

The Tears Of A Single Parent

Many single mothers have a "woe is me" attitude to life. They are of the opinion that life has dealt them a rotten hand, and that much of what happens to them because of that rotten hand, is not fair. They become bitter towards the father (or fathers) of their children, bitter towards the government, and bitter towards society in general. This "woe is me" attitude can also lead to tears. I'd like to state here that I believe that tears are a valuable commodity. I believe that God is moved by tears and is even pleased with tears. Now, before you fill God's ears with your crying, and soak your pillows with your tears, it is necessary to remind ourselves that there are different kinds of tears.

God is moved by tears of grief and pain. All parents have certain concerns about their children: will they get a good education, will they stay out of trouble, will they do what is right, will they marry a good person, will they be happy, will they be successful in life, will they be 'well-adjusted' 'well-rounded' adults? For the single mother, society has already tagged her doomed to fail and her children bound to become illiterate law-breakers and lazy welfare bums. Thank God, we Christians have a Heavenly Father who dispels our anxieties (if we let Him), watches over our children and guides them toward His plan for their future. I wrote in another article that because God is a need-meeter, He provided help to bridge the gaps in our children's lives. So we really ought to "*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God*" (Phil.4:6).

Well, taking all this back to the tears of grief and pain, Christian children sometimes "go bad". The same devil, the same world and the same pleasures of the flesh that dog our steps are also enemies to our children. A parent who loses a child to the world, grieves. It hurts. And the tears of pain and loss are shed. Well, for the single mother, society expects it. Even members in a church family will deem it inevitable. But Christ has compassion on the heart that cries out in pain. Jesus had compassion on the widow woman who lost her only son to death. He felt her grief and was moved at the sight of her tears. So much so, that He brought her son back to life. He didn't do that for the son; He did that for the woman.

Jesus approved of the tears the woman in Luke 7 used to wash His feet. He told the Pharisees that she loved Him much because much had been forgiven her. Her tears were tears of love for her Master. She felt no shame at having others see her display of love. For her display, she was criticised by the Pharisees, but she was defended by Jesus.

God approves when we weep for those who weep, as Jesus did outside the tomb of Lazarus. He approves of our tears shed when we or others sin. David was so overcome by the awfulness of his sin, that it drove him to tears; Jeremiah was so disgusted with the sin of the nation of Israel, he was constantly going to God in tears. I think that is the key. God is pleased when we care so much for others that we are driven to tears for others. Jesus had compassion everywhere He went. He wants us to also have compassion. That may mean putting aside our own concerns long enough to recognise those of others; caring little enough about ourselves to get a burden for others. I like what Brother Teft said in his sermon "Charlie Mike". He said that we need to get on a mission larger than ourselves. We really have so much going for us because of Christ. Why is it that we feel our tears are best spent on ourselves?

I said, at the beginning, that tears are a valuable commodity. Psalm 126:5 says, "*They that sow in tears shall reap in joy*". We ought to care enough about the lost, who are on their way to hell, to weep over their condition. Then we ought to be like the woman in Luke 7 who was not ashamed to show her love for the One who saved her. We have no right wasting our tears on ourselves when we have eternal life and all its benefits, and then keep our hearts cold and our eyes dry for those who will die and go to hell. We are all guilty of it. We seem to feel that because we are single parents, we struggle more, so we hurt more inside and so our tears are justified. But this really isn't so. I have yet to read in the Bible about God's pleasure at selfish tears. I have yet to read about God being moved to compassion over tears shed out of self-pity. A couple of years ago, I prayed that God would help me to cry for others; to reserve my tears for others. I have a long, long way to go to get to where I'd like to be, but God has given me opportunities to cry for others, that I would not have noticed had I been all wrapped up in myself.

God wants to use us to reach others. We cannot reach others if we have no compassion for them. And our compassion is small if their condition does not move us to shed a few tears.

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