



HELP, I'M GRIEVING

Grief is one of the most profound and painful emotions a person can face, whether from the loss of a loved one, the breakdown of a relationship, or a significant life change such as job loss or relocation. The ache can feel overwhelming, as though the weight of sorrow will crush the soul. It is natural to wonder how a loving God could allow such pain. Grief can be unpredictable, bringing denial, anger, or numbness. Yet, understanding that grief is a normal part of the human experience provides a foundation for healing and hope.

HOW GRIEF FEELS

Grief often feels chaotic and all consuming. A person may experience fear, dread, or a sense of unreality. Some feel empty or numb, as though in shock. Physical symptoms such as trembling, nausea, difficulty breathing, muscle weakness, loss of appetite, or insomnia are also common. Anger may surface, even if it feels unfocused, and many wrestle with guilt, asking what could have been done differently to prevent the loss.

Scripture reminds believers that grief is part of the human condition, and that God is near in the pain. "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18). It is in these moments of deep sorrow that God's sustaining grace begins to bring healing. Over time, stability returns, even though life may look and feel different.

WHY GRIEF HURTS

Grief hurts because it reflects the depth of the love and connection that has been lost. God has given people the capacity for emotional pain as a way to alert them when something is wrong. Just as physical pain protects a broken bone by causing a person to limp, the emotional limp of grief

reminds the heart of the value of what has been lost. The more intimate the relationship, the greater the pain.

This pain is not wasted. Jesus Himself felt the sting of loss and wept at the death of Lazarus, even knowing He would raise Lazarus from the dead. "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). Grief reflects the heart of Christ, who mourns the brokenness of this world alongside His people.

WHAT GRIEF MEANS

Grief reminds people that they were not created for loss, separation, or death. These were never part of God's original design. Sin brought death into the world, as God warned Adam and Eve: "For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17b). Since that time, humanity has lived with the consequences of sin and the brokenness of creation.

Grief testifies to the longing within the soul for restoration and wholeness. Paul wrote, "For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now" (Romans 8:22). When people grieve, they echo that groaning, yearning for the day when God will make all things right.

HOW GRIEF HEALS

Though painful, grief is a pathway to healing. It brings people face to face with eternal questions, leading them to deeper dependence on God. Loss often draws the heart closer to Him as comfort and hope are sought. The promise of Scripture is that healing and restoration will come: "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Grief also refines the heart by teaching trust in God's goodness even in pain. As Paul wrote, "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Corinthians 4:17). Though the process is difficult, grief deepens faith and reminds believers that their ultimate hope is in Christ.

THE CYCLE OF GRIEF

The Holy Spirit often works gently in the midst of grief, guarding the heart in the immediate aftermath so the weight of sorrow does not overwhelm all at once. Over time, He allows emotions to surface gradually, helping a person process grief in ways that can be endured. This slow unfolding allows grief to come in waves, touching different areas of life at different times.

These emotions may come and go unpredictably, sometimes overwhelming and other times leaving a sense of numbness, yet this is part of His

healing work. Eventually, the Spirit fills the heart with hope, not by removing the pain or making the loss acceptable, but by teaching how to live within a new reality. “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Romans 15:13).

Grief often follows a cycle, though not always in a linear way. A person may revisit certain stages or experience them in a different order, but understanding the following phases can provide clarity during a difficult time.

Denial: This stage often begins with shock and disbelief. A person may struggle to accept the loss, which serves as a protection against overwhelming pain. Trusting God’s promises in this moment provides stability even when reality feels unbearable. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1).

Anger: There may be anger toward God, others, or even oneself. This is part of processing the injustice of loss. Bringing that anger honestly before God allows space for healing. “Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent” (Psalm 4:4).

Bargaining: A person may wish to undo the loss or promise change in exchange for relief. Remembering that God’s plans are perfect, even when they are not understood, brings perspective. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD” (Isaiah 55:8).

Depression: Deep sadness often settles in as the reality of loss becomes clear. It is important to allow this grief while trusting that God’s comfort remains near. “The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down” (Psalm 145:14).

Acceptance: With time, a measure of peace may come, even though the pain remains. This does not mean forgetting the loss but learning to move forward with hope. “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning” (Psalm 30:5b).

Grief is not about getting over a loss but about allowing God to lead a person through it. His presence transforms even the darkest valleys. “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4).

CHILDREN AND GRIEF

Children experience grief differently, often without the ability to fully process or express their emotions. Caregivers serve as God’s provision to bring comfort and stability during these moments. The role is not to fully explain why loss happens, but to walk alongside children with patience, presence, and grace.

Scripture calls believers to care for those who are vulnerable. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Creating a safe space for children to express their feelings and reminding them of God's unchanging love helps anchor their hearts. "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven'" (Matthew 19:14).

Grief, though painful, is not without purpose. God walks with His people through this journey, bringing healing and hope in His time. His faithfulness carries them through.

GOING FURTHER: RESOURCES

A Grief Observed by C.S. Lewis

When God and Grief Meet by Lynn Eib

Good Grief by Granger E. Westberg

The One Year Book of Hope by Nancy Guthrie

Grieving with Hope by Samuel J. Hodges IV and Kathy Leonard

Through a Season of Grief by Bill Dunn and Kathy Leonard



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