



WEEKLY
CHRISTIAN
FOCUS

A Heartbreaking Journey through Loss and Reflection

November 6, 2024

What does it feel like to lose a daughter to depression?

What does it feel like to get that call and hear she's gone? I remember the moment I received the news—just before exiting the bullet train station parking lot. All the strength drained from me. I couldn't drive, couldn't even go through the motions. I was in shock, just looking for a place to stop.

I parked, and the freezing rain sent a shiver down my spine; the car heater had not even kicked in yet. A knock on the window brought me back to reality. "You can't park here. You have to move on," the attendant said. Dazed, I inserted the parking ticket, fumbling for the right change. I slowly pulled out of the lot, the heater finally beginning to melt the sleet on the windshield. Soon I was on the main road, but I couldn't concentrate, so I veered onto side streets, trying to gather my thoughts.

After what felt like an eternity, I arrived home. The cold, empty house greeted me, and I felt sorrow engulf me like

waves from a stormy sea. It felt as though my soul was being pulled from me, as if my daughter were drawing me beyond the veil. It was a feeling no words could describe, a deep emptiness—a void with no end.

Thoughts spun through my mind: *How could this be happening?* I blamed myself, agonizing over every missed opportunity, every word I didn't say. *Why was I not more sensitive to her needs? Why didn't I just hold her and tell her that everything would be okay?*

I felt like I was on the edge of a vortex, spiraling down into hopelessness and despair.

Paula was my first daughter. She had a special place in my heart. We were a team, and she was our right hand, helping us raise many of her siblings. In recent years we had drifted apart when she moved to another country and also as she could not find in her heart to forgive our failures as parents and held unto bitterness.

The next morning, November 7th, I couldn't find my bearings. In desperation, I

cried out to God for comfort. I remembered a Bible verse about "wiping away our tears." Frantically searching, I found it in Revelation 21:4: *"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."* This verse became my lifeline, something I could cling to for dear life.

The struggle continues, but God has given me the strength to see it through His eyes. I find myself able to hold back the despair that, like a tsunami, seeks to crush me. I am lost at sea, holding on for dear life—holding on to His promises.

Promises that P. and I will meet again. "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God." Revelations 21:3

As the days pass, new thoughts and reflections come into sharper focus. I am beginning to truly understand that each

of our loved ones is a precious, unique individual—irreplaceable in every way. They are an integral part of our lives, and no one else can ever fill the space they leave behind. The value of a single soul surpasses anything this world can offer; nothing compares to it.

This realization has led me to question myself: What have I been spending my time on? How many fleeting interests, passing trends, or self-centered distractions have stolen moments that could have been spent with those who truly matter?

Update April 9, 2025

It's been just over five months since that moment—and with time, clarity has come.

So what have I learned or convicted me about my daughter passing away at 43?

Often we hear of difficult situations or someone asking for prayer and we may respond by saying "I will pray for you". This is important, but it's not the *end* of our responsibility. Sometimes, we hand things over to God... And He hands them right back to *us*.

Because we are His hands. His

feet. His voice of comfort. His presence in someone's storm.

So the real question is: **How far are you willing to go to be the answer to someone else's prayer?**

Don't just offer words—offer *yourself*. Let God use you. **Be the vessel.**

Erwin Ortiz

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Gone From My Sight

I am standing upon the seashore. A ship, at my side, spreads her white sails to the moving breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength. I stand and watch her until, at length, she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.

Then, someone at my side says, "There, she is gone."

Gone where?

Gone from my sight. That is all. She is just as large in mast, hull and spar as she was when she left my side. And, she is just as able to bear her load of living freight to her destined port.

Her diminished size is in me -- not in her.

And, just at the moment when someone says, "There, she is gone," there are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout, "Here she comes!"

And that is dying...