

Remember, we do not know what has transpired in the hearts of unbelievers before they passed, only God knows if they reached out to Him. Do not carry the weight of their salvation beyond the grave, that is not your burden to bear.

*3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

*- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV*

*Another way God comforts us is through others. Have you had an occasion to offer comfort and support when others are grieving or have you received comfort from others? How is that comfort different from the comfort of those who haven't gone through a similar experience?*

The Holy Spirit (Gr *paraklētos*) is referred to in some translations as the comforter. He is the one who comes alongside to help us. We know the Spirit dwells in us and understands our grief. We can trust that God sees us, knows our pain and offers us His love and peace and comfort as we journey through our grief.

## **WRAP-UP**

Grief is an essential part of the human experience, reflecting the emotional depth with which God created us. It is the natural response to loss, whether from death, broken relationships, or unmet expectations. While grief can be painful, it serves as a way to process and heal from these losses. The Bible acknowledges various sources of grief, from bereavement to sin, and tells us we receive God's comfort when we mourn. Jesus Himself experienced grief and shows that God understands our pain. By allowing ourselves to grieve, we open the door to comfort from God, who offers hope through the promise of eternal life and the presence of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter. Through His love and peace, we can find healing, whether in our own sorrow or in offering comfort to others who are grieving.

## **MEMORY VERSE**

*18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed. - Psalm 34:18 NLT*

*Challenge – If God is bringing up something you haven't fully grieved, find a quiet place to express your loss and invite Jesus to heal your heart.*

## **Grief Beneath the Surface - Week 3**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The beauty and complexity of man includes a symphony of emotions. God created us to experience both the highs and the lows of life, just as Jesus Himself did. Included in this spectrum of feelings is grief. Grief is the way we were meant to deal with loss. It may be encountered when we lose someone we love, or perhaps in the loss of other things in our lives. But no matter the source, grief is painful. We may not want to suffer grief and so we push it down below the surface and refuse to deal with it. But because we suffer when we grieve, God wants to be the source of our comfort. So, whether it is from experiencing a death, a broken heart, or lost dream, we want to draw near to God as we expose the grief that lies beneath the surface in each of us.

### **Ice Breaker**

***Have you ever been surprised when something that you considered trivial became the source of more grief than you expected? For instance, when you broke the Christmas ornament your child made in kindergarten years ago.***

### **Key Passages**

**4 God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.  
- Matthew 5:4 NLT**

### **STUDY QUESTIONS**

#### **1. This Hurts**

When we think of grief, we commonly associate it with death. Certainly, when someone we love dies, we may experience intense grief. But there are other sources of grief, and the Bible recognizes many of them. Here is a sampling of the types of grief or sorrow found in the scripture:

Bereavement (Gen 37:34,35, John 11:19-40), Infertility (1 Sam 1:15) Our Sin (2 Cor 7:10), The Lost (Matt 23:37) Foolish children (Pro 17:25).

*Make a list of all the sources of grief you can identify. Which of these losses have you personally experienced?*

*Select two or three types of loss. Look beyond the obvious to see what else was lost? For example, if diagnosed with cancer, you lost your health, but you might also lose independence, financial stability, enjoyment of normal activities.*

*Can you identify a loss in your life that you couldn't or haven't allowed yourself to fully grieve?*

*1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: ... 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,  
- Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4 NIV*

*4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted  
- Matthew 5:4 NIV*

The Bible does not shy away from grief and sorrow. Many of the Psalms and the entire book of Lamentations is an expression of grief. We may mistakenly equate grief with weakness. We might try to create an artificial time by which we should "get over it and move on." But in the sermon on the mount Jesus does not depict it in that way.

*What does Jesus tell us about those who mourn in Matthew 5:4?*

When we fail to adequately mourn our losses, we forfeit the comfort that God has to offer us, and instead keep our pain hidden below the surface. As we see in Ecclesiastes there is a time to weep and mourn, but we don't have to remain there. There will be a time to laugh and dance again. Our grieving is as unique as we are. Allow yourself to fully process your loss. God will be with you for as long as it takes.

## 2. God Cares

*18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed. - Psalm 34:18 NLT*

*14 But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless. - Psalm 10:14 NIV*

When we are struggling with grief, we may create the false narrative that

God doesn't see us or doesn't care about our pain.

*What stands out to you about the Psalmist's description of God's involvement in our grief in the above passages? What does it reveal about God's character?*

*9 Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief. - Psalm 31:9 NIV*

*33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. 35 Jesus wept. - John 11:33-35 NIV*

In Psalm 31 David expresses his grief to God and asks for mercy in his distress. In John 11 we see Martha and Mary mourning and grieving the loss of Lazarus, and Jesus was deeply troubled and moved to tears. Jesus experienced grief. He understands our pain - he joins us in our grief and sorrow. He joins us in our frustration and questioning. We just have to let him in.

*Have you experienced a grief like David's that left you weak and drained? What was the event that grieved you and how long ago did it occur? How has your grief changed over time? How have you experienced God's presence in your grief?*

## 3. Comfort

*13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 NIV*

One way God give us comfort in our grief is that He gives us hope. All of us will die one day, but for the believer there is glorious future beyond this life. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that our grief is different from the world. We will still feel the sting of loss, but when we lose a loved one who trusted Jesus, we know they will be with Him.

*Have you lost a loved one who was a believer? How is your grief for them different from the grief you experienced when an unbeliever died?*