

# Pandemic Emotions Series

## Special Encouragement from the Field

As told to Dr. Lois A. Dodds  
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November 18, 2020

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## Introduction by Dr. Lois Dodds

We are all having our ups and downs since this pandemic began--many huge and some small. I am deeply touched by how one couple, precious friends on a Pacific Island, is weathering their unique pandemic stresses. I am sharing their story with permission, though I am changing their names. The wife is a midwife, the husband a physician. Their allocation is a difficult one, as you can see in their story. Even though there is such sadness, you will find this uplifting, as we can emulate their confidence in the Lord. They continue to share their lives, pouring them out, even using their personal finances to feed villagers in their area. May you be touched as well as uplifted as we share this account from them:

"Hello beautiful friends,

"I'm sending little snapshots of our life whenever I can, to share the gritty reality, to show how near to us our God really is, and to hopefully encourage your hearts in the big and small moments. I am praying blessings over each of you this week.

"One of my favorite songs of the moment has a line that says,  
"The One who sung the stars into the sky is the One who knows every day of my life. The One who wears the heavens like a robe, is the One who chose to make me His home. You know my mountains high; you know my valleys low, everywhere that's in-between, You will go."

"I've been singing it this week on repeat, sometimes with tears.  
There are mountains high and valleys low, sometimes shifting from moment to moment.  
Two years ago, we met a little village girl names Karen. She was brought to the local health center with high fever and seizures. She was unresponsive and hanging onto life by a thread. She was transferred to the nearest hospital over an hour away, and we, along with many others, prayed, and prayed, and prayed for her to live.  
She was diagnosed with meningitis, and miraculously survived.  
We worshiped.

"We began to walk beside her family, along with other missionaries, helping them to feed their children and to know how to care for them, to be able to discern when to come get help.  
Karen's father came to us the next time she was sick, even when the hospital dismissed them and sent them the long seven hour walk back to their village.  
She was critically ill, but she survived.  
We worshiped.

"So many times we have sat with Karen and her loving father, as she vomited worms out of her belly, while she was seizing and unresponsive. We've watched her recover, run and jump, smile and laugh, play tricks on her siblings, bounce back. We sat back and marveled...  
and we worshipped.

"Several days ago my husband walked back to the village, a 45-minute drive and several hour hike through jungle and across rivers. He was going to meet another village friend, to deliver food and to bring coffee saplings to transplant in another village as a new livelihood project.

When he arrived, he was told that just a few hours before, Karen had died.  
She is gone.

"Months ago, Karen's family had moved their hut even further up into the mountains, like so many other families, out of fear of Corona virus. One week ago, Karen began to have debilitating headaches, and her family chose to not come down the mountain or go to the hospital. The fear of Covid-19 paralyzed them and decided for them.

When she began to become incoherent and unresponsive, they chose to stay.  
And Karen died.

"My beloved sat that morning with Karen's dad, who we've rarely seen without his daughter on his lap. He is a kind and gentle man, his big calloused hands sitting still and useless in his lap. His head hung down. He had buried his daughter an hour before, just hours after she breathed her last breath.

"There were no "You should have's...." only tears as two fathers sat together and grieved. There are no words that help when a child has died.

There is presence. There is shared grief. There are groans that only the Holy Spirit can translate, and He responds with the comfort of the Father.

We're grieving with these parents, and the ache and the weight are fathomless.

We've walked through more valleys of death that we can count, the vast majority of them being deaths of children.

The cycles of poverty, oppression, ignorance, and injustice in the developing world make it an uphill battle for children to survive to adulthood.

"Through many of these deaths I've had to grapple and wrestle, and ultimately choose if I still believe God is good and merciful. That He is who He says He is.

My faith has gone from shallow, mountain-top, glittering in the sunlight, to rugged, tears-on-my-tongue, blood-streaked, tested.

There is a limp in my walk from the wrestling matches I have had with God. My roots are growing deeper in the valleys than they did on the mountain-top and I have far to go.

"I've seen Him raise the dead, heal the near-dead, do the impossible. And then sometimes He does not.

I've sat with dead children on my lap, screaming from my heart, barely able to whisper, 'Why?! How is this You being good?'

So often I hear Him say, 'You do not see now, you do not understand yet. I am good. Hold onto Me... Come deeper. Come closer.'

Do not back away.

"Come closer.

"When I do not understand, I come closer. When I am filled with grief, anger, ragged and bleeding, I come closer.

When I wade through death and injustice that makes me want to look away and stop feeling, I catch glimpses of His heart and see that His pain and grief, His love over His children eclipses mine billions of times over.

“I’m crying because He cried first. I’m hating brokenness and injustice because He hated it first. I’m loving beautiful people because He loved them first. He loved me first. Instead of “Why?” I’ve begun to ask, “Show me your heart.” He wants to meet with us in the middle of the pain.

"When I come closer, I am met by the heart of a Father who is Love unimaginable. A Love that is more fathomless than the deepest pain. I am feeling only a shred of what He feels; The grief, the pain, the joy, the love. I want my heart to remain soft and compassionate, and not grow hard. I want to be strong but not tough. I want to feel deeply but not fall apart. We want to keep going and not become shells of burned-out workers. The only way is to hold onto Jesus as our anchor, to run hard into His heart and listen to His voice, to let Him shoulder the weight of every heartache we cannot carry alone. We will keep loving deeply, keep sitting in the dirt with the broken and crying as we share in their pain, keep on rejoicing with those who are healed, keep on hoping and fighting for life..... because He did first, He still does, and He won't stop. He's really, really good. Today we grieve, and still we worship.”

[MOUNTAIN HIGH](#)