

Published based on [A Time to Cry](#)

A Time to Cry

Ecclesiastes 3:

¹ To everything *there is* a season,

A time for every purpose under heaven...

⁴ A time to weep,

Weeping. Crying. Sobbing.

These words bring so many pictures to our minds and if we allow them, emotions to our hearts.

Should we weep? Is it appropriate to weep openly in front of others? Should a man refrain from crying? If he does cry, is he a weak man? Is it more acceptable for a woman to cry? Can we fully accept her tears as real expressions of her heart and not simply a result of her hormones or emotional makeup?

I think of King David, a man described as one who had God's heart, who was no stranger to weeping. David wept when he knew his relationship with Jonathan was about to be over because of Saul's hatred for David. He was about to lose his dearest friend. They both wept, but I love the fact that Scripture records that "David wept the most".

David and his army wept aloud until they had no strength left over their loss at Ziklag. Their wives and children had been taken captive. They wept.

Jacob and Esau wept when their relationship was restored.

Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, mourned, and refused to be comforted, and wept when he thought his son Joseph was dead.

Years later when Joseph and his brothers were reunited in Pharaoh's house, Joseph was "deeply moved" and wept. He wept over his brother Benjamin. He kissed all his brothers and he wept. The door was opened for restoration and he and his brothers began to talk.

Abraham wept over Sarah when she died.

Ruth, Naomi, and Orpah wept as they were about to leave each other and experience separation.

Jesus wept over Lazarus' death, even knowing that Lazarus would be raised from the dead, Jesus did not refrain from weeping. The literal words mean that he burst into tears.

Jesus wept bitterly over the city of Jerusalem because of his great love for the people and their rejection of that love.

Jesus was unafraid to weep. He didn't hesitate to fully experience the emotions of the movements of his heart. He knew that weeping was an expression of his heart beating with God's heart.

Peter wept bitterly when he faced his failure of Jesus.

Mary wept at Jesus' tomb.

Esther wept before the King as she interceded for her people.

The woman in Luke 7 wept as she kissed Jesus' feet.

There is a lot of weeping recorded in the Bible. Men and women. And most of it is about relationship. The loss of relationship. The damage in relationships. The hurt which is inevitably experienced as a result of men and women living in the realm of humanity.

God responds to our tears. We need to know that. One of the most beautiful descriptions of Jesus found in the Word is that he is a High Priest who can be touched – moved – by our pain, our weaknesses, our sicknesses, our woundedness.

He “gets” it. When Jesus came and lived as a man among us, experiencing every temptation, experiencing relational pain, experiencing humanity; he sometimes expressed that with tears. Often with what is described as “bitter” tears. He felt it. And that experience did not make him less of a man, as we might say. In truth, his ability to express his emotions was a valuable part of his being “all” man. Totally human. He never ran from pain. He experienced it and allowed it to move him to prayer, to action, to service, to love.

Some of you might ask what the purpose is in tears. God gave us tear ducts and perhaps we have established ground to stand on that says it is okay to cry, but why?

I did a little research on that very question and here are some of the answers I found:

Tears help you see.

Tears kill bacteria.

Tears remove toxins from your eyes.

Tears lower your stress.

Tears can elevate your mood.

Tears build community with other people.

Tears release feelings.

And then maybe we should ask the question, what happens if we don't cry when we need to? Is there a negative effect on the physical body, the spiritual life, the emotional makeup?

One day we are told that God will wipe away all our tears, but until that day we need to understand that there is a time to weep. We need to understand that our tears are heard and felt by God. Psalm 56:8 even tells us that he stores them in a bottle. They do not go unobserved or uncared for.

We need to know that when we weep over the pain we experience in our humanity, God tells us that we will experience the dividends of joy and comfort as our return (Psalm 126:6; Matt. 5:4). It seems that tears provide water for the ground of restoration.

Once again we find that God is able to embrace paradoxes and live within them. He can honor strength in weakness. As He holds both your strength and your weakness in His hands, He is whispering to your heart that He will be ever faithful to care about your tears. After all, there is a time to weep.

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