

What to Say in a Crisis?

What do you say to a dear friend whose daughter just discovered she has stage 4 cancer?

His 37-year-old offspring had just learned the news the day before. As he shared the information, tears were in his eyes and such pain in his voice he could barely speak. My heart was broken for him and for his wife.

It was a situation similarly occurring in families and employee groups all across the country – one dealt with often by our associates in Life Care and Century Park.

When my friend left my office, I was confronted with the question: What can I say – or do – to help relieve his pain?



I am reminded of what David wrote in Psalm 11:3-4:

*When all that is good falls apart,
what can good people do?
The Lord is in His holy temple;
the Lord sits on His throne in heaven.*

Isn't David's question ours? When all that is good falls apart, what can good people do? When illness invades, marriages fail, children suffer and death strikes, what are we to do?

Minister and author Max Lucado weighs in on the subject in his book *For These Tough Times*: "Curiously, David doesn't answer his question with an answer. He answers it with a declaration: 'The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord sits on His throne in heaven.'

"His point is unmistakable: God is unaltered by our storms. He is undeterred by our problems. He is unfrightened by these problems. Buildings may fall, careers may crumble, but God does not. Wreckage and rubble have never discouraged Him. God has always turned tragedy into triumph," Lucado wrote.

When bad times come, we are all prone to wonder: Where is God in all of this? And prayer – is God really listening? In the dark days of my life, I've discovered that He is.

But back to the question that won't go away: What can we do ... for my friend's personal family or for thousands in our professional family across the country who are facing frightening circumstances of their own? Here are some thoughts:

(more)

- **We can pray.** God encourages us to bring our concerns to Him. We can pray for healing, for strength, for a level of peace in dire situations that can only come from the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in believers.
- **We can offer words of encouragement** through hugs, and spoken words and cards that relay our love.
- **We can have assurance – through our Lord’s own promises** – in our lives or those of our family and friends that death, which will come to all of us, is not the end, that earthly separation is temporary, that we await an eternal life with our loved ones in heaven.

The Bible is clear in the hope of glory that awaits us:

- *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:16-19 NIV).*
- *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory (Romans 8:16-17 NIV).*

Those truths sustain us, no matter what may come our way.

– Beecher Hunter