

How God Sees Your Tears

Two years ago, my family and I went to Branson, Mo., to visit my mom and stepfather. At the time, Ellie was 4, Kenny was 2 1/2, Lindsey was 1, and I was a couple months pregnant with Jessica. One day, we decided to take the kids to a beautiful lake not too far from where we were staying. We loaded up all the gear we would need—towels, sunscreen, plastic inflatable toys, water shoes—and headed for the lake.

It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining, and it was warm, but not too hot (especially considering that we are used to Texas summers). The scenery was gorgeous. The water was perfectly clear. Best of all, since it was fairly early in the morning, there was only one other family at this little beach.

We staked out a spot and headed for the water. The two younger kids wanted to stay where it was still quite shallow, so I sat in the water as they played around me. We even noticed about a million little fishes that swam by just a little further out. Wow! Fish! Right there! The kids were excited, though a little scared.

My husband took Ellie on one of the inflatables out into deeper water, where he could pull her along and she could float. They were having a grand time, and so were we, playing together. It was all brand new to the kids. I felt so relaxed, sitting in the water and feeling it lap around me, being just the right temperature, enjoying the beautiful scenery in the sunny quiet, and being with the people I loved most in all the world.

All too soon, it was time to go. The kids were getting tired. So we got out of the water. I made sure the little kids were following me. Lindsey ran on ahead as we made our way toward where we had left our towels and other stuff. Kenny trailed behind.

Actually, Kenny was what we call “dinking around”—that is, not following promptly. I encouraged him one more time to follow me, and then I turned away and began walking—slowly—hoping he would decide to follow.

Instead, after I had taken a few steps, he began to wail.

I turned back to see him rooted to the spot where he had been when I turned away from him. He was wailing, the tears flowing down his face.

It was a clear that Kenny felt abandoned and afraid.

Immediately, I turned back. I went to him, hugged him, and then scooped him up into my arms, holding him close and saying, “It’s OK, Kenny. Mommy’s here.”

I carried him back to the van that way, secure in my arms, comforting him with my touch, my voice and my nearness.

It wasn’t until later that I thought about how this reflects our relationship with God.

Sometimes it feels like God is walking away, doesn’t it?

Leaving us behind. Abandoning us.

Maybe we’ve gone through a season of hurt where it felt like instead of being close to us, God was more distant than ever before.

Maybe it felt like we were falling further behind, getting more and more desperate, until finally we were so far behind we could only see God disappearing in the distance.

What do we do during those times?

Sometimes we get angry. We get mad at God for not making us feel better. For letting us hurt. *Fine*, we think, *walk away. I’ll make it on my own, if that’s what I have to do.*

Sometimes, like Kenny did, we simply wail out our anguish, as God (we think) gets farther and farther away.

What should we do? What is the right response when we feel distant from God and we're afraid and we desperately need Him?

Do what Kenny did.

Cry out.

Wail out your anguish to God.

You see, if I, as a human mother, heard my son's anguish, was moved with compassion in my heart for him, and responded, how much more will God, the perfect parent, respond to our heart's cry?

Dear friend, it's true that sometimes God won't fix our situation. Sometimes, no matter how much we cry out, the pain and grief will not disappear. They are something to be worked through, not something to get rid of.

But though He won't always respond by fixing our situation, God will respond with Himself.

You see, God has promised. And He cannot and will not lie.

When you need Him, cry out. He's there. It may look and feel like He's far away, but He's as close as your heart and ready to respond when you need Him.

Is life going well for you right now? Call Him. He's there to rejoice with you.

Is life more painful than you ever imagined? Cry out to Him. He's there to grieve with you.

Crawl into his lap, lay your head on His chest, and feel His loving arms around you, holding you close.

Or if you can't even crawl, then just cry out.

He will come to you.

Psalm 55:17—Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress,
and he hears my voice

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