

MAGNOLIA MINDS: When death shatters the heart

By Dawn Early

It seems like every day I read or hear of a sudden or tragic death. Immediately my mind goes back to the evening of March 13, 2023, when my husband and I received the worst news a parent has to hear: "There has been an accident, and your daughter is dead."

At that moment, I believe I went through every stage of grief. My heart sank into my stomach. I screamed, cried, threw up, and went numb all at the same time. To make matters worse we were eight hours from home. I vaguely remember throwing things into the vehicle and starting the drive home. I remember the anger boiling up in me and trying not to punch my fist through the windshield. It was a long, gut-wrenching drive home in the middle of the night.

Looking back over this past year, I have poured my heart and soul out every day to God. It is odd that I never went through a bargaining stage of grief. I have argued with God and asked, "Why her?" But I never bargained with Him.

There is no magical answer to the question of, "Why my child?" I know every single person on earth goes through a loss of a loved one. I must trust that God knows better than I do of when He will call His children home. I know we all have a birthday and a death day, but it does not take away the brokenness of my heart.

When a child is born it is a celebratory moment, but when a child of God dies and goes home to God, we mourn. There is so much irony in that last sentence. We should consider it a celebratory moment that our loved one is in the presence of the almighty. But we are human and we have selfish desires,

whether we like it or not.

I stumbled across a verse in Psalm 116:15 that says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." I know my daughter was well received when her life left this earth to go to her heavenly home. I also know that God has not abandoned me in my grief. He tells us in Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Psalm 147:3 says, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." Even on my worst days, I know God gives me the strength to keep moving forward. I may move at a snail's pace, but I am moving. Yes, there are days I cry, shout, or just sit and look through pictures or watch videos of all those special moments we had with her.

I wish I could say that putting my shattered heart back together is easy, but it is not. I know my life will never be the same without her here with us. "Us" meaning that she left behind parents, a brother, children, aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends, and many cousins who all loved her deeply. But every time I have asked God for something He has given it to me in glimpses.

I asked Him to let me hear her say "momma" one more time, and He did through a video. I asked Him to let me see her play softball again, and He did through a video. I asked Him to let me hear her funny side, and He did through multiple videos. I have so many videos and photographs of every celebratory moment we shared as a family, which is a great comfort. I also have the photographs of the worst days we went through during the week of her death. While we were mourning, she was celebrating with Jesus.

There has not been a day that I do not think of her. I would love to see her barge through my front door being her flamboyant, feisty, hardheaded self. I get glimpses of her through her children, and it makes me laugh and be grateful

that, for a moment, I can see her in them. I have learned many lessons through this grief journey, especially not to major on the minors. I cling to the hope of what Revelation 21:4 says, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

That is our future in Heaven as children of God.

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