

When Weeping Is Ungodly **2 Kings 19:1-8**

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 3-2-2014

Introduction

Today we are going to deal with a subject that could be sensitive to some people, and I will be the first to say that we must be very careful that we do not minimize the pain that anyone goes through, even if their pain has been illegitimately expressed like David's was. God understands our pain; He counts our tears: He ministers to us in the midst of sorrow; He commands us to weep with those who weep.

But that must be carefully balanced with the Biblical fact that Christianity is not all about our feelings, and Scripture is quite clear that some weeping is ungodly. For example, some people manipulate with their tears, and that is ungodly. Some people cry over the wrong things. In Joshua 7:10 God rebuked Joshua for crying over the wrong thing. Sometimes our perspective needs to be adjusted. For our weeping to be godly, it must have the right motive, the right goal, and conform to the standards of God's Word, which includes standards governing self-control, care about others, and even timing.

Some of you may never have thought about the fact that your weeping must be sanctified. You might think, "What's to sanctify? You either weep or you don't weep, right?" But the Scripture does speak a great deal about the importance of sanctifying our weeping to Lord. Just as one example, my lack of weeping in my teens and twenties did not conform to the word of God because I didn't think men should cry, so I always held it in. But Romans 12:15 is not a command that is only addressed to women, when it says, "weep with those who weep." We men have to learn how to weep as Jesus wept. There is an entire book of the Bible that gives guidance on weeping. It's the book of Lamentations that comes right after Jeremiah, the weeping prophet.

But today I want to give a tiny introduction to the subject of ungodly weeping. From this one passage I am obviously not going to cover everything that could be said about ungodly weeping, but Scripture is quite clear that David's inordinate weeping here was inappropriate.

Ecclesiastes 3:4 says,

[There is] A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

One commentary on Ecclesiastes said, "...the point [that] Qoheleth stresses [here] is that we [should] do these things only when it is appropriate."¹ God is saying that there are times when it is not appropriate to laugh (no matter how funny something might seem to be), and there are other times when it is not appropriate to weep (no matter how sad we may be). Our emotional expressions must be sensitive to the context. And David was clearly not being sensitive to the context. Even though his heart was breaking, he should have held it in for a time, and let the dam burst when he could be by himself.

Last week we looked at Ahimaaz who was shocked at David's insensitivity to their love and faithfulness and sacrifices. David probably had no intention of hurting their feelings, but his insensitive words almost treated their love, loyalty, and sacrifices as inconsequential. His mourning would have been a kick in the stomach. But today we are going to focus on David, not Ahimaaz.

I. What was not wrong about David's weeping

And before we look at what was wrong about David's weeping, I want to quickly mention what was *not* wrong. And we know these things were not wrong from the inspired Psalms that David wrote at this time as well as from many other Scriptures that instruct us about weeping.

A. It was not wrong to love his son. 18:33 is one of the most remarkable expressions of a father's love for his son in the Bible.

It was not wrong to love his rebellious son. Chapter 18:33 is one of the most remarkable expressions of a father's love for his son that you can find in the Bible. It says,

2Sam. 18:33 Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: "O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!"

This love is incredible. It's like God the Father's love for us. Despite Absalom's rebellion; despite his lack of love for David; despite his attempt to kill David and to kill anyone associated with David, David did not respond in kind. He loved Absalom deeply. We've already seen that his love was not properly displayed, and there was some idolatry mixed in. But the

¹ Ogden, G. S., & Zogbo, L. (1998). *A handbook on Ecclesiastes* (p. 93). New York: United Bible Societies.

love itself was a good love. It was an unconditional love that faintly reflects God's love for us.

B. It was not wrong to be deeply moved and heartbroken (18:33)

Second, it was not wrong for David to be deeply moved and broken hearted over his son. God said that his heart was deeply moved, and who would not be deeply moved over a son who had died without showing any evidence of regeneration. That's got to be the ultimate grief – a grief of having a loved one headed toward hell – at least from all outward appearances. The Psalms do not appear to fault David for being moved. Jeremiah was deeply moved in the book of Lamentations. Paul was deeply moved for his unbelieving brethren in Romans 9.

C. It would not have been wrong to go into a room to hide, if the context had been right (18:33)

Thirdly, it would not have been wrong to go into a room to hide from the crowds if the context had been right. But he was a king who had some more responsibilities, and he should have held his emotions for a while longer and gone to a truly private place where he could sob his heart out before God. There are times when we cannot hide and when we must not try to escape until we have dealt with our responsibilities.

D. It would not have been wrong to sob over the loss of his son (18:33)

Fourth, I am not saying that a man sobbing and sobbing over the loss of a son is wrong. I would have done the same thing – in private. And I can even understand that David couldn't hold it in any longer. I can be understanding to people who respond sinfully under such circumstances. But it's what was said along with the sobbing that is especially disturbing. But on the tears themselves, sometimes try as we might, we can't hold the tears back. But there are situations where we must try. And if we can't, to at least express to those around us that we are not upset with them.

E. It would not have been wrong to wish that God would have let him die instead of Absalom dying (18:33)

And then lastly, it would not have been wrong to wish that God would have allowed him to die instead of Absalom dying. Saying it in front of these people was totally wrong, but feeling it and even wishing it secretly is another thing. Jesus actually fulfilled His wish that He could die on our behalf, didn't He? Every one of us was an Absalom from a divine

perspective, and yet Jesus had the balance of judging us guilty and worthy of death (so He didn't excuse our sins) and yet at the same time He took our place. That's the marvelous love of Jesus. Paul reflects that by wishing that he could go to hell instead of his unbelieving brethren.

Of course, David did not completely measure up to Christ's love, did he? There are times when our emotions are sometimes unruly, and we don't always understand what is going on deep within us. A lot of what David was experiencing is perfectly understandable. In fact, his having blown it is perfectly understandable. He actually did quite well in holding back his emotions during the previous three days. We have already seen in a previous sermon that David did not want to fight against Absalom. He would rather have left the country and let Absalom rule than to fight against Absalom. But in terms of his calling before God, he knew he had to fight. And he did the right thing. So we saw that David maturely held back his emotions for at least three days. But now the floodgates burst open and he lets it all hang out.

II. What was wrong about David's weeping (vv. 2-4)

A. Context: When your mourning robs others of their rightful joy (last week with vv. 1-3)

So what is wrong with doing what David did? I'm going to outline eleven things that were wrong. First, it is wrong to let it all hang out when your mourning robs others of their rightful joy. Last week we focused on the rightful joy that Ahimaaz and the other men had at the miraculous victory that God had given. I won't repeat what I said last week. But look at the general impact that this had on the men. They were incredibly joyful, but verses 1-3 say,

2Sam. 19:1 And Joab was told, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom."

2Sam. 19:2 So the victory that day was *turned* into mourning for all the people. For the people heard it said that day, "The king is grieved for his son."

2Sam. 19:3 And the people stole back into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

The context for mourning was highly inappropriate. It would be like crying with a loud voice all the way through a wedding and reception because of the loss of a child. I think such a person should be escorted out of the wedding. It's understandable, but wrong context. In Nehemiah 8:9 Ezra and the Levites commanded the people to stop mourning because the context was supposed to be a context of joy and celebration. It was a command: stop

mourning. Jesus told the Pharisees that they were missing the context when they insisted that the disciples mourn and weep on the days of fasting that the Pharisees had legalistically set. Jesus said,

Matt. 9:15 ... “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?”

And the obvious answer intended by Jesus is “No. They should not mourn. It’s not an appropriate context.” And people might respond, “But I can’t help it. The weeping and mourning just comes out.” And my response is that you may not be able to help it if you are utterly unsanctified in your emotions, but the more you mature, the more self-control you will exhibit, and you will be able to bring joy to a joy-context even when you don’t feel like bringing joy. And afterwards you will be able to retire to a private place and cry your heart out before the Lord. That’s what Jesus did. Do you think at the Last Supper that Jesus really felt like building up His disciples, comforting them, and bringing joy to His disciples? No. But He knew that they needed it, and he was a joy-giver at that meal, waiting till the Garden of Gethsemane to cry his broken heart out to the Father. It’s a part of maturity to be able to control our emotions in ways appropriate to context. So context is the first issue that needs to be examined in godly weeping. And we need to train our children on what is appropriate to various contexts. There is a time to weep and a time to laugh. We must disciple our children on what are appropriate displays of emotion.

B. Station in Life: When mourning makes you abandon your God-given responsibilities (18:33-19:1)

The second issue is station in life. All of us have different responsibilities, and when mourning makes us abandon our God-given responsibilities, we need to be challenged like David was. He had a responsibility as king to his citizens. He also had a responsibility as king to put all murderers to death – and that included his son Absalom. But when it came to his son, he just could not seem to do the right thing. And even after God took that decision out of his hands, he had a responsibility as a king to move the nation forward. But his grief did not allow for that, and he almost lost the kingdom over it.

What is your station in life? If you are a child, you have responsibilities to your parents, and parents who let their children get away with rebellion simply because the child is broken hearted over not getting his way are not doing their child a favor. And children who are not being trained

to control their tears and cryings are not being done a favor. And we will look at that more in a bit.

But parents have emotional responsibilities to their family. They are called to nurture, to cheer, to encourage, to admonish, and through discipline to bring their children to tears. So there is a whole range of emotions that parents are responsible for. And when Jacob (in the book of Genesis) brought only tears and mourning into his family day after day for year after year, he was being derelict in his duty. Certainly the pain of his lost son would hurt, but his weeping was tearing his *living* family apart, and Judah finally had to leave because he couldn't stand it anymore.

And church officers are required to bear the burden of the pain in some members lives while also being willing to minister joy and humor into other people's lives. And it takes maturity to control your emotions in that way. God rebuked Moses for crying when he should have been leading the children of Israel with emotional confidence (Ex. 14:15). God even required that Ezekiel not publically mourn the loss of his dearly beloved wife who was shortly going to die. That's incredible, yet Ezekiel had matured to a place where he could hold those emotions in while in public and just weep while alone. It can be done. God told Ezekiel, "Son of man, behold, I take away from you the desire of your eyes [that's his wife] with one stroke; yet you shall neither mourn nor weep, nor shall your tears run down." (Ezek. 24:16). So some stations of life require much more complicated control of our emotions. But it is still a part of every Christian's sanctification. You can't always just do what you feel like. The excuse, "But I don't feel that way" is utterly irrelevant. Our feelings must be sanctified and under control.

C. Focus: When your mourning becomes the center of attention (v. 2b)

The third question is focus. When your mourning is in private, it is a side issue. It's a side issue even if people find out about it. But when your mourning is front and center and becomes the focus of attention, then there are problems. And that's exactly what happened with David's mourning. The second part of verse 2 says, "For the people heard it said that day, 'The king is grieved for his son.'" There wasn't anybody who wasn't talking about David's mourning. And actually, there wasn't anyone in the city who could not hear his loud cries. And in verse 3 there wasn't anyone who wasn't negatively impacted by his mourning. His mourning had become front and center. He was the elephant in the room that nobody could ignore.

This is what went wrong with Jacob's mourning for the twenty-one year period recorded in Genesis chapters 37-45. Twenty-one years! The Scripture doesn't approve of the seven stages of grieving, but even if it did, he sure took it to the extreme. Twenty-one years of weeping in front of his family! His constant weeping became so much the center of attention that it negatively impacted everything. And when people tried to comfort him, he refused to be comforted. He said that he was going to go to his grave mourning for his son. Sometimes refusing to be comforted becomes willful sin. And in the process of picking at his scabs, he made life messy for his family.

But there are other ways that mourning can become the center of attention. I've been in homes where you could slice the air with a knife because of the bad feelings emanating from the woman of the house. She had learned that she could manipulate with her tears and mourning. You hear the expression, "If mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." But actually, I have seen that syndrome with men as well. But either way, it's not right. Take your burdens to the Lord, but don't keep dumping them on everyone. Obviously there is a place for putting our arms around people and helping them through the shock and sorrow that they are facing. I'm all for that. But if a person's emotions are displacing everyone else's there is likely some emotional immaturity that needs to be replaced.

D. Impact: When your mourning is a source of embarrassment to others (v. 3)

And actually, what I have just said under point C overlaps into point D: when your mourning is a source of embarrassment to others. Verse 3 says,

2Sam. 19:3 And the people stole back into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

They were so embarrassed and ashamed that they didn't quite know how to deal with it. And there are times when displays of emotion are just too awkward for everyone. And yet I have seen those people with embarrassing emotional outbursts justifying themselves with the idea that you can't deny your feelings. That's nonsense. Sanctification is all about self-denial and our emotions must be sanctified.

E. Inordinate nature: when your mourning is too loud and too prolonged (v. 4)

Verse 4 gives another factor to consider: is the display of emotion inordinate? In other words, is it too loud and too prolonged? If you have worked with children for very long, you know that sometimes the crying over a “No” or over a discipline can be out of control and way out of proportion to what has been experienced. They just will not stop crying, and crying loudly; and following the parent around while they are crying. You know exactly what is going on. Well, our children knew that such behavior would be disciplined. If they cried inordinately over a rebuke or over a discipline, they would get extra discipline. And eventually they learned that it didn’t pay. Children need to begin learning self-control in the display of emotion. David was not doing that in verse 4.

2Sam. 19:4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, “O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!”

He had already been saying that long before Joab arrived, and this is just going on and on. It would be one thing to be sobbing silently in his room, but he is crying out with a loud voice and the thing that he is saying is highly insulting to these men. In the book of Exodus, that first generation of Israelites had not developed even the level of maturity that David had. God faults them because “they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage” (Ex. 6:9). We can understand the anguish of spirit and cruel bondage, and Exodus tells us that it was precisely because God cared about that anguish of spirit that He visited them. So God cared. But God was not going to put up with inordinate mourning anymore than a parent should put up with his children crying inordinately.

F. When your mourning legitimately angers others (v. 5a)

Verse 5 starts by saying, “Then Joab came into the house to the king, and said...” – and *what* he said shows that Joab was very angry. Your mourning may be ungodly if it legitimately angers others. And of course, the big question is, “How do you know whether their anger is legitimate or not?” Obviously some people can get angry over anything, and can manipulate with their anger, so this is not an obvious or an absolute point. But Joab is here taking offence on behalf of the people.

Think of it this way: if a previously convicted murderer and rapist had gotten out of prison on parole and then immediately raped and killed several women, that would be bad enough. You would be upset with the government for having paroled him. But if that murdering rapist was the son of the

government official who had paroled him, that would be worse. But let's say that that murdering rapist had been shot by the last woman that he attempted to rape. And let's say that the only thing the news media picked up on was the father's weeping and saying what a dear son he had lost. Most people would be extremely offended with this front and center highlighting of emotion, wouldn't they? Well, that's not too far off from the truth of what was happening here. Absalom had indeed engaged in murder three years before, and his dad had let him out of banishment on parole. Then after having raped several of his dad's concubines, this Absalom went on a rampage against David's followers, being willing to kill anyone who got in his way. And all that the people see is David's weeping and wailing over the loss of a son who was a horrendous criminal. They don't see him weeping over the poor people who have been raped and killed. That's ungodly, no matter how hurt David may have felt.

G. When your mourning disgraces those whom you love (v. 5b)

The seventh thing to evaluate is whether your mourning disgraces those whom you love. So again we have somewhat of an overlap between these points. Verse 5 goes on to say,

Today you have disgraced all your servants...

A child who gets a Christmas present that is nice, but weeps because he or she wanted something else, has disgraced the giver of the gift. I think you can see that weeping can disgrace others. When Samson's first wife wept over the fact that he wouldn't tell her the answer to the riddle, which she was planning to give to the Philistines, she disgraced her husband. In David's case, it was an unintended consequence, but Joab was exactly right that his mourning had shamed his loyal soldiers who had laid down their lives to protect him from Absalom. Shameful weeping.

H. When your mourning ignores your true blessings (v. 5c)

The eighth thing to evaluate is whether your mourning ignores your true blessings. Verse 5 continues:

"Today you have disgraced all your servants who today have saved your life, the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives and the lives of your concubines..."

When mourning ignores the true blessings that God has showered us with, it is ungodly. Over and over in the Old Testament God got angry at the Israelites for focusing on what they did *not* have and crying about it rather than focusing on the incredible blessings that God had given to them. And

David was not only ignoring the fact that God had saved his life, the lives of his sons and daughters, and the lives of his wives and concubines, but God had also helped his men to win a remarkable victory and spared him the discomfort of having to try his own son in court. And this means that David's weeping would come under the same judgment that Israel came under in the wilderness – that is, if he had not repented.

I. When your mourning disregards the feelings of those who love you (v. 6a)

The ninth thing that Joab brought to David's attention was that his mourning was completely disregarding the feelings of those who loved him. He was focused on his own feelings, and ignoring the feelings of others. In fact, to Joab it looked like David hated his friends and loved his enemies. He said, "in that you love your enemies and hate your friends." That was a bit of a misrepresentation, but to Joab it sure looked that way. And it is so easy for people who are focused on their own feelings to disregard the feelings of those who love them. In the book of Genesis, Jacob was utterly oblivious to the emotional train-wreck that he was making of his family by his selfish prolonged mourning.

J. When your mourning disregards your responsibilities in the chain of command (v. 6b)

Point J says that mourning can be wrong when it disregards our responsibilities to the chain of command. Joab said, "For you have declared today that you regard neither princes nor servants..." "It's just about you David. The whole world revolves around you. And you don't seem to give a blankity-blank about either the leaders or the servants, both of whom you are responsible to." That's in effect what Joab was saying.

K. When your mourning completely miscommunicates your heart values (v. 6c)

And then the last reason given by Joab shows that he had completely misunderstood David's heart values. He accused David saying, "for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well." David really did value all these people, *but his actions were saying otherwise* – that's the point. So mourning is ungodly when your mourning completely miscommunicates your heart values. Weeping is a form of communication, and if it miscommunicates, it is wrong.

Emotions can blind us to all of these eleven reasons that we have gone through and it is sometimes necessary for God to bring a messenger into our lives to correct us. And what you do with that messenger can make all the difference in the world as to whether you get better or get worse. Some people go on the attack against the messenger, and they don't care that their lives are spiraling out of control.

III. How to undo the damage caused by ungodly weeping

While you could perhaps wish for a much more sensitive person than Joab to give that wakeup call, if someone calls you to get mature and to control your emotions, treat the advice as welcome. Don't go on the defensive. David would have been absolutely ruined without Joab's advice in these verses. And I'll maybe look at Joab for a bit at the very end. But let me quickly look at six steps for undoing the damage that may have been caused by our ungodly weeping.

A. Listen to the message, don't just react to the messenger (v. 7)

The first step is to listen to the message and not just react to the messenger. It is true that Joab was threatening his own revolt in verse 7. He had ungodly attitudes. He was not sensitive and caring. In fact, he really didn't love David now at all. He later on ends up rebelling against David with another son.

But despite that, David listened up. He listened to the message that was true and he took heed to it. It doesn't matter how much of a curmudgeon your messenger may be, listen to God's voice through that messenger. Focus on the message, not just on the way it was brought. And it takes crucifying your pride to do that. One thing David had was humility, and he immediately responded appropriately. And some of us need to develop a little more tough skin to the Joabs around us.

B. Get up from your pity party (v. 7a)

Second, get up from your pity party. Verse 7:

Now therefore, arise...

When we are dejected, it is so easy to feel sorry for ourselves and want to sit in a puddle of tears indefinitely. We already started the sermon by affirming that it is not wrong to cry. But when weeping is ungodly, take action. While we do want to be sensitive to people's pains, you find plenty of examples of God telling people to stop engaging in a pity party. Elijah had plenty of reasons to stay in a pity party, but God told him to get up and

to get moving. He also provided emotional support, but the worse thing you can do for someone who wants to crawl in a hole and let the world go away is to let them crawl in a hole. You can't let them do that. If Joab had let David crawl into a hole, he would have ended up all alone in that city. Emotions tend to blind us to consequences, and it is important that we grab ourselves by the scruff of the neck and get up.

C. Go to those who need you (v. 7b)

Third, go to those who need you. In David's case it was his wives, his children, and his soldiers. In your case it might be your parents, your spouse, your children, or your work. Verse 7 goes on to say, "...go." We need to go and minister to others. The best therapy I have had when I have felt depressed and down is to start thinking about the needs of others. And the apostle Paul over and over calls us to minister to others when we are grieving. Why? People don't typically want to minister when they are down, but there is nothing like ministry to bring healing.

D. Speak emotional EQ into those you are responsible for (v. 7c)

Fourth, speak EQ (that's emotional quotient) into the lives of those for whom you are responsible. Joab said, "...go out and speak comfort to your servants." I have found comfort coming to my own heart when I have sought to be an encouragement to others. It's hard to bless others emotionally without being blessed yourself.

E. Begin to enter into normal routines (v. 8a)

Fifth, begin to enter into normal daily routines. Verse 8 says,

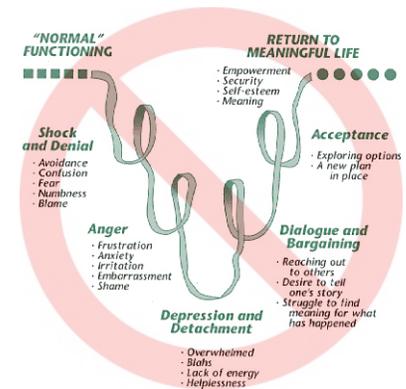
2Sam. 19:8 Then the king arose and sat in the gate. And they told all the people, saying, "There is the king, sitting in the gate." So all the people came before the king. For everyone of Israel had fled to his tent.

The first half of the verse speaks of sitting in the gate. This was where kings and judges normally sat, so it speaks of David getting back into his normal routines. There is something emotionally stabilizing about doing so.

F. Re-engaging normal relations (v. 8b)

And the second half of the verse speaks of re-engaging normal relationships with others. It's hard to do that when you feel like sobbing your heart out, and from the Psalms we know that David still did cry out his hurts to God. But he engaged in normalizing life to some degree.

Now, if you have studied psychology at all (as I have) you will probably notice that this is quite contrary to the current wisdom of the seven steps of grieving. Modern humanistic wisdom says that all seven steps are inevitable, healthy, and critically important to follow through in exactly that order. You will not find a shred of evidence that the Bible supports such prolonged pity parties. God's grace is far greater than that, and more times than not I have seen terrifically evil consequences that flow from following those seven stages of grief. Let me go ahead and list them for you. I took a diagram from one psychological book and put it in your outlines so you can follow along, but notice the "do not do" sign I placed over it.



Instruction from the religion of Psychology

The first stage that they give is shock and denial, and is said to last for weeks and even months. The second stage is incredible pain and guilt. The third stage is anger at God and anyone else that you can lash out at. Psychologists claim that you should unleash the bottled up emotion and unleash the anger. And in the process there are months (and sometimes of years) of people self-centeredly hurting others by unleashing their emotions.

The fourth stage is depression, reflection, and loneliness. During this stage you isolate yourself on purpose, focus on memories of the past, and have feelings of emptiness and despair. And psychologists tell you that you aren't supposed to get past this too quickly. They say that it is not healthy to skip any of these stages or to shorten them. And for sure, you are not supposed to allow pastors like me to talk you out of this period of grieving. And there are some people who stay in that fourth stage for years.

The fifth stage is an upward turn, the sixth stage you start getting responsible and work through the financial problems that the first stages have ignored.

The seventh stage is acceptance and hope. During this stage you learn to accept and deal with the reality of your situation. However, some psychology books will insist that you will never again be able to return to the carefree, untroubled YOU that existed before this tragedy. Perhaps eventually after years you will no longer have pain.

And some of you may have read about those seven steps of grieving from Christian books that have been influenced too much by psychology. They may even throw a Scripture in here and there from a Jacob or a David

or someone else who has grieved. But if those steps are indeed as essential as they say they are, then Scripture portrays God as a pretty poor counselor of Adam and Eve, of Noah, of Abraham, of Job, of Ezekiel, and of many others in the Bible. God wants us to get past the pain much more quickly and much more maturely than psychologists do. I have known pastors who have practically destroyed their families and destroyed their churches because they have insisted on taking several months for each stage of grieving. It's not Biblical. Nor is it mature. It is a self-focused way that shortchanges everyone around you. The seven stages of grieving prolong ungodly grieving and prolong the consequent hurt in the lives of others. Now, that's not to say that some people won't take longer than others to process their grieving. No two people are alike. But the typical seven-step approach to grieving mandates that everyone go through all seven stages and skip none. And you will not find Biblical evidence for that.

Conclusion – final words of caution to those who must advise emotional Davids:

1. While it is appropriate to show the damage caused by unrestrained emotion (v. 7)

But I want to give one final word of caution, this time to the would-be counselors who try to help a David who is going through inordinate weeping. Verse 7 doesn't show a very caring person, does it? Joab said,

2Sam. 19:7 Now therefore, arise, go out and speak comfort to your servants. For I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, not one will stay with you this night. And that will be worse for you than all the evil that has befallen you from your youth until now.”

2. Don't use threats or abusive language as Joab did (v. 7)

While it is appropriate to show the damage to others and to self that could be caused by unrestrained emotion, you don't want to be an insensitive curmudgeon like Joab. Joab's threat, while it did elicit action on David's part, was evidence that he really didn't care about David. David was his job security, since Absalom didn't want him. And so, Joab was really reacting out of his own ungodly emotions that sprang from other things that we have already looked.

If you are to be a counselor of those who weep, you need to first of all learn the principle of empathy commanded in Romans 12:15, which commands us to weep with those who weep. If we are to get people past

their pain rather than adding to their pain, we must approach them with caring hearts.

Second, we must have the humility that Galatians 6:1-5 calls for. It calls upon us to recognize that any one of us could do exactly the same thing that David did. And so Paul says in those verses that all of us should be humble, gentle, and willing to bear one another's burdens (verse 2) as we seek to help them begin properly bearing their own burden (verse 5).

And there are other things that the Peacemaker's book encourages us to put on before we can effectively help the emotionally distraught through their issues. We need to be prepared to realize that when someone is emotionally distraught, they are likely not going to reason as logically as they might normally. In fact, if you bring up some of these things, they might get mad at you. Who knows? Some of you might be mad at me for having preached this. So don't get frustrated with them. Love them as yourself, and you will likely avoid some of the mistakes that Joab made.

May God help all of us (whether we are Joabs or Davids) to sanctify our weeping to the Lord. And may He use the principles we have looked at this morning to help each other to grow in grace. Amen.