit in that chair, ma'am? And sir, would you sit there? Can I get four or five men, four or five ladies? I don't call deacons or just whoever wants to.

I'm going to pray for this couple and their ministry that God would continue to use them. So I need at least five ladies over here, at least five men. I just want to pray for them. Get us two microphones.

How many of you believe they've been greatly used of God today? Amen. And I just think it's been sweet as honey. Chuck. A little feeling courage.

We came in office. He said, well, you planned this one, right? I said, well, yeah, I didn't really plan it because he's supposed to come earlier. But he said, boy, it was the right time. I think God did that. Don't you? And I, I hope it's a blessing to you.

[70 : 20] And, uh, I just want to be a little bit of a blessing by praying for him. So let's, uh, two ladies over here can pray. Y'all just figured it out. Two men over here can pray. And then I'll close. Two ladies start praying.

Dear God, I thank you so much for today. And I thank you for your blessings by bringing the Ashley's here. I pray God for Joanne.

And I pray for their ministry. Lord, that you would continue to touch lives all across this United States.

Lord, that they will be used in a way that, that it can only be said that it's you. that you use them to touch people, to help people.

I thank you for their family, for their, for John, not only Johnny, but their other two boys and their families. And I thank you for your blessings on us today, especially for having them come and having your word preached to us and show us how we can help others.

[71 : 30] In Jesus' precious name I pray. Lord, we just come to you and thank you so much for giving us this opportunity to hear this couple and how to deal with all kinds of grief.

It may not be a loved one that's passed away. It may be other things that we deal with in our lives that cause us pain and hurt. Things we see our children do that cause us pain.

Lord, we just thank you and praise you for allowing them to share with us. And we just ask that you work good through what they're saying and how they reach other people and the lives that they will touch.

And Lord, help us to take what we've learned today and apply it to our lives. Put feet to it. Put action. Lord, just be with them as they go their way. In your name we pray.

Heavenly Father, we recognize your hand upon the day. We're so grateful that you would care for us in the way that you do. We see you as a good shepherd, Lord. We see that you sent your servants here to us today to speak truth, Lord, and to help us.

[72 : 37] Lord, we have been blessed so much to have such good understanding of you. who you are and from your word. And Lord, tonight as a church family, our hearts are full, wanting to be used of you in the same way that we saw today, the minister to a hurting world.

So Father, I pray that you will, that you will lay people upon our hearts, or that you'll give us the courage that we need to act out and to make a difference. Lord, we thank you for the ministry of your word upon our hearts today.

Lord, I thank you for this family sharing the life and story of Johnny with us. Lord, thank you for using him in the way that you have, Lord, and it brings great glory to your name. Lord, we pray your favor upon this family and the ministry.

I pray that you'll use them in a great way to strengthen other churches. Lord, that individuals and churches will find emotional health, Lord, and spiritual understanding concerning these hard times.

We're to recognize this day as a gift from you, and we thank you for it. God, we thank you for your goodness. We thank you for the love that you show to us on a continual basis, Lord.

[73 : 37] We thank you for the Ashley family, Pastor, Miss Ashley, and the things that you have, you've taught them and that you've shown them. We thank you for the open, receptive heart that they had to learn from you through the life and the death of Johnny, Lord.

And we thank you for the realness that they brought to us today, Lord. I'm just the willingness to open up to us, uh, to share, to share with us the realities of pain and hurt and how that's hard.

But we know, even though it's hard, we know that you are a great God who loves us and that ministry that they've started. We pray that you would bless that Lord, that we would bless them and that you would bless all those who hear.

So folks would be equipped Lord, and, uh, to, to know how to handle their own grief and their own pain, Lord, but also to minister to others, Lord. We just thank you so much for this, this opportunity.

We thank you so much for this family. We pray many blessings on them in your name. We pray. Amen. God, I thank you so much for the privilege you've given us today to have your servants here.

[74 : 37] And mostly to have your Holy Spirit take the word of God and teach us and comfort us and guide us. I love the people that heard the message today. I love them.

And I ask you to bless them. And you did. God, I just pray for those that are hurting because, they lost their daddies. Some girls that lost some babies and, uh, friends, changes, moving on, going to the mission field.

And it hurts. And our church deals with so much hurt because our best friends leave. God, God, I just pray, God, that you bless your people tonight.

God, I ask you for Joanne Ashley, God, a mama who lost her son and lost her life's work in a lot of ways. I just pray you bless her.

I pray you give her strength. I pray you to help her to take this message and bless other ladies. I pray to God for the two young men, their brothers.

[75 : 47] I think it's Bob and Jason. God, I ask you to work in their lives. Bless them. God, I don't know what it must be like to lose your brother. I lost my sister, but we were older.

So Lord, I know it's different. I just pray you'd bless. Pray you'd bless. God, I pray you'd be with Ashley. God, thank you for the way you've taught him.

Holy, correct use of the word and how you have given him the story and the message and how like an Old Testament prophet, he has lived his message.

He is a walking testimony of the message you have in him preach. I just pray God you'd bless him. I pray to help him to know that small church down in Atlanta and Alpharetta loves him and we'll be praying for him.

And thinking about him. And I'll give you praise for all that you do in their ministry. God, continue to work, please. In Jesus name. Amen. Well, y'all can make it back to your table whenever you're ready.

[76 : 50] If you enjoyed it today, say, man, and you want to take and shake their hand or whatever. They'll be out at our table. The books are available. And you got, I think those books would be a blessing to you.