

# **Will You Wipe My Tears?**

**By Joyce Jamerson**

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*Spiritual “equipment” for the contest of life.*



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# Table of Contents

Memoriam .....	1
Forward .....	2
Introduction .....	4
Our Story .....	7
Chapter 1 What is grief, anyway? .....	10
Chapter 2 Illness brings grief too? .....	17
Chapter 3 But I don't know what to say! .....	26
Chapter 4 P.J.'s, Chocolate and Mac & cheese .....	37
Chapter 5 Encourage me, please .....	47
Chapter 6 Why? .....	58
Chapter 7 It makes me so mad, I could... ..	68
Chapter 8 I can wait...if it doesn't take too long .....	77
Chapter 9 Grievors can still be happy? .....	85
Chapter 10 Rebuilding the bridge of faith .....	96
Chapter 11 Slow me down, so I can pray .....	105
Chapter 12 Contentment & Joy .....	113
Chapter 13 My friend Jesus .....	124
Endnotes .....	135

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**Dedicated to all those who want to  
help others**



**In Memory of our  
daughter, Jill  
April 7, 1974 ~  
September 18, 1993**

Some people come into our lives and quickly go.  
Others stay for a while and move our souls to dance.  
They awaken us to understanding with the passing  
whisper of their wisdom. Some people make the sky  
more beautiful to gaze upon. They stay in our lives  
for awhile, leaving footprints on our hearts and we  
are never, ever the same.

Flavia Weedn

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### **FORWARD**

My journey of grief has led to invitations to speak in various places, and eventually to speak at the Florida College lectures in February of 2000. When the invitations to speak were first offered, it was a difficult decision. I didn't know if it would be a good thing; would it cause me to dwell more on grieving or take me to a place where I didn't need to be? Would I be happy doing it? But on the other hand, would I be happy *not* doing it? My decision was made easier because I could see a definite need for better understanding concerning grieving.

In addition, I couldn't picture myself standing before my Lord at judgment, knowing I had this information, to tell Him I didn't want to do His work.

Since the death of our daughter, clippings, poems and general information about grief have gone into a file drawer. You know how preaching families are about these things, I might need that sometime! So the file has served me well, although there were days when the memories were too vivid to continue, and the project had to be set aside. Rarely do we go out of town without someone mentioning *Helping the Grieving*, the tape that was made of the F.C. speech and how the tape of that speech has been copied and shared. This book has come about because of conversations with those who are grieving and comments from those who truly want to help but don't know where to start. The effort to get my thoughts on paper has been a true labor. Many times I wondered *what came over me; why in the world did I ever think I could write a book!*

Since I am neither a writer nor a public speaker, this venture has been blessed by God. We've done it together; I'm unable to do this alone. This shy servant has stood before hundreds, with shaking knees and an occasional tear, being convinced the message is needed. These pages are written to

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## *Helping the One Who Grieves*

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Christians. We, of all people, should be able to comfort one another throughout the grieving process; however, if the grief of those around us lasts more than a few weeks, our sympathy bank seems to become overdrawn.

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of those  
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So I hope you, the reader, can overlook the fact that I've been out of school for many years, and have long forgotten some of the elements of writing. Just accept my words as a small attempt to bring about better understanding, and through this understanding, to ease the pain of a friend. This work only briefly discusses many important topics, so it is my hope that it will inspire the need for deeper study.

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There are several people to thank, especially those who proof read and gave me their constructive comments; but throughout this book, I have purposely not revealed many names. They know who they are and I am deeply grateful for each contribution. Many people helped my family throughout our grief journey and continue to do so. Hopefully, our focus is not on who did what, but on how to help others and how we can glorify God by doing so.

Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

## *Will You Wipe My Tears*

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### **Will You Wipe My Tears?**

A guide for helping the grieving

#### **Introduction**

My husband has often teased me about liking puzzles. He can't understand why anyone would cut a perfectly good picture into 1500 pieces! Many times, my daughter Jill and I would spread a puzzle out on the dining room table, and take days and even weeks to put it together. Sometimes the puzzle would just call our name, and anytime we passed by the table, we'd have to stop and find a few pieces. The reward comes when you see that lovely picture completed. There's a feeling of meeting the challenge and enjoying the accomplishment (although the space it took on my dining room table did become a problem!)

Once in a while someone will ask if I have a hobby. My usual reply is that *I like to cut up fabric and sew it back together again*. Now and then there's a puzzled look until they realize I'm talking about quilting! It's the same concept as a puzzle, but with a much broader sense of accomplishment. When you see it to completion, you have something that doesn't get torn up and put back into a box but involves the same principle of finding and putting together pieces. Cutting up fabric and sewing it back together may seem futile to some, but there are great rewards when you see the design come together.

Many other puzzles can come about in our lives. When our daily routines are disrupted by the bumps of life ~ illness, accidents, death ~ it may take a while to find all the pieces and get them in order again. The process of grieving is a large difficult puzzle with many pieces and it takes a long time to get the pieces in their proper place. Some struggle with this puzzle for a lifetime and, for some, a few pieces are always missing. Some work on their puzzle privately, refusing to speak of it; so we fail to learn from the experience of others and the cycle of

## ***Helping the One Who Grieves***

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misunderstanding continues.

Most of us will face this puzzle at some point in life. For many, it's the death of a parent, spouse, or close friend. The puzzle becomes more difficult when we have to bury a child as children are our hope; our link to the future.

During the September 11 ceremonies in 2004, at the World Trade Center site, this statement was made:

*Men who have lost their wives are called widowers. Women who lose their husbands are called widows. Children who have no parents are orphans but parents who have lost children ~ what are they called? There are no words to describe them.*

Whether it is a sudden traumatic event or a long lingering illness doesn't seem to change the complexity of the puzzle. Birthdays, anniversaries, and special occasions will delay the process of putting the pieces in order and as we struggle with this, many do not understand. For others, it's just a day. For grievers, it's a memory.

The suddenness of a situation may bring many questions; questions about death, about God, and the ever puzzling, *why?* For the friends who gather around, the questions are: *What can we do? How can we help? What should we say?* Can we, will we wipe their tears?

### **How will you help?**

Obviously, the needs of the moment will depend on the situation. At the onset, food, lodging, errands and babysitting may all be needed and we are happy to either fulfill the need or find someone who can. But beyond the obvious lies another set of questions.

How would you help a friend remember a special day? What is appropriate? What would be too much to say and what would be too little? What do you say when someone close to you suffers the unimaginable? When it's time to say goodbye to that aged parent? What do you say to a dying friend? To their

## *Will You Wipe My Tears*

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relatives? To one who has just learned they have an incurable illness? To the couple who suffers a miscarriage or stillbirth? To the one whose spouse breaks their marriage vows? What *can* you say? How can you say anything when the very thought of what they're going through rips through your heart and your own emotions fail to cooperate?

Words escape us during these times and we feel lost, inadequate and frustrated. What can we do to help them with their immediate needs, and then later, to help them find the pieces of their puzzle? After some time has passed, should we even mention it? What if we say the wrong thing? At a time when our friends and family need us the most, words fail us. We don't know how to help and as a result, we usually don't say anything. After all, *time* is the healer, isn't it?

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This study is designed to help those of us who really want to help the grieving ~ to be able to wipe their tears. Perhaps you are the one who is grieving, and these pages will enable you to let others help you. Whatever the case, I hope the pages of this book will serve you; help you to help others and in turn, strengthen us so we can honor God and give Him the glory.