

LIVING WITH GRIEF



Session 1

GRIEF IS DISRUPTIVE AND DISORIENTING. WHAT'S WORSE IS THAT SOME PEOPLE WILL MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE OVERREACTING TO THE DEATH OF YOUR LOVED ONE. YOUR GRIEF SHARE EXPERIENCE WILL INCLUDE THREE KEY COMPONENTS THAT MAKE UP EACH SESSION:

1. **Video seminar**
2. **Group discussion**
3. **Workbook and journaling exercises**

These three elements are critical parts of your healing process. They will introduce you to others who've made it through grief. They offer suggestions to help you endure your season of grief. Completing each will help you find answers to the following questions:

- Is it okay for me to grieve?
- How long will my grief last?
- How do I deal with these overwhelming emotions?
- How should I handle the big decisions that need to be made?

EXPECT GOD TO SHOW YOU THAT THERE IS HOPE.

Video Outline

Use this outline to write down important concepts, encouraging words or questions you may have while viewing the video.

What Is Grief?

Grief is a maddening experience

You are not going crazy

Grief is the recognition you've lost someone you love

Grief Is Normal

It's not a sign of weakness

"IF THERE WERE NO LOVE,
THERE'D BE NO GRIEF."
—ZIG ZIGLAR

Pretending you're okay isn't helpful

Jesus' grief is instructive

"WHEN YOU'RE GRIEVING,
THAT'S NOT THE TIME TO BE
BRAVE OR STRONG. YOU NEED
TO LET IT SHOW." —ZIG ZIGLAR

Give yourself permission to grieve

Many men don't permit themselves to grieve

Honestly express your emotions

"KNOWING THE LORD AND
KNOWING HIS COMFORT
DOES NOT TAKE AWAY THE
ACHE; IT SUPPORTS YOU IN
THE MIDDLE OF THE ACHE."
—DR. LARRY CRABB

Expect your pain to come and go

We Are Often Unprepared for Grief

Many people avoid thinking about death

You may be surprised at how long it lasts

You may be thinking about suicide

Eventually, life will get better

Suggestions for Living with Grief

Lean into your grief

“ALLOW THE LORD
TO COMFORT YOU.”

—SABRINA D. BLACK

Follow the ABC’s of grief

Postpone big decisions

Don’t rush into remarriage

Dealing with people who rush you

What to do when you can’t

Do the next thing

Commit to this GriefShare group

Use your GriefShare workbook

“EVEN THOUGH YOUR
HEART IS BREAKING AND
TEARS ARE CLOUDING
YOUR EYES AND STAINING
YOUR CHEEKS, GOD DOES
GIVE US SOMETHING
WORTH TRUSTING IN
TOUGH TIMES. AND THAT’S
HIM, AND HIM ALONE.”
—DR. JOSEPH STOWELL

IN OUR NEXT SESSION

The Journey of Grief

Grief is like a journey, and this next session will help prepare you for what to expect along the way.

ON THE VIDEOS YOU HEARD OTHER PEOPLE SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES IN GRIEF. THIS SECTION GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO THINK THROUGH YOUR OWN GRIEF EXPERIENCE.

As you complete the exercises, you will begin to ...

- realize you are never alone in your grief
- learn about the true source of peace
- find out why it is important to allow yourself to grieve
- discover what God's character has to do with your grief

Take time each day and complete these exercises to learn more about how to live with grief. Also, be sure to write in the Weekly Journal section at the end of each From Mourning to Joy section.

The presence of pain, and the presence of God

God's Word to You

"My bones are in agony. My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long?" (Psalm 6:2-3)

How would you describe your pain?

As you learned on the video, it takes longer to heal than most people imagine. What concerns or issues does this raise in your mind regarding your situation?

Remember

Grief is a natural part of life. The feelings you have are normal. Other people are experiencing these same feelings.



And though it may seem like God has abandoned you, He is there for you. You are never alone.

Talking to God

God, the pain of my grief is pressing in on all sides, and sometimes I can't breathe with the force of it. Lift me into Your arms. Comfort me with Your presence, and teach me to grieve.

In Your Life

What hope or comfort did you have from listening to the people on the GriefShare video?

Even while you are living with grief, you can have the living God dwelling within you.* How is this (or how might this be) comforting?

Is He living inside you? If not, would you like that?

* If you would like more information about how God can live within a person, see The Foundation for Healing section on page xi.

The source of peace

God's Word to You

"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you." (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

Who is the source of peace?



The writer of 2 Thessalonians 3:16 says God can give you peace in all situations. What will it take for you to experience peace again?

What do you think it means to experience peace “in every way”?

Remember

A person who is filled with peace may still be overcome with emotions of grief. These overwhelming emotions occur because you loved the person you lost.

You can have peace in the midst of your whirling, confusing emotions. Keep going back to the Source of Peace.

Talking to God

God, I am blindsided by my emotions and bewildered. You say that You give peace at all times and in every way. I need Your peace in my pain.

In Your Life

When a person is grieving, it's common for him or her to want the pain to go away without seeking the unique peace God offers. Have you been more motivated to get rid of your pain or to obtain peace? Why?

What would be different if, while living with grief, you gained a deeper sense of God's peace?

Grieving leads to comfort

God's Word to You

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)

What does Jesus promise will happen to those who mourn/grieve?

Are you allowing yourself to grieve? Why or why not?

What does your grieving look like?



Remember

You are not grieving only one loss. The loss of your loved one brings layers of losses that must be acknowledged and mourned. Honest grieving leads to comfort.

Talking to God

God, I am dragged down by new losses every day. Help me to recognize all I have lost so I may mourn and then experience Your comfort. I need to be honest about my feelings.

In Your Life

Each day you may discover new losses that have occurred as a result of the loss of your loved one. Identifying and mourning these losses is an important part of healing. Here are ideas of new losses you may be facing. Check any that apply:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job | <input type="checkbox"/> Source of laughter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home | <input type="checkbox"/> Cuddler |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Possessions | <input type="checkbox"/> Cook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relationships | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Companion | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardener |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confidant | <input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder to cry on |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lover | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking partner |

What else is on your list? Each week you will be able to update your list in your Weekly Journal (at the end of each From Mourning to Joy section).

Take time to talk with God about each of these losses.

What does God's comfort look like? Where do you find it?



God's Word to You

"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken." (Psalm 62:5–6)

The author of this passage describes what he finds in God and who God is. List everything you can learn about God's character from the verses above.

Getting to know God's character will aid you in receiving His comfort. What attributes of God from Psalm 62:5–6 do you find most comforting?

Remember

Grief can cloud your vision and keep you from seeing the comfort and hope that is available for you.

Dr. Paul David Tripp says in order to receive God's comfort, you have to place yourself where His comfort is. Find it in prayer and the Bible, in time spent with Christians, in His creation, under the mentoring of a mature Christian, in God-pleasing music, in quiet time spent with God. Your GriefShare group is a great place to stay connected to God's comfort!

Talking to God

God, I know my pain isn't going to just disappear, so please show me what Your comfort looks like. Teach me to cling to Your comfort and to the hope that is found in You.

In Your Life

In the last couple of weeks, what have you found comfort in?

God has provided many resources of comfort, including inspirational music, people, your GriefShare group, Bible truths, church and much more. Which resources will you make a commitment to be faithful to, even on days you don't feel like it?

God is close to you (the brokenhearted)



God's Word to You

"The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18)

During your journey of grief, when have you felt closest to God?

At what moments have you felt farthest away from God? Why do you think this is?

Remember

As strong as your feelings are, you cannot let them determine what is truth. If you are a brokenhearted child of God, He is close to you.

Talking to God

God, my spirit is crushed, and my heart is broken. Sometimes I can't feel You, but I know You are here. I choose truth over feelings. Save me, Faithful God.

In Your Life

What do you do when you can't feel God's presence?

How can You be sure that He is always by your side, always faithful to love you?

Psalm 34:18 says God "saves those who are crushed in spirit." What do you think you need to be saved from?

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MY WEEKLY JOURNAL



Living with Grief

1. The loss of a loved one results in layers of losses that are uncovered as you travel your grief journey; for instance, the loss of dreams, relationships, possessions, time, duties and around-the-house helps (such as cook, mechanic or gardener).

The newest loss I have felt is ...

The most significant losses I have experienced are ...

2. Personal evaluation: How are you feeling this week?

	Really Bad	Okay	Pretty Good	Great
Emotionally				
Physically				
Spiritually				
Relationally				

3. Choose one (or more) of the following ideas to journal on:

- a. From the moment you wake up until you crawl into bed at night, what is it like to live with grief?
- b. The unknowns of grief can create anxiety and fear. Write a prayer to God telling Him what you are afraid of and asking for His help in overcoming those fears.
- c. What are some differences in the way you are grieving compared with other people?
- d. Describe a big decision you are facing now and your feelings about the different options. What do you think God would think of those options?
- e. Making a commitment to do anything right now may seem overwhelming. We urge you to write a commitment to stick with this GriefShare group and to attempt to complete the workbook exercises.

We encourage you to use a separate notebook for your weekly journaling.