

construed as a failure, but again just a part of the complicated process of grief. "For in grief, nothing stays put; one keeps on emerging from a phase, but it always recurs. Round and round. Everything repeats."<sup>4</sup> Whether you follow one process or another is not as important as understanding that you will go through different stages, and that is all a part of the healing process. One of the greatest ways to deal with this long journey is to do so with the help of friends, a counselor or to join a grief group. Grief affects all aspects of your life. It is important to take care of your body as well as your soul. The grieving process will take time and energy; take your time and walk through the process even if it is just one small step at a time. *"But they who wait upon the LORD will renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."* Isaiah 40:31

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Westberg, Granger (*Handbook for Christian Living*) by Charles Stanley, p.107

<sup>2</sup> Zig Zigar in GriefShare program produced by Church Initiative.

<sup>3</sup> GriefShare produced by Church Initiative

<sup>4</sup> C.S Lewis in *A Grief Observed*.

All scripture is from the English Standard Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org)

*Harsh Grief, Gentle Hope*  
by Mary White

*Good Grief*  
by Granger Westberg

*Finding your Way after the Suicide of Someone you Love*  
by David Biebel & Suzanne Foster

*Recovering from the Losses in Life*  
by H. Norman Wright

*Experiencing Grief*  
by H. Norman Wright

*Getting to the Other Side of Grief:  
Overcoming the Loss of a Spouse*  
by Susan J. Zoonbelt-Smeenge & Robert C. DeVries

## DIGGING DEEPER

**For more help on this topic or for information on the multi-faceted ministry of America's KESWICK call 800.453.7942 or visit our website at [www.americaskeswick.org](http://www.americaskeswick.org).**

  
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## GRIEF



## Grief

The Journey

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

by **LYNNE D. JAHNS, PhD, BCCC**  
Director of Guest Services and Institute of Biblical Studies,  
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## The Journey of Grief

*"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope." – 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13*

Unlike many experiences in life, grief is one experience that all of us share. Some to a much greater extent than others, but we will all experience grief in our lifetime. Grief is best defined as a multi-dimensional reaction to loss in our lives, particularly the loss of someone or something that we love. Common to human experience is the death of a loved one, whether it is family, a friend, or other companion. When that bond is broken through loss, we experience grief. Often we focus mainly on the emotional response to loss, but grief also has physical, cognitive, behavioral, social, and spiritual dimensions.

Probably as you read this pamphlet you will be reminded of your times of grief, or possibly you are currently in the midst of a season of grief. The most complicated aspect of grief is that it is rarely experienced the same by any two people. Grief has many faces/facets and can vary in the length of time it lives with us in our daily lives. If you have love, you will also at some point experience the pain of grief. Scripture teaches us that Jesus was one who knew grief (Isaiah 53:3), and we know that He wept at the tomb of His friend Lazarus (John 11:35). Each of us will experience grief differently based on a series of variables, but all of us will experience grief at some point because we live in a fallen world (Romans 5:12). The goal of this pamphlet is to look at some of the normal reactions to the grief experience, as well as some helpful ways to allow the process to be completed. The key terms we will explore are "normal" and "process."

**Grief has many faces/facets and can vary in the length of time it lives with us in our daily lives.**

### TERM #1: NORMAL

That may sound like a strange term to use since I already stated that grief is experienced differently by everyone. What is normal is that during times of grief our emotions will fluctuate and at times it may seem like you are "losing your mind." The emotions may run from both the dark painful emotions to feelings of relief and joy, and that often adds to our confusion. "You cannot live without experiencing grief in a thousand different ways!"<sup>1</sup>

**Grief affects all aspects of your life.**

#### Note the emotions and experiences that are a normal part of grief:

- Profound sadness
- Anxiety
- Sorrow
- Dismay
- Apathy
- Anguish
- Disappointment
- Anger
- Resentment
- Fear
- Inadequacy
- Confusion
- Guilt
- Depression
- Dread
- Jealousy
- Relief
- Betrayal
- Rejection
- Helplessness
- Vindictiveness
- Joy
- Distrust
- Emptiness
- Physical ailments
- Shattered beliefs
- Irritability

You may think you are going mad, but all the symptoms you are experiencing are normal after a loss — you are not going crazy. No matter how spiritual you are, it does not change the effect of grief; it only changes how you deal with the experience. In order to normalize your grief, it is important that you do not pretend that all is OK. That is not helpful and most often only serves to prolong the pain and sadness. If you pick up any book on grief, one of the main themes that will run through the book is that you must give yourself permission to grieve and that the honest expression of your emotions is part of the healing process. "When you are grieving,

that's not the time to be brave or strong. You need to let it show."<sup>2</sup>

### TERM #2: PROCESS

C.S Lewis described this process well in his book, *A Grief Observed*, when he stated that "Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape." Depending on whom you talk to or what book you read, you may learn about the stages of grief. The most famous stages were described by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, in her book, *On Death and Dying*: 1) Denial or shock, 2) Release of emotions, 3) Guilt and anger, 4) Bargaining, 5) Sadness, and finally 6) Acceptance.

I would like to talk more about the key elements to the process and key tasks that need to be accomplished as you walk through your grief. GriefShare<sup>3</sup> uses a simple formula remembered easily as the ABC's of grief. As you keep in mind these key elements, you will be better equipped to walk through the process.

**A: Always be true to yourself** (Matthew 11:28)

**B: Believe you will make it – Believe God's Word** (Psalm 31:14-15)

**C: Remember people Care – Communicate your needs** (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

**Another easy model to follow is the TEAR model regarding the tasks we need to accomplish.**

**T:** To accept the reality of the loss

**E:** to fully Experience the pain of the loss

**A:** to learn to Adjust to the new environment — better known as your "new normal"

**R:** Reinvest in your new normal — to re-enter life with new interests, patterns, designs, hopes, and dreams

It is possible to think that you have completed the task, but then later on discover that you need to go back and complete the task again. This is not to be