

GRIEF CAN BE...

- *an overwhelming sense of loss*
- *like walking through a dark tunnel*
- *an inability to find your way out of that tunnel*
- *loneliness, emptiness, and sadness*
- *a feeling of hopelessness*
- *letting go*
- *anger and denial*
- *asking "Why?"*
- *losing a major part of yourself*
- *turning toward God*
- *turning away from God*
- *tears and more tears*
- *normal*

Grief can be all of the above and more. It may take all of your energy to grieve for your lost loved one. Every person's grief becomes an individualized journey of feelings, emotions and responses.



In John 11, a story unfolds in the town of Bethany, home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Lazarus became very ill and died. When Jesus arrived, His soul was grieved because His dear friend had died. Jesus wept with Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha. Jesus was modeling for us that grief is a normal reaction to the loss of someone you love. His tears mingled with the tears of other mourners and He was not ashamed to express His true feelings.

You may find that coping with those same feelings in grief can be overwhelming. Here are some practical suggestions which may help you through your grief journey:

- **Don't put a timetable on your grief. Allow yourself the freedom to grieve as much as you need to for as long as you need.**
- **Allow the tears to flow.**
- **Don't make any major decisions during the first year.**
- **Talk about your loved one.**
- **Express your true feelings with a trusted friend who is willing to go the distance with you.**
- **Set small attainable goals for yourself.**
- **Plan ahead how you will spend anniversary dates and holidays.**

You do not have to travel alone on your grief journey. God provides hope for your suffering. Reflect on the following verses that promote God's hope in the midst of grief:

- **Isaiah 43:2:** Even through much suffering, God is always with you.
- **John 14:27:** There is no need to feel alone and afraid because we have God's peace.

- **Psalm 23:4:** Grieving the death of a loved one can be overwhelming, but God walks beside us every step of the way.
- **1 Corinthians 15:26:** God promises that death is the last enemy to be destroyed.
- **1 Thessalonians 4:14-18:** We can experience grief with hope because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If we believe in the hope of Jesus Christ, then heaven becomes a place of wonderful reunions with our loved ones.

Trusting God with your grief can bring both peace and comfort. Jesus, God's Son, experienced grief so He knows what you are going through. May you find rest knowing that God cares for you and desires that you seek Him for hope and comfort.

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