



Stage Seven

We are filled with anger and resentment

Gradually we move up out of the depression, and in so doing we may be more able to express some of the strong feelings of anger and resentment of which we may not even have been aware.

When we say anger and resentment are a part of “good grief,” we probably should qualify this to some extent. We do not wish to leave the impression that persons in grief ought to be encouraged to be angry or resentful. What we are saying is that these feelings are normal for every human and that even the most devout persons can

very well feel angry and resentful, even though we try very hard to sublimate these feelings. It would be most harmful to us if we could not admit to ourselves, to God, and to our friends that we, being human, need to confess our anger and resentfulness and ask for strength to rise above it.

Another way to put it is to say that resentment is not a healthy emotion and, if allowed to take over, it can be very, very harmful. Yet it is a normal part of the grief process. It is to be expected, it is to be wrestled with, and it can, by the grace of God, be overcome.

When we have something precious taken from us, we inevitably go through a stage when we are very critical of everything and everyone who was related to the loss. We spare no one in our systematic scrutiny of the event, attempting to understand exactly why this thing happened, and who is to blame. The human is always looking for someone to blame. If we have lost someone through death, we express hostility toward anyone who cared for the patient. We are hostile to the doctor because he operated, or we are hostile to him because he did not operate. No matter what he did, it was wrong. While we are in this mood, we look at everyone with a jaundiced eye.

If we talk to the minister and are encouraged to admit what we really think, one day we may say, "Why did God do this to me?" or "How can He be a God of love if He treats people like this?" With Thomas Carlyle we cynically say, "God sits in His heaven and does nothing."