

GRANDPA FORGETS (PART 1)

READ: DEUTERONOMY 31:6; ISAIAH 44:21; LUKE 12:6-7

Hi, Grandpa!" exclaimed Maddie on her way to the checkout lane. "Is Grandma here too?" Maddie had come to the supermarket with her dad, who was buying cake mix and ice cream to celebrate her eighth birthday the next day. *What's wrong with Grandpa?* Maddie wondered. *He's staring at me as if he doesn't know me.* Maddie noticed that Grandpa had been acting strange lately. She remembered that he'd recently had some medical tests, and Mom had said he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. She knew that was what caused him to forget a lot of things, but she certainly didn't expect him to ever forget her!

Just then, Grandma appeared. "Robert, I told you to wait by the magazines," she scolded gently. Seeing Maddie, she gave her a quick hug. "Are you all ready for your birthday party?" she asked.

"Party?" asked Grandpa. "Who's having a party?"

"Maddie is. We talked about it at breakfast," said Grandma patiently. "Don't you remember?" She took his arm. "Let's go buy a birthday present for a certain little girl, shall we?" Her eyes twinkled as she smiled at Maddie.

That night, as Mom tucked her into bed, Maddie told her about Grandpa's strange behavior. Mom sighed. "Grandpa isn't well. The disease he has causes him to forget names, dates, places—and sometimes even people he loves."

Maddie swallowed hard. "But Grandpa and I are friends. He said so himself...and friends aren't supposed to forget each other."

"I know, honey," Mom said, giving Maddie a hug. "But friends do sometimes forget—especially if they have certain diseases."

"But I thought I would always be able to count on Grandpa," Maddie said, her eyes welling with tears.

"It's okay to feel sad that Grandpa is sick and his mind doesn't work the way it used to, but just remember that he can't help it when he forgets," said Mom. "Thank God for the good times you had together, and remember that Jesus is always there for both you and Grandpa. Jesus is a friend who sticks even closer than a grandfather, and He will never, ever forget us."

As Maddie snuggled into bed, she thanked Jesus that He would never leave her. And she prayed for her grandpa and asked God to help him remember that Jesus would always be with him too. ♥ CAROL J. BROOKMAN

JESUS NEVER FORGETS YOU

KEY VERSE: THERE IS A FRIEND WHO STICKS CLOSER THAN A BROTHER.
PROVERBS 18:24

Do you feel sad because someone seems to have forgotten you? Perhaps a friend moved away or a grandparent doesn't seem to remember you anymore. Stop for a moment and thank God that He never forgets His children. Jesus is a friend we can always count on. Talk to Him about the person you miss and ask Him to let them know He's always there for them too.

GRANDPA FORGETS (PART 2)

READ: PSALM 121:1-8; PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Pink and yellow balloons hung around the living room. Blue and lavender streamers twisted their way across the ceiling. A big sign reading “Happy 8th Birthday, Maddie” was hanging over the sofa. Many of Maddie’s aunts, uncles, and cousins were already there when Grandpa and Grandma arrived. Grandma immediately went around the room and gave everyone a hug. But Grandpa stood by the door, a lost, confused expression on his face. “Who are these people?” he asked.

“They’re your children and grandchildren, dear,” said Grandma.

Maddie noticed that Grandma sounded like she was talking to a small child. *I guess that’s because Grandpa has Alzheimer’s disease and forgets a lot of things*, she thought. Maddie walked over to her grandpa and slipped her hand into his. “I’m glad you came to my party.”

Grandpa looked down at Maddie, and a soft smile spread over his face. He patted her head clumsily, and for a moment she thought he was going to be like he’d always been. But then he said, “Is this your house, little girl?”

“Of course, Grandpa,” Maddie replied. “I’m Maddie—remember? You’ve been here lots of times.”

When Maddie and her dad were cleaning the kitchen after the party, Maddie closed the dishwasher door with a bang. “Why does Grandpa have to have Alzheimer’s?” she muttered. “I can’t think of a single reason why God would let it happen.”

“Neither can I,” said Dad, and Maddie’s eyes widened. “That surprises you, doesn’t it?” said Dad. Maddie nodded. “Grandpa’s Alzheimer’s disease is sad,” Dad said, “and just as he often can’t understand what’s happening around him, we sometimes can’t understand why such sad things happen in life. God doesn’t ask us to understand, but He promises to be with us in difficult times. Jesus understands our pain and sadness, and He’s there to strengthen and comfort us when we’re hurting. One day, when He comes again to get rid of sin, sickness, and death forever and make all things new, He will wipe all our tears away.”

“So I guess I just have to keep trusting Jesus even when I feel like crying,” said Maddie. “He’ll help me through it.”

“Yes,” said Dad. “And He will cry with you.” ♥ CAROL J. BROOKMAN

KEEP ON TRUSTING JESUS

KEY VERSE: MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU,
FOR MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS. 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

Do you wonder why God has allowed something difficult to happen in your life? He doesn’t always reveal why things happen, but He wants you to trust Him even when you go through difficult times. Jesus understands what you’re going through, and He wants to comfort you and help you. As you trust Him, you’ll find that His grace is more than enough. He will carry you through hard times until the day your tears are gone forever.

A MIRACULOUS CHANGE

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-44

What’s that?” asked Nevaeh when her brother showed her a pale green object dangling from a branch.

“Isn’t it cool?” said Dakota. “It’s called a chrysalis, and there’s a caterpillar in there. Or at least, he used to be a caterpillar.”

Nevaeh frowned. “I don’t like caterpillars.” As she went into the house, she saw her mother wiping tears from her eyes. “What’s the matter?” Nevaeh asked.

“I just got a phone call,” Mom said softly. “Grandma Carter died.”

“Oh no!” Nevaeh burst into tears. “I don’t want her to die!”

Mom took her into her arms. “I know, honey. This is a sad day, but we can find comfort in knowing Grandma is in heaven with Jesus.”

Nevaeh and Dakota had never known anyone who had died. They were a little nervous when they went with their parents to the funeral home and walked up to the casket where Grandma lay. “She looks like she’s asleep,” said Nevaeh softly.

The next day, the kids attended the funeral service with their parents, and after the service, they all went to the cemetery.

Nevaeh was quiet as they sat on the patio that afternoon. “I thought Grandma was in heaven, but they put her in the ground,” she said at last.

As she spoke, Dakota came over carrying the branch with the chrysalis dangling from it. Only a thin, clear film remained. “Look,” he said. “This is just an empty shell now.”

Mom nodded. “The caterpillar spun a chrysalis around itself. After a while, it burst open and a beautiful butterfly came out.”

“I love butterflies!” said Nevaeh. “They’re much more beautiful than caterpillars.”

“That’s a good example of what has happened to Grandma,” said Dad.

“Remember how sick she was? She has left her body, and now it’s like an empty chrysalis. It was buried in a grave today, and Grandma’s soul has gone to be with Jesus. But one day Jesus will resurrect Grandma’s body and make it like new. When that happens, Grandma will have a new body that will never get old or sick and will never die. Jesus will give us new bodies then too—bodies that will last forever!”

Just then a butterfly fluttered past Nevaeh’s nose. “Look!” she exclaimed. “A caterpillar in his new body.” ♥ BARBARA J. WESTBERG

CHRISTIANS WILL HAVE NEW BODIES

KEY VERSE: OUR BODIES ARE BURIED IN BROKENNESS,
BUT THEY WILL BE RAISED IN GLORY. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:43 (NLT)

Has someone you love died? The Bible teaches that those who trust in Jesus go to be with Him when they die. Though their bodies are buried in a grave, they’re not in them anymore. One day, when Jesus resurrects all Christians, He will give us wonderful new bodies—bodies much better than the old ones. Just like caterpillars get new bodies as butterflies, Jesus promises to raise Christians’ bodies and make them new so they last forever.

NIAGARA FALLS

READ: ISAIAH 54:10; JEREMIAH 31:3; EPHESIANS 2:4-8; 3:14-19

“Is your water bottle full?” asked Dad, adding two sandwiches to his backpack.

“No, it’s empty again,” answered Tyson. He turned on the tap and filled his container stamped with a maple leaf to mark his first visit to Canada. Handing it to his dad, he exclaimed, “I can’t wait to see Niagara Falls!”

As they exited the hotel, Tyson asked, “We’re going to the biggest waterfall, right?”

“Yes, Horseshoe Falls. It’s only a short walk so we should get a good spot to see it before our picnic.”

Tyson took a few steps on his tiptoes. “I can’t see anything yet, but I hear it!” They quickened their pace as the sound of gushing water grew louder.

“I see it!” Tyson exclaimed. He crossed the street with his dad toward the majestic U-shaped waterfall. They found an empty space along the concrete barrier crested with a black metal handrail. Tyson wrapped his fingers around it for a closer look. “Awesome!” He marveled at the white sheets of tumbling water. They crashed into the rocks below with such force that they sprayed him and his dad with a gentle mist.

Dad reached for his camera. He spent a few minutes snapping photos.

“I’m thirsty,” announced Tyson. Dad passed him his water bottle. After several sips, Tyson handed it back, saying, “That’s enough. I don’t want to run out of water for our picnic.” He returned to the view. “Dad, what about Niagara Falls? Won’t it run out?”

“No. The source is always sending more,” replied Dad, stashing his camera. “You know something else that never runs out? God’s love for us. The Bible describes God’s love as eternal.”

“I know what that means!” said Tyson. “God loves us now, and He always will.”

“Exactly. God offers us a never-ending supply of love so it’s always available.”

Watching the spilling water, Tyson added, “It’s sort of like how Niagara Falls is never-ending because the water keeps flowing without stopping.”

Dad nodded. “That’s a good way to say it. God loves us without stopping. The love Jesus pours into our lives each day will never stop flowing. It lasts forever.” ♥

ELENA DEE



GOD'S LOVE IS ETERNAL

KEY VERSE: “FOR THE MOUNTAINS MAY MOVE AND THE HILLS DISAPPEAR, BUT EVEN THEN MY FAITHFUL LOVE FOR YOU WILL REMAIN...” SAYS THE LORD, WHO HAS MERCY ON YOU. ISAIAH 54:10 (NLT)

Do you ever stop and think about how much God loves you? Can you list all the blessings in your life? Everything that’s good comes from God and shows His great love for you! Jesus died for your sins so you could be saved, and He promises to love you eternally—now and always. As you go through your day, see if you can identify all the ways God shows you His love.

BITTER MEDICINE

READ: HEBREWS 12:5-7

“Oh, Dad!” said Owen. “I don’t see why I have to be grounded! Can’t I just do some extra chores or something?”

“I’m sorry, Owen,” said Dad. “But I think being grounded this time is the best way to help you remember to obey.” He patted Owen’s shoulder. “I hope you know that I don’t enjoy disciplining you. I do it because I love you.”

“Yeah, right,” Owen mumbled as Dad left.

The following week, Owen came down with a cold and a bad cough. He watched warily as his dad poured a spoonful of medicine for him to take, then gulped it down. “Ugh, it tastes awful! I don’t want any more of that!” But during the night, Owen woke up, coughing again. His throat hurt, and he was actually glad when Dad came in with the medicine.

The next morning, Owen felt better. “Last week I was grounded, and this week I was sick. I felt like I’d never get to have fun again. But that medicine really helped. It sure doesn’t taste good though!”

“I know,” said Dad, “and I know you didn’t like the punishment you received for disobeying, but discipline is a lot like bitter medicine—it’s meant to make us better.”

“I guess so,” Owen replied.

“I know being disciplined isn’t fun, but it’s a sign of love,” Dad said. “After all, the Bible says God disciplines us as His children, and He loves us more than anyone! He loves us so much that Jesus took the punishment for our sins Himself when He died on the cross. When we trust in Him as our Savior and become part of God’s family, He uses discipline to teach us and help us grow.”

“So does that mean you get disciplined sometimes too?” asked Owen.

Dad laughed. “Yes, it does. There have been times in my life when God has allowed me to suffer consequences for my sinful actions. When He has, it helped me realize that I had done that wrong thing because I was looking to the world or to myself for what I thought I needed instead of God. Though it wasn’t fun, I was thankful He loved me enough to teach me that lesson.”

Owen sighed as Dad poured him more medicine. “Then I guess I should be thankful for discipline too!” ♥ SHERRY L. KUYT

BE THANKFUL FOR DISCIPLINE

KEY VERSE: THE LORD DISCIPLINES THE ONE HE LOVES, JUST AS A FATHER DISCIPLINES THE SON IN WHOM HE DELIGHTS. PROVERBS 3:12 (CSB)

Do you enjoy being disciplined? No one does! But the correction you receive from your parents helps you grow into a mature, responsible adult. Disciplining a child for bad behavior is hard for a parent, but it shows their love. God also disciplines His children out of love so we’ll learn to trust and obey Him. So don’t resent discipline. Instead, be thankful for the loving correction you receive.