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Understanding the Grieving Process

Valerie Paige

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My Journey

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Coping with Grief

Psalm 34:18 reminds us: “*The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*”

That verse does not say God rushes us past grief. It says God **draws near**.

We live in a culture that's uncomfortable with grief. We rush it. We minimize it. We expect people to “be strong,” “move on,” or “get back to normal.”

But grief doesn't work on a schedule—and there is no normal to go back to. There's only learning how to carry what's changed.

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Coping with Grief

There's a common myth about the "5 Stages of Grief." While that model can be helpful, grief doesn't move in neat steps. It's more like waves. Some days are manageable. Others knock the wind out of you—sometimes years later, triggered by a song, a smell, or a random thought, Friday date nights, places you frequented...

That doesn't mean you're doing grief wrong.
It means you're human.

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What Grief Really Is...

Grief can look like:

- Exhaustion you can't explain
- Anger that surprises you
- Brain fog, forgetfulness, trouble concentrating
- Guilt, numbness, or even relief
- Physical symptoms—headaches, tight chest, stomach issues

Grief is the body, mind, and heart responding to **loss**.

And here's something important:

Grief is not a sign of weakness.

It's a sign that you loved, hoped, invested, and cared.

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Grief is Biblical

Sometimes we think grief means our faith is weak. Scripture tells a very different story:

Abraham grieved Sarah	Genesis 23
David mourned deeply	2 Samuel 12:16 - 19
Job cried out in anguish	Job 7:11 - 21
Mary wept at the tomb	John 20:11
And Jesus wept	John 11:35

Jesus knew Lazarus would rise—yet He still cried.
Why? Because grief is love responding to loss.

Grief is evidence of love—and love comes from God

1 John 4:7-8 Dear Friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love"

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What Grief is NOT

- Grief is **not** just sadness...
- Grief is **not** a lack of faith
- Grief is **not** something to "get over."
- It's **not** moving from one stage to the **next**... as in the 5 Stages of Grief
- And it's **not** the same for everyone.

Comparing grief—your own or someone else's—can be deeply harmful.
There is no hierarchy of pain; no **one's** pain is greater or above another's

- Someone maybe grieving a spouse.
- Someone maybe grieving a child.
- Someone grieving a parent, a miscarriage, a divorce, a diagnosis, a career, or a version of themselves they lost.

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What Grief is NOT (cont.)

Different losses. Same truth: pain is pain.

The Bible is full of lament—honest prayers spoken from pain.

Psalm 13 begins: "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?"

That's not polished faith... poised and controlled

That's raw faith.

God does not ask us to pretend. He invites us to bring our sorrow, confusion, anger, and questions to Him.

Faith is not denying grief.

Faith is **bringing grief into God's presence.**

Matthew 11:28 Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

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Hope Doesn't Cancel Grief

As believers, we hold onto hope—but hope does not erase pain.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 says: "We do not grieve as those who have no hope."

Notice it does **not** say we do not grieve. It says we grieve **with** hope.

Hope and sorrow can exist together.

Tears and trust can share the same heart.

Resurrection hope does not silence mourning—it **sustains** it.

HOPE:

Optimistic attitude of mind based on an expectation of positive outcomes.

If we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." It's future, that's the distinctive mark of hope: it is always future.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

FAITH: Hebrews 11:1

It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead.

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God Walks with Us in Grief

Isaiah 43:2 says: *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you."*

Not *if* you pass through. *When* God doesn't promise a life without loss—but He promises His presence in it.

Often, God comforts us:

- Through scripture, prayer, our community, even through quiet strength we didn't know we had

Sometimes healing comes quickly.

Sometimes it comes slowly.

And sometimes it comes in ways we don't recognize until later.

But God does not abandon the grieving.

Psalm 34:18 *The Lord is near the broken-hearted; He saves those crushed in spirit*

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Grief Changes Over Time

One of the most compassionate ways to think about grief is this:

The loss doesn't shrink—but **our lives grow around it**.

Early grief can feel all-consuming. But over time, the intensity may soften, but the **love and the loss remain connected**. Sometimes people worry that feeling better means forgetting. It doesn't.

Healing doesn't mean letting go.

It means learning how to carry the memory without being crushed by it.

And sometimes grief resurfaces—not because you're failing, but because something mattered.

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Supporting Someone Who is Grieving

Many people want to help but don't know what to say. Here's what truly helps:

- "I'm so sorry. I'm here."
- "I don't have the right words, but I care."
- "Would you like to talk about them or it?"

What to do:

- Show up consistently, not just at the beginning
- Be patient with mood changes
- Offer specific help: meals, errands, rides, check-ins
- Ask what support looks like to them *and at different stages*

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Supporting Someone Who is Grieving (cont'd)

What to avoid:

- "Everything happens for a reason."
- "They're in a better place."
- "At least..." (anything).
- "That probably wasn't what you needed"
- "There's something better around the corner"

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Being the Body of Christ to those Grieving

Grief is not limited to the loss of a loved one through death. While that is often the most recognized form, grief can also emerge from many other losses, including:

When a person comes in for prayer and appears to be dealing with issues of grief, one of the first things that we need to do is identify the loss that the recipient has suffered.

Losses are inevitable and a natural part of life – we have all suffered losses.

- A divorce
- loss of a job
- loss of a relationship
- loss of finances
- loss of a home
- loss of one's health
- loss of memory
- loss of a pet
- any kind of trauma
- emotional loss
- abortions
- lost childhood or innocence, etc.

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Being the Body of Christ to those Grieving

So how do we pray for someone who is grieving?

1. Remind them that grief is natural, a God-given way to process loss
2. Identify the loss associated with their grief
3. Listen to their story
4. Make sure they know they are in a safe place to express feelings, fears, tears.
 - Tears of grief release toxins from the body.
5. Encourage them to be honest and to identify their emotions and their responses:
 - I numb myself with alcohol/drugs
 - I keep myself busy – I work, work, work
 - I get depressed and withdraw
 - I shop, I eat, I exercise

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Being the Body of Christ to those Grieving

6. Look for emotions that may be buried; ask Holy Spirit to reveal any that need to be expressed, processed, and discussed. Healing always begins with emotional honesty.
 - *Repressed grief may cause lung or heart issues.*
7. Invite Holy Spirit – the Great Comforter – in to offer comfort to the recipient
8. Pray for inner healing. Allow the recipient time with Jesus.
9. Talk about closure – were they able to get closure with the loss
10. Restoration – Job 42:10-12a

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Being the Body of Christ to those Grieving

Romans 12:15 instructs us:

“Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.”

We are not called to explain grief away.

We are called to **sit with it**.

The most Christlike response is presence:

- Listening without fixing
- Praying without preaching
- Loving without rushing

Sometimes the most comforting thing we can say is: **“I’m here.”**

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Being the Body of Christ to those Grieving

If you’re grieving—now or in the future—please hear this:

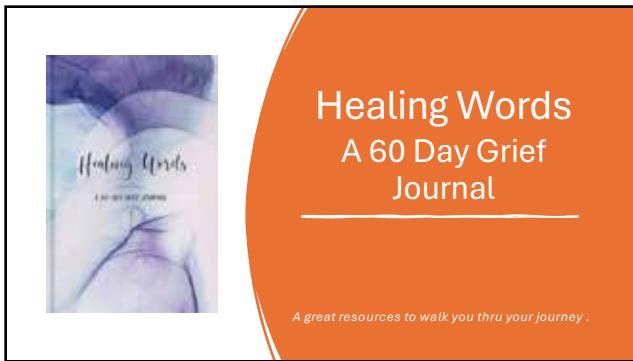
- You are not broken
- Your timeline is valid
- Rest is not laziness
- Joy returning does not betray your loss

It’s okay to seek help. Counseling, support groups, Healing Prayer, or simply a trusted friend—grief is not meant to be carried alone.

This is where scheduling a prayer appointment can be crucial to allowing the Holy Spirit to come into the grieving process and start the healing.

And it’s okay to set boundaries. You don’t owe anyone a “strong” version of yourself.

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Loving Reminders on Grieving

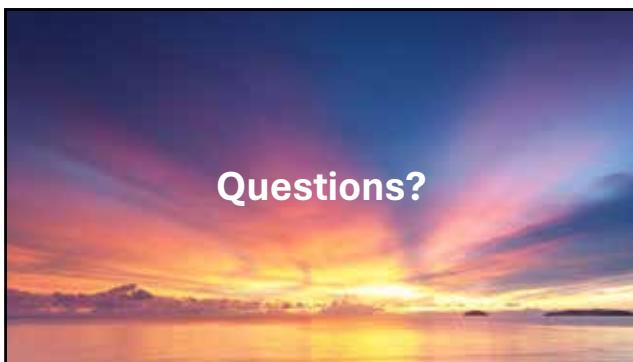
- Grief is the cost of love. If we didn't love deeply, we wouldn't grieve deeply.
- Grief will visit every life—but it never walks alone.
- So, when grief shows up—in ourselves or others—let's meet it with patience, honesty, and compassion.
- The goal isn't to erase grief... The goal is to **live fully while carrying it**.
- God is near to the brokenhearted... Christ understands our tears.

And one day, Scripture promises:

Revelation 21:4 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes."

Until that day, we trust—not because it doesn't hurt—but because God is faithful **in the hurt**.

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