



Celebrating Life

All losses involve grief, there are losses that are easy to assimilate, such as the loss of an object; There are others that can even be replaced, such as a job, but the loss of a loved one is one of the most complex and unique processes of each person. Specifically, losing a spouse regardless of the years of marriage, is a cyclical process and often painful, At the beginning it can appear in the form of emptiness. However, even though there is pain and uncertainty, a widow's journey can also be experienced with celebration and gratitude.

By focusing on celebrating a life rather than the pain of loss, we can find peace, and continue the legacy of a union that, although it is now on pause, we know its duration is for eternity.

How then can we achieve that tranquility?

-Acknowledge the pain, holding on to God's promises: experiencing grief will be the most complex and difficult part of a loss; difficult because pain and sadness are among the most uncomfortable and exhausting emotions of the human being, and complex because each pain is experienced differently, all grief is unique and therefore must be treated as such. Fortunately, we have a God of details, a God who made you, who knows details as small as the amount of your hair and experiences as complex as the pain you feel. No one will understand the pain you experience better than God himself, and in Psalm 34:18 we are reaffirmed the promise "The Lord is near to those who are aching in heart and saves those who are in contrite spirit." God pays special attention to those who suffer, God has special care for widows, because only He sees what others do not see, and He knows what they need to be sustained, what they need to get up, and what they need to go on. Therefore, recognizing pain is good, it is the first step, because by recognizing it we also declare who can deliver us from it, God reminds you, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matthew 5:4)

-Celebrate love: although the loss of a spouse can leave a physical void, the principle of love remains, the Bible states in 1 Corinthians 13:8 and 13 that "love never fails... faith, hope, and love remain; but the greatest of these three is love." That is, love in any form of expression surpasses the physical presence of a person, do you realize what other elements the Bible relates to love, faith and hope? Faith is to love despite the absence with the Hope of a coming encounter. When love is maintained, the wait for that reunion is more bearable and can urge us to honor the love we still have and keeps alive the hope of seeing our spouse. Therefore, honor the love that still exists and that motivates you to carry out projects and plans that maintain the legacy of the loved one, celebrate what they were, but even more celebrate the love that still is.

-Find strength in community and faith: we were created with the capacity and need for bonding, having meaningful relationships is part of our social-emotional development. That is why, in times of trial and

vulnerability, comfort and support can come from our closest community. The Bible is very precise in advising "bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2), seeking a support network apart from our family and close friends, can give us a sense of belonging and support, and what better than to find these virtues in our community of faith. Therefore, belonging to clubs, ministries or groups that the church itself promotes can serve as an incentive to provide support, empathy, bonding and even reaffirm faith in the hope we have. Include yourself in the activities that are most related to you and find in them a space of strength and support.

-Finally, live in gratitude: Gratitude is the best antidote to hopelessness and discouragement, and you could probably ask yourself how to live with gratitude when there is pain? However, as we have said before, celebrating the life of the loved one involves not only acknowledging the pain but also the blessing of the moments and the life that was shared, having gratitude for the time, the experiences and the union we had. The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 "Give thanks in everything, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." Giving thanks is not a false attempt to find happiness, giving thanks or experiencing gratitude means that despite the pain we can still find elements for which to be grateful and praised. Gratitude is associated with praise, and it is inevitable, because by focusing on what still works, what we still have, what we have, we will have nothing but praise in our hearts and gratitude for what God did, does, and will still do in each of our lives.

Living with a loss can be something possible and functional, even for those of us who believe in God we know that it is temporary. We have reflected on how the pain of a loss can be transformed into gratitude, purpose, and celebration. God has given us the ability to grieve with hope, recognizing His love and faithfulness at every stage of our lives. As we celebrate life, we not only honor the legacy of those we love, but we also embrace the promise that we will one day be reunited with them in the presence of our Creator.

Today I invite you to take a moment to surrender your pain, your doubts, and your emotions to God, knowing that He is the only one capable of restoring and renewing your life. Acknowledge the blessing of shared memories, honor the love that still lives in your heart, and trust in God's perfect plans for you. Leave this place with a renewed perspective, committed to living in gratitude, strengthened in faith, and determined to fulfill God's purpose for this new stage.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).
Rest in His promise and celebrate the life God still has ahead of you.



Women's Ministries
Inter-American Division