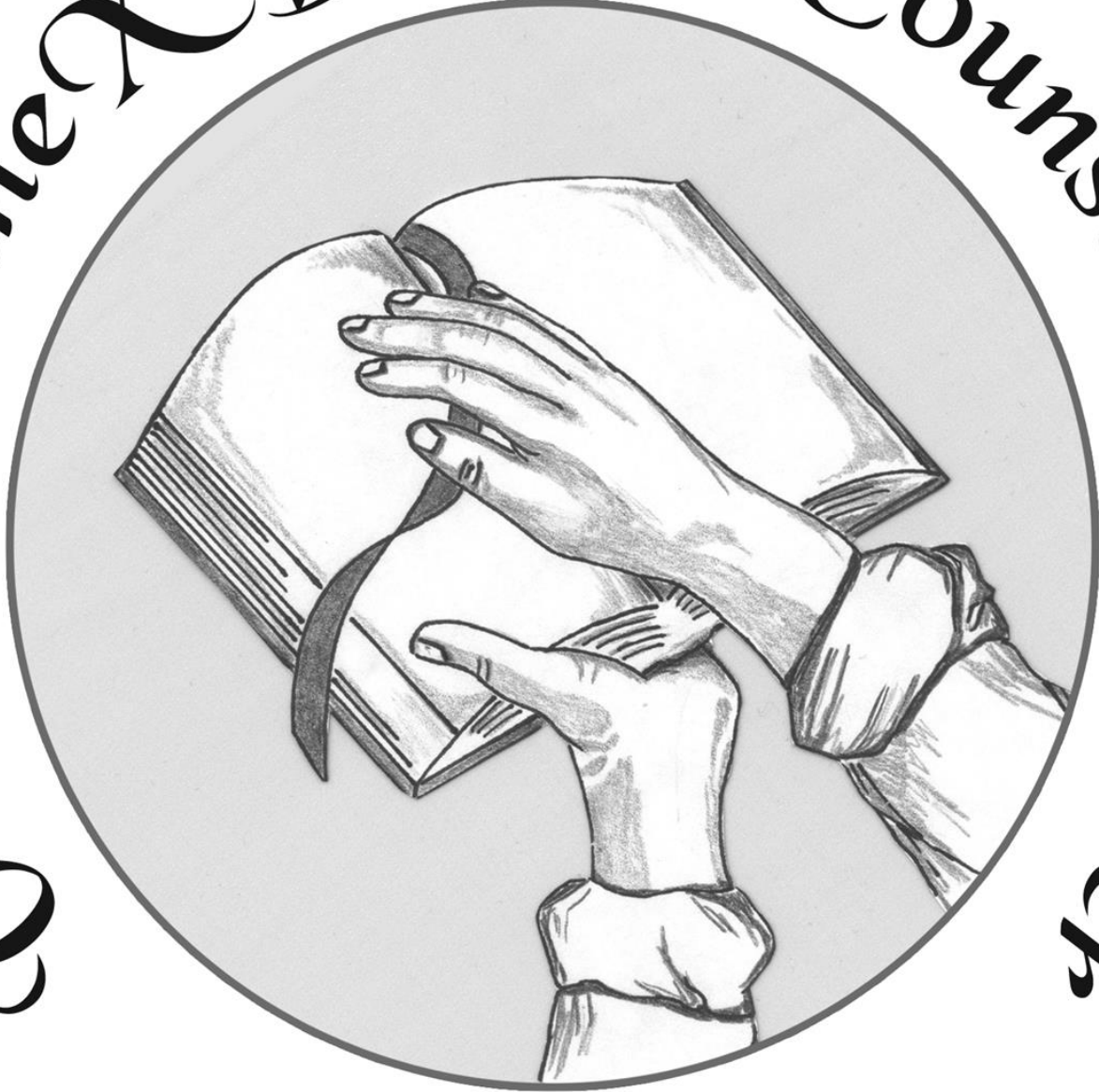


Valley Connect Biblical Counseling Center



Journey Through Grief

Grief: Response to loss or hardship affecting our thinking, actions and feelings.

- Impacts us mentally, physically and emotionally.

Scripture also identifies grief as a result of being confronted with our sin and grief over the sinful condition of the world.

- Genesis 6:6 God grieved over the condition of the world before the flood
- 1 Samuel 15:15 Samuel grieved over Saul after God declared His judgment on Saul.
- Mark 3:5 Jesus grieved at the hardness of the Pharisees' heart
- 2 Corinthians 7:9-10 Grief over our sin that brings to repentance.

This study will focus on grief from loss or hardship which can be:

- Potential i.e. general announcement of layoffs
- Perceived i.e. Life is not as expected (begins as disappointment or worry and can reach the level of grief)
- Realized i.e. death of a loved one, loss of job, serious or terminal medical diagnosis.

Grief is something we help people journey through,
not something you help people get over.

- ⁴ 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 (ESV)

Grief is as unique as the person and the occasion of the grief.

- What about the “stages of grief”.
 - Denial and Isolation
 - Anger
 - Bargaining
 - Depression
 - Acceptance

Grief is as unique as the person and the occasion of the grief.

- What about the “stages of grief”.
 - Developed by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross from observations of patients who had received a diagnosis of terminal illness.
 - They are descriptive not prescriptive i.e. this is neither something a counselor should feel compelled to lead their counselee through nor to make sure they are experiencing.

Grief is as unique as the person and the occasion of the grief.

- David and the death of Saul and Jonathan 2 Samuel 1:11-27
 - Jonathan is described in scripture as the closest of friends. V 26
 - Public display of distress and grief. Tore his clothes, mourned, wept, fasted.
 - Composed a lamentation/tribute to Saul and Jonathan
 - Ordered the lamentation/tribute to be taught to the people of Judah and preserved in the Book of Jashar (Book of the Upright)

Grief is as unique as the person and the occasion of the grief.

- David and the death of the first child with Bathsheba 2
Samuel 12: 13-25
 - Example of grief as a direct result of personal sin vs. 13-14
 - Responded to the potential loss with extended isolation, fasting and prayer. vs. 15-17
 - Responded to the realized loss with acceptance and assurance based on the fact the child was safe in God's hands and immediate return to normal activity. vs. 18-23
 - Comforted Bathsheba his wife and the grieving mother of the child. v. 24

Grief is as unique as the person and the occasion of the grief.

- David and the death Absalom 2 Samuel 18:31-19:1-8
 - David is so completely overcome with grief that he withdrew and ceaselessly cried out his anguish for his son. 2 Samuel 18:33; 19:4
 - David allowed his grief to cloud his judgment and as a result the men who had risked their lives for him came back into the city as those who had been defeated. 19:1-4
 - At the rebuke of Joab David composed himself and went to the gate to show his support for fighting forces. 19:5-8

The goal of the biblical counselor is to help people maintain a biblical orientation as they journey through grief or restore them to a biblical orientation to life if they have reacted to the loss or hardship in unbiblical ways.

It is not for us to prescribe how a person progresses on this journey but to help them keep a biblical orientation.

Counseling with one in the throes of grief is a time to be quick to hear and slow to speak.

- Don't feel that you need to immediately correct rash or outrageous statements, especially in the face of a fresh and tragic loss.
- This is a time when it is very important not to interrupt a period of silence.
- Listen for themes rather than isolated statements.

God uses the occasions that bring about grief as a part of the process of discipleship.

- ² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:2-4 (ESV)

- See also Romans 8:28-29

Counseling people who are grieving is one of those occasions when we can provide comfort but always be discerning that it is not at the expense what God wants to form in their lives.

- 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Always keep in mind the reality that the devil will attempt to use the occasions of grief to destroy.

- ¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.
¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:10-12 (ESV)

Always keep in mind the reality that the devil will attempt to use the occasions of grief to destroy.

- ⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.
1 Peter 5:8-9 (ESV)

Grief seeks expression and we have the opportunity to help one keep that expression under the lordship of Christ.

- Unhealthy or forbidden expressions of grief.
 - Self harm Deuteronomy 14:1; 2 Samuel 12:18
 - Shirking responsibilities 2 Samuel 19:5-6
 - Prolonged isolation Mark 5:5; Hebrews 10:25

Grief seeks expression and we have the opportunity to help one keep or bring that expression under the lordship of Christ.

- Healthy or acceptable expression of grief
 - Defined periods of mourning Genesis 50:1-5; Deuteronomy 34:5-8
 - Weeping 2 Kings 20:3; Nehemiah 1:4; John 11:35
 - Fasting (that does not rise to the level of self harm). 2 Samuel 1:12; 2 Samuel 12:16
 - Prayer Psalm 18:6; 22:24; 107:28-32; 1 Peter 5-7
 - A written or spoken tribute to one who has died. 2 Samuel 1:17-27
 - Relating remembrance and experiences of the loss to others. Luke 24:13-27