



## How Do You Find Your Way Through Grief?

**2 Corinthians 4:8-10:** (NASB) <sup>8</sup>*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; <sup>10</sup>always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*

**Special Guest: Becca Marten**



Loss brings grief. Everyone hurts when they suffer loss and many losses are met with grief. The recent Florida school shooting brings the trauma out in the open for all to see. Yet before and after that singular tragedy there have been and will continue to be countless experiences of deep grief that are not so public. For many of us, grief acts like a disease. Its symptoms can be deep and debilitating, and its cycle is repetitive and exhausting. Grief stinks and yet is an important and even healthy part of our coping with our traumatic personal losses. How do we go about finding the healing part of grief? How do we know what to hang on to,

what to let go of and when any of this should happen? What can those of us who are not presently experiencing a personal loss do to help those who are in such pain and anguish?

*(Commentary has been edited for brevity and clarity. Becca's comments are shown in purple.)*

Throughout the program, we will reference the article: "Coping with Grief and Loss" from [helpguide.org](http://helpguide.org).



**Grief is a natural response to loss. It is the emotional suffering you feel when something or someone you love is taken away. The more significant the loss, the more intense your grief will be.**

The experience of grief is deeply personal and emotionally draining; our desire is to be sensitive and helpful.

**To begin, we present a light at the end of the tunnel:**

**Luke 4:17-21:** (NASB) (Jesus in the synagogue in Nazareth) <sup>17</sup>*And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. And he opened the book and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup>The spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD.*

*Set free is to release from bondage. Oppressed means to be crushed.*



When we think of grief, we think of the bondage of being crushed by a loss. Jesus is essentially saying, "I came for YOU and I understand what you are going through."

<sup>20</sup>And he closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup>And he began to say to them, Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

While it is encouraging to know that Jesus did come to relieve our suffering we also know that this relief will not come miraculously. Jesus helps us through it.

We will be sharing two powerful stories to help us learn how to manage very difficult experiences.

We received a Facebook comment in February in response to our advertisement for this topic:



Patrick: Today is my birthday and I'm thinking about age today. I had a dear friend pass away a few days ago at the age of 40 from a brain aneurysm. I am wondering why kind, generous, caring people die from natural causes at a young age, yet some mean and nasty people live a long time and many times become wealthy in life. It doesn't make sense.

The world of sin and death that we live in does not make sense. We will try to provide an answer.

Grief comes from MANY different kinds of loss. One of two stories we will highlight is a written story that we obtained permission to use. The article is read by one of our CQ team members.

### Introduction and tragedy, *Rejoicing Through Unbearable Sorrow*

- In 2005, we welcomed our first baby, Chase, and our second baby boy, Cooper. My husband runs a large cattle and grain operation, and I work full time for the Ministry of Agriculture. My boys were always involved in extracurricular activities such as baseball, swimming and hockey, but their passion was being on the farm exploring and experiencing all the wonderful things farm life offered. Our lives were full, and we were blessed beyond measure. In the spring of 2011, our lives took an unexpected and drastic blow! Our oldest son, Chase, was killed in a farm accident. He was 6 years old.*



Stay with us as we follow the experience and lessons with the grief of Chase's mom.



Grief is not an event; it is a process that needs understanding and attention for it to be positive:

## The five stages of grief:

"Coping with Grief and Loss" from helpguide.org

- Denial: "This can't be happening to me."
- Anger: "Why is this happening? Who is to blame?"
- Bargaining: "Make this not happen, and in return I will \_\_\_\_\_."
- Depression: "I'm too sad to do anything."
- Acceptance: "I'm at peace with what happened."



How do you go from denial to acceptance? Our two stories will help us understand the process.

 **Loss, pain and suffering, *Rejoicing Through Unbearable Sorrow***

- *I do not know if I can articulate in words how extremely painful this experience was to us. I can remember the numbing that lasted months, the feeling of anger, regret and sadness that seemed to cripple us for years and which affects us in our lives even to this day. I did not understand how the world could continue on when something this devastating happens! Children are not supposed to die before their parents! Things like this don't happen to people like us. I was living in a nightmare. I hurt. I ached. I cried. I was numb. Our world collapsed. Time stood still and did for a long time. How could we continue in this world without our beautiful child? Grief overtook our lives, and I did not function properly for a long time.*

One of the striking things about this story is the brutal honesty with which she expresses herself. These parents lived in grief for a long time.

We would like to mention one of our Christian Questions co-workers lost his father one year ago today. To lose a parent is devastating. It is interesting that God overruled our privilege to discuss this subject on the one-year anniversary of his personal loss.

Isaiah 42:3: (NASB) *A bruised reed He will not break and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice.*

When things are difficult, God, through Jesus, looks at us with compassion and wants to help us heal, not break.

**Grief sounds complicated. Where do we even begin to try and understand it so we can cope with it?**

Grief IS complex and thankfully so. Because we as human beings are so incredibly capable of emotional attachment to others, to places and to potential circumstances, the *grief process provides us a way to put that*



*emotion in order when we are torn by loss. Without grief's process there would be no healing, growth or change - only painful memories.*

To help us get closer to understanding the grieving process we asked one of our own CQ Team Members to share her personal story.

Welcome Becca Marten!

Hello! I am a new part of the CQ team, and I help to manage our social media as well as all of our YouTube videos. Professionally, I have been a teacher for the last 15 years. I work with kids of all ages, mostly in urban environments with a focus on teaching theater. I was teaching high school theater full-time, however, last year I quit that job and am now freelancing as a teaching artist, which gives me more time and flexibility.



We schedule topics five to six weeks ahead and send out the list to our CQ team volunteers. Becca received this list and emailed to say she was glad we were doing the topic of grief because she felt it would help her. She shared her story and we asked her to be involved in our podcast today to tell her story to help others.



**Grieving is a highly individual experience; there's no right or wrong way to grieve. How you grieve depends on many factors, including your personality and coping style, your life experience, your faith, and how significant the loss was to you.**

Becca, you got our attention by the way you described your circumstances and your current battle with grief. What happened?

My husband David and I have been married for seven years, and we decided about three years ago we wanted to have children. I spent a lot of time over those three years praying to God that we might have children and especially remembering the Scripture in Psalms that talks about the Lord giving us the desires of our hearts. Ultimately, I want His will to be done in my life, and if my will is not His will, I want Him to change mine so that I am not praying amiss.



I am a teacher and naturally like being around kids. A little over a month ago we found out that although not impossible, it would be very unlikely we would be able to have children, which was devastating to me. I have wanted to be a mom for a long time. My mom was really awesome, and she died when I was 17. Passing on her legacy by raising a child in some of the ways I was raised felt like a way to remember her and honor her memory.

Motherhood is important to you because of the gift of motherhood you received from your mom.

Yes. A few years later, my dad died. My experience of not being able to have children feels like a death, but in a different way. It is a death of someone who never even existed. It is like the death of this dream or idea of a person, only this time no one knows that person or about this death unless I go out of my way to tell them. It is very much a *secret grief* that feels very lonely and isolating. Inside it feels like a death.



This inability to have children is a *secret grief*. You are grieving over the potential that seemed to be the next logical, wonderful step in your life which could not happen. Men do not understand motherhood, but we know there is something magnificent about the idea of motherhood and to have that taken away must be an extremely hard experience. Because no one knows about this secret grief, you are subject to inadvertent difficulty.

Usually people reach out when someone dies, but because of the type of situation this is, many people have no idea. After being married for seven years, people inadvertently ask a question like, "When are you planning to have kids?" without realizing it is a sore subject.

People cannot see the pain. So far, we see Becca is looking at life and knowing God gives the desires of the heart, but she does not want to pray for something that is not God's will. Sometimes the desires of our heart do not come to us, because God has a different plan.

Sometimes we need to stop and be held in the arms of Jesus.



### "Just Be Held," (Verse one) Casting Crowns

Hold it all together  
Everybody needs you strong  
But life hits you out of nowhere  
And barely leaves you holding on  
And when you're tired of fighting  
Chained by your control  
There's freedom in surrender  
Lay it down and let it go

So, when you're on your knees and answers seem so far away  
You're not alone, stop holding on and just be held  
Your world's not falling apart, it's falling into place



I'm on the throne, stop holding on and just be held  
Just be held, just be held

### **We need to give ourselves permission to grieve:**

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-4:** (KJV) *<sup>1</sup>To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: <sup>2</sup>A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; <sup>3</sup>A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; <sup>4</sup>A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.*

We appreciate you being willing to be vulnerable for the sake of others. Outside of and in conjunction with the deep desire for children, how else have you seen the hand of God in your life for you and your husband?

Right after my husband and I got married we wanted to buy a house. We were living in a small condo and wanted to have a bigger space where we felt we could better serve the Lord. We prayed and prayed, and nothing was coming on the market that was right for us, so we ended up buying this huge, beautiful house in foreclosure. It was everything I had wanted in a house. There was lots of cool old woodwork and tons of space. We had the house renovated, we moved in and after living there for about a year we realized this house was crazy big and we had rooms we never went in! So, we decided our "dream house" was not such a dream after all. After living there for two years, we ended up selling it and moving to a more "right-sized" house for us where we are much happier. We realized we did not need what we thought we needed in order to serve God. We had put our own qualifications on what *we thought* we needed to have.



You had a dream and wanted to use it for the Lord's service and realized it really was not what you needed. That was a life lesson.

Around the same time we moved into our dream house, I also got my DREAM JOB. I got to teach theater full time at a school for the arts in the city. In a career like mine, jobs like that never come up. I taught there for four years, and over that time I became a different person that I did not like very much. Although there were aspects of the job I loved, like working with the kids whom I adored, the job was all encompassing of my life, my brain and my time. During that time, I prayed for years for opportunities to serve God, but I really had no time for Him and this left me feeling constantly guilty and feeling like I was a "Sunday Christian."

### **What do you mean by a "Sunday Christian"?**

I thought about God when I was there, but when I was no longer at church other things consumed my time. I wasn't serving God through my week. By the last year I was at my wits end. I would feel sick to my stomach on Sunday nights prepping for the week ahead, and on top of everything I had a really difficult boss who was cruel and made the work environment incredibly uncomfortable and stressful. I couldn't take it anymore and my husband suggested I quit, which I did about this time last year.



It was a sad and difficult decision to make, BUT because of my time off last summer I was given the other desire of my heart that I had prayed about for so long, and that was to serve God. The service came through opportunities with Christian Questions. I was finally able to serve God in a way I was meant to do.

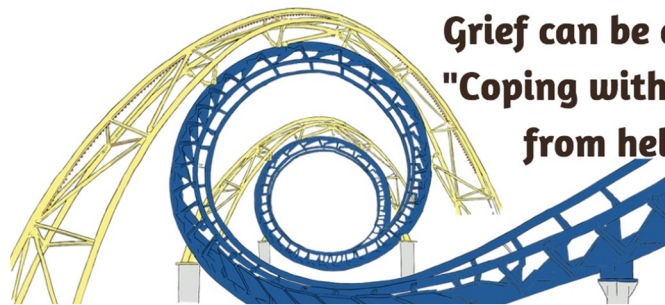
So, you had a shattered dream that became a nightmare and then you had this spiritual dream which has been fulfilled. Through these life experiences of your house and your job, you learned lessons.

*There is no grief like the grief that does not speak. — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

**God really does know, does watch, and does care:**

Matthew 10:29-30: (NASB) <sup>29</sup>Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. <sup>30</sup>But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

**Now what? Life can bring many series of events that can pile up!  
How do we sort it all out?**



**Grief can be a roller coaster:  
"Coping with Grief and Loss"  
from helpguide.org**

**Instead of a series of stages, we might also think of the grieving process as a roller coaster, full of ups and downs, highs and lows. Like many roller coasters, the ride tends to be rougher in the beginning, the lows may be deeper and longer. The difficult periods should become less intense and shorter as time goes by, but it takes time to work through a loss.**

It helps to know someone's story, so you can better understand their grief.

Becca, you mentioned losing both your parents as a very young woman. What did that mean for you growing up?

I was 17 when my mom died, a senior in high school. My little sister was only nine. My brother is a year and a half younger than me and kind of kept to himself. I had a lot more responsibility. My dad, who had always been an alcoholic, became even worse after my mom was gone. I had to be the mother figure for my sister. At the time of my mom's death I was not a Christian which meant that her death was especially difficult for me because I didn't have a foundation of faith. I felt I just needed to hold it together for my sister.



Part of the difficulty of managing grief is when we need to be strong for somebody else. Becca, for you there was no one else to lean on and you had no faith at that point.

It was so frightening. I can remember those stages of grief. I spent a lot of time bargaining and saying, "Whatever is out there, if I could die instead, just take me instead of my mom." I was scared for my sister.

It was really tough for some years there; I had to rearrange my life. All of my decisions had to be about making sure I could help take care of my family from small things like cooking and cleaning to going to college in town and living at home so I could work. My brother and I both had jobs and took on the financial responsibility, since my dad was not able to work for a long time. He died from alcoholism about seven years after my mom died and at the time my sister was still in high school, which meant I had to become her legal guardian.

In the middle of all this, you had a friend. Tell us about your friend.

My best friend since middle school would talk to me about God. I honestly do not remember anything she said other than I knew she was a Christian because she talked about it a lot. It wasn't until after my mom died that I could remember the things she was saying. I was finally in a place where I needed to hear her. I felt God drawing me to Him and wanting to comfort me. I was in a place where I was searching for that comfort. About a year after my mom died, my faith was part of who I was becoming. By the time my dad died, I had my faith to help carry me through that experience.

Through all these stages and experiences of grief there was hope planted. As the experiences continued, your hope was tested. Tell us about your mom.

My mom was awesome. Everyone says that about their mom, but it was really true about her. She was really funny, creative and artistic. She focused on raising my siblings and me to be good people. She wasn't religious in any way, but she wanted the best for us and did everything for us even when we had nothing. We were poor growing up, so we spent a lot of

time doing inexpensive activities connecting with each other like playing board games or listening to music and going on walks and talking. She was a really cool person and I wish I could know her now as an adult.

Your mom filled your life with happiness, activity and fun and seeded your deep desire to be a mom.







I used to think, "I can't wait to do that with my own kids." I can look back and see the good things about my childhood.

Your story, while it is full of grief, is full of hope. It is astounding to see the two working together. What about your childhood? It was not all good.

I feel very heavy when I think about it. My parents had a very unhappy marriage. My mom had a very strong personality and I think after years of my dad drinking and not changing, she just stopped speaking to him. I would frequently be the communicator between the two (as I was the oldest) and things were generally tense. My dad was really bad with money and he got us into a lot of debt and was working three jobs, so there were times when we did not see him a lot. We didn't have much money and that played into how I remember my childhood. There were times growing up where I remember our VCR, video tapes or other things would be missing because he would sell them to the pawnshop at the beginning of the week so we would have money for food. Then on Friday when he'd get paid, he'd go back and buy as many of the things he had sold as he could afford. It was embarrassing. We didn't have a telephone and sometimes we didn't have a car. I just realized that my life was really different than a lot of my friends.

Your previous statement was, "I had an awesome childhood." You were able to see such goodness through such difficulty. This is a great lesson in perspective and to look for the silver linings.

All that being said, my parents really loved us. They tried to make us happy even when at times they didn't know the best way to do that.

#### **A Scripture about looking forward:**

**Psalm 121:1-4:** (KJV) <sup>1</sup>I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. <sup>2</sup>My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. <sup>3</sup>He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. <sup>4</sup>Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

When you were in your late teens and early 20's you began to see there was a place to find the strength to be able to cope.

Even though you are still battling with grief because you are only months into the realization that children are not in your future, can you sum up your experiences so far?

I try to remind myself that God has been with me and continues to be with me. When I look back on my life's experiences I can see He has led me through some really difficult things. Although this new experience of not being able to have kids is still very sad, I know that it is going to shape me, and I also know that God has a path marked out for me in my life.

Your conviction of your faith is very clear. "You know He has a path marked out for you." That is more than Him taking care of you.



God has a plan for me. Even though I wanted children so badly, at the same time I can see God gave me the other desire of my heart, to serve Him. If I had kids I don't know that I could serve in the capacity that I am currently serving in, particularly with Christian Questions. I know there is a purpose to my life and I know he has blessed me BEYOND measure, beyond what I ever thought was possible for my life, and so I know that I need to pray and trust that He will see me through this too.

What would you say to someone who is experiencing a similar "secret grief"?

Allow yourself to cry and be sad and grieve because that is human. It is okay that everything is not okay right now. That is something that (for myself especially) has always been hard for me. I have spent my entire life trying to make everything "okay" for others and myself, and sometimes it is just not.

First lesson: It is okay to cry and that everything is not okay right now because that is the way life is.

One of the things I always tell my students when they are going through a difficult experience is that they might not be okay right now, but someday things WILL be okay again - you have to trust that that day will come. I think it's also important to give voice to those feelings. It is only as secret as you let it be. I have gone out of my way to tell people that I can't have children, because it does affect me and make me sad and I WANT their support. This isn't true for everyone, but it is important to find an outlet even with a few trusted friends or family. Sometimes we can get stuck in our own heads which isn't helpful.

You realize you need support and now you are looking for it. Think of the value you can be to other people's lives who are hurting just like you. You get support by giving it. What else?

Focus on the blessings in your life. Like the song, "Count Your Blessings." It is easy for us to go down a really negative road and at first. We might not want to "look at the bright side," but sulking for the remainder of our lives is not helpful, healthy or healing. Right now, I am trying to change my own mindset of how I am looking at the rest of my life, which can be challenging and scary, but by focusing on the blessings I know that God has given me can be a positive way to work through this experience.

**What about those five stages of grief? What should we expect?  
How do we deal with them?**

One of the toughest challenges with grief is its uniqueness in each individual life. Because we are each a unique combination of genetics, mindset and life experiences, we need to have broad strokes applied to managing grief. That management only comes through *plowing through the experience*.

**The first of the five stages of grief:**

- **Denial: "This can't be happening to me."**



*Denial helps us to pace our feelings of grief. There is a grace in denial. It is nature's way of letting in only as much as we can handle. — Elisabeth Kubler-Ross*

Denial helps to pace our feelings of grief. It is important because your heart and brain cannot handle it all at once. The process is there to give us that time.

**Sometimes we are just not ready to see the reality and mercy of God's long-term plans:**

*Psalm 43:2-5: (KJV) <sup>2</sup>For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? <sup>3</sup>O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. <sup>4</sup>Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God. <sup>5</sup>Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

It is so hard to determine what will happen as the grief process progresses. One thing we can know for sure is that this process can bring us eventual peace, strength and happiness. We need to focus on these stages and how to learn and move on from them. The first stage of denial is a hard stage to work through but a necessary one.

Let's go back to our story about the woman who lost her six-year-old son in a farming accident.



**The grief cycle and trust, *Rejoicing Through Unbearable Sorrow***

- I used to think that things "like that" do not happen to people "like us," and we took a lot of things for granted. I felt strong and confident that I was in control of circumstances. Was I wrong! It is strange how in a moment your life can change and how you can fall to your knees. The grief cycle goes between anger, denial, regret and sadness. Sometimes you go through that cycle multiple times in a day. This is when I really understood I was not in control of my circumstance, but God was. This experience has taught me humility that I may not have had otherwise. C.S. Lewis said, "True humility is not thinking less of yourself, but it is thinking of yourself less." These humbling, tearful and uncertain circumstances deepened our trust in the Lord and helped us realize the power of God's grace.*

Becca, she is talking about that grief cycle. Does that resonate with your experience?

She mentioned the idea of letting go. I am a control freak and struggle with that in my relationship with God. Letting go and trusting God will take care of me is a difficult thing for me to do.

We would like to thank your husband David for his support and being there to encourage you to share your story with others.



The five stages of grief (stages 2 and 3): "Coping with Grief and Loss" from helpguide.org

- **Anger:** "Why is this happening? Who is to blame?"
- **Bargaining:** "Make this not happen, and in return I will \_\_\_\_\_."



What about scriptural principles to combat anger and bargaining?

**Re-center and rehearse your deepest core values - God is MY God, therefore...**

Isaiah 41:10: (KJV) *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

Becca, you mentioned earlier the entrance of faith into your life as being an important part of managing your grief. How is it different now that you are older?

It has been almost 20 years since my mom died. I know God is with me and providing what is needed to get through the experience, whether it is through the support of friends, family or being able to constantly go to God in prayer and say, "I need you to be with me." The other day at work I was overcome with grief about not being able to have kids, so I left the room, said a prayer, came back and I was okay. Just having that strength to draw on changes everything.



**Perspective and choice, *Rejoicing Through Unbearable Sorrow***

- *Perspective is both innate and learned based on our genetics, life experiences and values. However, there is another element of perspective, which is choice. More than just looking on the bright side, perspective is how we choose to see things. I know that we cannot always control what happens to us, but we can control how we react to them. We choose how we act in the face of adversity. We either get bitter or we get better. I remember a counselor talking to us after the accident and sharing the statistics of marital breakup after the death of a child. The statistics were not in our favor, but at that moment I decided that our marriage would not fall to that statistic. I knew that this experience could either break us apart or make us stronger. We made a choice to have it make us stronger. "He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." 1 Corinthians 10:13*

**Because God is MY God, He has insured my experiences to be manageable and finite:**

1 Corinthians 10:13: (KJV) *There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*



- **Accept that grief can trigger many different and unexpected emotions.**
- **Understand that your grieving process will be unique to you.**
- **Seek out face-to-face support from people who care about you.**
- **Support yourself emotionally by taking care of yourself physically.**
- **Recognize the difference between grief and depression.**

*There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able...*

I love that Scripture and go back to it often in my different experiences. I think about what Jesus went through. Jesus bore so much worse than what I went through. I can do this; God is with me. He allowed these situations to happen to me so I can be shaped in the way He wants me to be. Another thing that struck me was grief can trigger many different and unexpected emotions. Sometimes there can be negative things that come out. In my own life, I am experiencing jealousy! I'm in my 30's and a lot of my friends have children or are about to have children. I need to keep in perspective that I'm living my own path. I want to accept that God has a different path for me but also acknowledging that those experiences may come up.

As you pass through those stages of grief it is important to know, "This too shall pass." While the pain may never go away, it does not mean it cannot be compensated for in a spiritual way.

### **Silver lining, Rejoicing Through Unbearable Sorrow**

- *After experiencing this devastating hurt, I have become highly aware that most people hide their sorrow. We force a smile, we leave out details and we even convince others we are "fine." I developed a soft spot for those who put on a brave front and who are able to keep others at an arm's length for far too long. A silver lining in sorrow's dark cloud is that God can use our experiences to reach out to others with compassion and comfort. Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."*

**Because God is MY God, I must allow His spirit to manage my anger and do the bargaining:**

**Romans 8:26, 28:** (KJV) <sup>26</sup>Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.... <sup>28</sup>And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Both of our real-life examples have shown us that managing grief is really a choice.

**Because God is MY God, He is everlastingly worthy of complete trust:**

**Isaiah 26:3-4:** (NASB) <sup>3</sup>The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You. <sup>4</sup>Trust in the LORD forever, For in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock.



## The last two stages, depression and acceptance, seem worlds apart. How do we make that leap?

It is not a huge leap between depression and acceptance. The huge leap was going from denial through anger and bargaining. Once we begin to feel depressed, we have to a degree already accepted much of our trauma and are now faced with carrying its weight. Acceptance provides all of the necessary strength to carry whatever we need to carry.

The five stages of grief (stages 4 and 5): "Coping with Grief and Loss" from [helpguide.org](http://helpguide.org)



- Depression: "I'm too sad to do anything."
- Acceptance: "I'm at peace with what happened."



**Grieving is a highly individual experience; there's no right or wrong way to grieve. How you grieve depends on many factors, including your personality and coping style, your life experience, your faith, and how significant the loss was to you.**

We grieve differently. Sometimes these steps get repeated. It can be cyclical.

*The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing... not healing, not curing... that is a friend who cares. — Henri Nouwen*

There is a big difference between men and women. Men want to fix it and make it better. To sit there and not be able to help and cure is difficult.

Sometimes you need someone to just be next to you. David has been very supportive. He is sad, but he understands it is different for me. Sometimes you just need someone to be there for you and let you cry.

Fighting the depression:



**Stay focused and be patient, *Rejoicing Through Unbearable Sorrow***

- *Stay focused. Your mind will go wherever you let it, so choose to fill it correctly. Train it to focus on the positives and the good, not because you are naive to the reality, but because it keeps you focused on that future hope for the whole world. Be patient. God has kept every single promise He has ever made, so why would He stop now? Everything He has promised to come true has, so now it is my turn to wait on Him so in His due season these things will come to pass. Romans 12:12: "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."*



**Because God is MY God, I have good reason to choose to refocus my thoughts higher:**

**Romans 12:12-13:** (NASB) <sup>12</sup>*Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, <sup>13</sup>contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.*

Becca, you made a choice to let faith dominate.

First, you need to go to God in prayer and then look for faith strengthening aspects of your life.

**Because God is MY God, I KNOW there is an “afterwards:”**

**Hebrews 12:11-13:** (NASB) <sup>11</sup>*All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*

**BELIEVE in the afterwards and act!**

***You have to realize that mood follows action –take the action despite how you feel – take the action anyway. – Rich Roll***

Sometimes you force yourself to get up and keep on keeping on.

There are the two main keys in putting the fight against depression into place: Prayer, which is being vulnerable before God, and doing something about it despite how you feel.

Embracing acceptance:



**Pay it forward, *Rejoicing Through Unbearable Sorrow***

- *Be a light unto others. Pay it forward. In 2011, Chase’s Elementary School took on the task of spreading the idea within the community that it only takes one person to make a difference. They taught their students the concept of “Paying it Forward” and handed out “Pay it Forward” cards to each student, asking them to think about ways to use them to perform a random act of kindness, a willingness to give your time, energy, or talent without expecting anything in return. Chase was only six years old when he came home with his card, and he was constantly thinking of ways he could make a difference. Whether it was shoveling the neighbor’s driveway in the winter or opening doors for others, Chase’s heart was so full of love and goodness to share. The lesson our family learned from Chase’s assignment is that no matter how young or old, rich or poor, everyone has something to give. When he passed away, we handed out these cards to all the people who attended his funeral, and still do this day, as a reminder of who Chase really was - a loving little boy with so much to offer. Every time I pay it forward, I not only think of our little boy, but it is a chance to brighten someone else’s day and let our light shine. “You, Lord, keep my lamp burning, my God turns my darkness into light” (Psalm 18:28).*



**Because God is MY God, I am privileged to see with HIS light through MY darkness:**

**Psalm 18:28-29:** (NASB) <sup>28</sup>For You light my lamp; the LORD my God illumines my darkness. <sup>29</sup>For by You I can run upon a troop; and by my God I can leap over a wall.

Becca, your infertility has led to the birth of hope and service. Your involvement in Christian Questions has been instrumental in our being able to keep preaching the gospel.

I wasn't raised as a Christian, so I feel the opportunity God provided to me in following His son and choosing to serve Him makes me want to give that to someone else. It has changed my entire life and purpose. It has made my life full. If my experience could help someone else, that would be one of the greatest blessings of my life.

**Because God is MY God, I know where I can look to find real, powerful and healing help:**

**Psalm 121:1-3:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? <sup>2</sup>My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. <sup>3</sup>He will not allow your foot to slip; he who keeps you will not slumber.

 **Conclusion, Rejoicing Through Unbearable Sorrow**

- We will never forget Chase and the wonderful life we had with him. I am thankful for everything he has taught us while on earth and even after he has left. Without him, we would not be who we have become. This experience has strengthened our marriage, made me a better mother, sister, daughter, and friend - and because of this I am so very thankful. In 2014, our family welcomed another baby boy, Coy. Coy has renewed our strength and brought more joy and laughter into our lives. Truly, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea." Psalm 46:1-2. To God be the Glory! May He continue to use me and my life as a testimony to others.*

Listening to that commentary makes me think that my mother dying was one of the hardest experiences of my life. If she had not died, I would not be talking





with you today or I would not know God. Even those difficult experiences are sometimes the most important in shaping who we become.

**Because God is MY God, He is PRESENT in our troubles which makes them into providences:**

Psalm 46:1-2: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. <sup>2</sup>Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea.

You can find your way through grief. Have faith in God, work at it and find support and grow and always have hope.

*So, how do you find your way through grief?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*

**Bonus Material**



Join us next week for our March 12, 2018, podcast,  
"Are God and Evil Meant to Coexist?"

*Suppressed grief suffocates, it rages within the breast, and is forced to multiply its strength.*  
— Ovid

*Grief is the price we pay for love.* — Queen Elizabeth II

*Tears are the silent language of grief.* — Voltaire

*I wasn't prepared for the fact that grief is so unpredictable. It wasn't just sadness, and it wasn't linear. Somehow, I'd thought that the first days would be the worst and then it would get steadily better - like getting over the flu. That's not how it was.* — Meghan O'Rourke

**Encouraging texts to help us with grief:**



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

Psalm 103:17-18: (NASB) *<sup>17</sup>But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, <sup>18</sup>to those who keep His covenant and remember His precepts to do them.*

Proverbs 3:5-6: (KJV) *<sup>5</sup>Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. <sup>6</sup>In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.*

Isaiah 26:3: (KJV) *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

Psalm 30:1-12: (KJV) *<sup>1</sup>I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. <sup>2</sup>O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. <sup>3</sup>O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. <sup>4</sup>Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. <sup>5</sup>For His anger endureth but a moment; in His favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. <sup>6</sup>And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. <sup>7</sup>LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. <sup>8</sup>I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication. <sup>9</sup>What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? <sup>10</sup>Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper. <sup>11</sup>Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness; <sup>12</sup>To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever.*

### Five things we can do to ease the burden of the grief of others:

(Source: "Bearing the Grievs of Others," Carl Hagensick)

**1. Be Touched:** In order to be genuine, any effort to reach out to others in their grief must begin within ourselves. True politeness and polish emanate from the heart. The weeping of Jesus over the grave of Lazarus is a good example of such true tenderness.

Isaiah 42:1-4: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; my chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. <sup>2</sup>He will not cry out or raise his voice, nor make his voice heard in the street. <sup>3</sup>A bruised reed he will not break and a dimly burning wick he will not extinguish; he will faithfully bring forth justice. <sup>4</sup>He will not be disheartened or crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait expectantly for his law.*

**2. Offer Words of Comfort:** We are often at a loss of what to say. Repeating such phrases as, "I am so sorry," "Be assured of my prayers," and "I know how you feel," though expressing true heart-felt feelings, somehow seem inadequate. The expression "You will get over it" is also cold comfort, for one does not "get over" grief but rather learns to cope with it and, it is hoped, learns from it.

Romans 15:1-4: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. <sup>2</sup>Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. <sup>3</sup>For even Christ did not please himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me. <sup>4</sup>For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*



**3. Prayer:** The very assurance to those who are suffering grief that they are being remembered in prayer is salutary. They recognize that others care, and they are not left to go through their trials alone.

**James 5:13-16:** (ASV) <sup>13</sup>Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise. <sup>14</sup>Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: <sup>15</sup>and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. <sup>16</sup>Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.

**4. Help and Assistance:** No matter what the physical need, the biggest asset to offering help is to give of ourselves. The best single gift is often the mere presence of a friend in the aftermath of a traumatic experience. Frequently the words are uttered, "If you need anything, call me." Because this offer is so general it is often not used, whereas a more specific offer may be more helpful. One suggestion might be to suggest to the bereaved to write out a list of what needs doing and offer to set up a time to assist in accomplishing the tasks.

**Galatians 6:2:** (KJV) *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

**5. The Experience Itself:** In God's economy the sorrows of life provide rich grounds for growth for both the mourner and the comforter. The mourner has the opportunity to experience first-hand one of the traumas common to all men. *There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it* (1 Corinthians 10:13). For the comforter, it is an opportunity to broaden the heart and to copy the compassion of his Lord. Then he learns the truth of the wise man's words, *It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting.* (Ecclesiastics 7:2).

Grief is a bitter experience but a rich testing ground for the higher graces of the spirit. Overcoming grief develops "good grief," because of the rich legacy it leaves behind. As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted* (Matthew 5:4).

**The following article is from [helpguide.org](http://helpguide.org) and is VERY helpful:**

### **Coping with Grief and Loss**

#### **Understanding the Grieving Process and Learning to Heal:**

Coping with the loss of someone or something you love is one of life's biggest challenges. Often, the pain of loss can feel overwhelming. You may experience all kinds of difficult and unexpected emotions, from shock or anger to disbelief, guilt, and profound sadness. The pain of grief can also disrupt your physical health, making it difficult to sleep, eat, or even think straight. These are normal reactions to significant loss. But while there is no right or wrong way to grieve, there are healthy ways to cope with the pain that, in time, can ease your sadness and help you come to terms with your loss, find new meaning, and move on with your life.



## What is grief?

Grief is a natural response to loss. It's the emotional suffering you feel when something or someone you love is taken away. The more significant the loss, the more intense your grief will be. You may associate grieving with the death of a loved one—which is often the cause of the most intense type of grief—but any loss can cause grief, including:

- Divorce or relationship breakup
- Loss of health
- Losing a job
- Loss of financial stability
- A miscarriage
- Retirement
- Death of a pet
- Loss of a cherished dream
- A loved one's serious illness
- Loss of a friendship
- Loss of safety after a trauma
- Selling the family home

Even subtle losses in life can trigger a sense of grief. For example, you might grieve after moving away from home, graduating from college, or changing jobs. Whatever your loss, it's personal to you, so don't feel ashamed about how you feel, or believe that it's somehow only appropriate to grieve for certain things. If the person, animal, relationship, or situation was significant to you, it's normal to grieve the loss you're experiencing.

## How to cope with grief:

While experiencing loss is an inevitable part of life, there are ways to help cope with the pain, come to terms with your grief, and eventually, find a way to pick up the pieces and move on with your life.

- Acknowledge your pain.
- Accept that grief can trigger many different and unexpected emotions.
- Understand that your grieving process will be unique to you.
- Seek out face-to-face support from people who care about you.
- Support yourself emotionally by taking care of yourself physically.
- Recognize the difference between grief and depression.

## The grieving process:

Grieving is a highly individual experience; there's no right or wrong way to grieve. How you grieve depends on many factors, including your personality and coping style, your life experience, your faith, and how significant the loss was to you.

Inevitably, the grieving process takes time. Healing happens gradually; it can't be forced or hurried—and there is no “normal” timetable for grieving. Some people start to feel better in weeks or months. For others, the grieving process



is measured in years. Whatever your grief experience, it's important to be patient with yourself and allow the process to naturally unfold.

#### **Myths and facts about grief:**

**Myth: The pain will go away faster if you ignore it.**

**Fact:** Trying to ignore your pain or keep it from surfacing will only make it worse in the long run. For real healing, it is necessary to face your grief and actively deal with it.

**Myth: It's important to “be strong” in the face of loss.**

**Fact:** Feeling sad, frightened, or lonely is a normal reaction to loss. Crying doesn't mean you are weak. You don't need to “protect” your family or friends by putting on a brave front. Showing your true feelings can help them and you.

**Myth: If you don't cry, it means you aren't sorry about the loss.**

**Fact:** Crying is a normal response to sadness, but it's not the only one. Those who don't cry may feel the pain just as deeply as others. They may simply have other ways of showing it.

**Myth: Grief should last about a year.**

**Fact:** There is no specific time frame for grieving. How long it takes differs from person to person.

**Myth: Moving on with your life means forgetting about your loss.**

**Fact:** Moving on means you've accepted your loss—but that's not the same as forgetting. You can move on with your life and keep the memory of someone or something you lost as an important part of you. In fact, as we move through life, these memories can become more and more integral to defining the people we are.

#### **The stages of grief**

In 1969, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross introduced what became known as the “five stages of grief.” These stages of grief were based on her studies of the feelings of patients facing terminal illness, but many people have generalized them to other types of negative life changes and losses, such as the death of a loved one or a break-up.

#### **The five stages of grief**

- Denial: “This can't be happening to me.”
- Anger: “Why is this happening? Who is to blame?”
- Bargaining: “Make this not happen, and in return I will \_\_\_\_.”
- Depression: “I'm too sad to do anything.”
- Acceptance: “I'm at peace with what happened.”

If you are experiencing any of these emotions following a loss, it may help to know that your reaction is natural and that you'll heal in time. However, not everyone who grieves goes through all of these stages—and that's okay.



Contrary to popular belief, you do not have to go through each stage in order to heal. In fact, some people resolve their grief without going through any of these stages. And if you do go through these stages of grief, you probably won't experience them in a neat, sequential order, so don't worry about what you "should" be feeling or which stage you're supposed to be in.

Kübler-Ross herself never intended for these stages to be a rigid framework that applies to everyone who mourns. In her last book before her death in 2004, she said of the five stages of grief: "They were never meant to help tuck messy emotions into neat packages. They are responses to loss that many people have, but there is not a typical response to loss, as there is no typical loss. Our grieving is as individual as our lives."

### **Grief can be a roller coaster**

Instead of a series of stages, we might also think of the grieving process as a roller coaster, full of ups and downs, highs and lows. Like many roller coasters, the ride tends to be rougher in the beginning, the lows may be deeper and longer. The difficult periods should become less intense and shorter as time goes by, but it takes time to work through a loss. Even years after a loss, especially at special events such as a family wedding or the birth of a child, we may still experience a strong sense of grief.

### **Symptoms of grief**

While loss affects people in different ways, many of us experience the following symptoms when we're grieving. Just remember that almost anything that you experience in the early stages of grief is normal—including feeling like you're going crazy, feeling like you're in a bad dream, or questioning your religious or spiritual beliefs.

### **Emotional symptoms of grief**

**Shock and disbelief** - Right after a loss, it can be hard to accept what happened. You may feel numb, have trouble believing that the loss really happened, or even deny the truth. If someone you love has died, you may keep expecting them to show up, even though you know they're gone.

**Sadness** - Profound sadness is probably the most universally experienced symptom of grief. You may have feelings of emptiness, despair, yearning, or deep loneliness. You may also cry a lot or feel emotionally unstable.

**Guilt** - You may regret or feel guilty about things you did or didn't say or do. You may also feel guilty about certain feelings (e.g. feeling relieved when the person died after a long, difficult illness). After a death, you may even feel guilty for not doing something to prevent the death, even if there was nothing more you could have done.

**Anger** - Even if the loss was nobody's fault, you may feel angry and resentful. If you lost a loved one, you may be angry with yourself, God, the doctors, or even the person who died for abandoning you. You may feel the need to blame someone for the injustice that was done to you.



**Fear** - A significant loss can trigger a host of worries and fears. You may feel anxious, helpless, or insecure. You may even have panic attacks. The death of a loved one can trigger fears about your own mortality, of facing life without that person, or the responsibilities you now face alone.

### **Physical symptoms of grief**

We often think of grief as a strictly emotional process, but grief often involves physical problems, including:

- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Lowered immunity
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Aches and pains
- Insomnia

### **Seek support for grief and loss**

The pain of grief can often cause you to want to withdraw from others and retreat into your shell. But having the face-to-face support of other people is vital to healing from loss. Even if you're not comfortable talking about your feelings under normal circumstances, it's important to express them when you're grieving. While sharing your loss can make the burden of grief easier to carry, that doesn't mean that every time you interact with friends and family, you need to talk about your loss. Comfort can also come from just being around others who care about you. The key is not to isolate yourself.

### **Finding support after a loss**

**Turn to friends and family members** - Now is the time to lean on the people who care about you, even if you take pride in being strong and self-sufficient. Rather than avoiding them, draw friends and loved ones close, spend time together face to face, and accept the assistance that's offered. Often, people want to help but don't know how, so tell them what you need—whether it's a shoulder to cry on, help with funeral arrangements, or just someone to hang out with. If you don't feel you have anyone you can regularly connect with in person, it's never too late to build new friendships.

**Draw comfort from your faith** - If you follow a religious tradition, embrace the comfort its mourning rituals can provide. Spiritual activities that are meaningful to you—such as praying, meditating, or going to church—can offer solace. If you're questioning your faith in the wake of the loss, talk to a clergy member or others in your religious community.

**Join a support group** - Grief can feel very lonely, even when you have loved ones around. Sharing your sorrow with others who have experienced similar losses can help. To find a bereavement support group in your area, contact local hospitals, hospices, funeral homes, and counseling centers, or see the Resources section below.



Talk to a therapist or grief counselor - If your grief feels like too much to bear, find a mental health professional with experience in grief counseling. An experienced therapist can help you work through intense emotions and overcome obstacles to your grieving.

### **Using social media for grief support**

Memorial pages on Facebook and other social media sites have become popular ways to inform a wide audience of a loved one's passing and to reach out for support. As well as allowing you to impart practical information, such as funeral plans, these pages allow friends and loved ones to post their own tributes or condolences. Reading such messages can often provide some comfort for those grieving the loss.

Of course, posting sensitive content on social media has its risks as well. Memorial pages are often open to anyone with a Facebook account. This may encourage people who hardly knew the deceased to post well-meaning but inappropriate comments or advice. Worse, memorial pages can also attract Internet trolls. There have been many well-publicized cases of strangers posting cruel or abusive messages on memorial pages.

To gain some protection, you can opt to create a closed group on Facebook rather than a public page, which means people have to be approved by a group member before they can access the memorial. It's also important to remember that while social media can be a useful tool for reaching out to others, it can't replace the face-to-face connection and support you need at this time.

### **Take care of yourself as you grieve**

When you're grieving, it's more important than ever to take care of yourself. The stress of a major loss can quickly deplete your energy and emotional reserves. Looking after your physical and emotional needs will help you get through this difficult time.

Face your feelings. You can try to suppress your grief, but you can't avoid it forever. In order to heal, you have to acknowledge the pain. Trying to avoid feelings of sadness and loss only prolongs the grieving process. Unresolved grief can also lead to complications such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and health problems.

Express your feelings in a tangible or creative way. Write about your loss in a journal. If you've lost a loved one, write a letter saying the things you never got to say; make a scrapbook or photo album celebrating the person's life; or get involved in a cause or organization that was important to your loved one.

Look after your physical health. The mind and body are connected. When you feel healthy physically, you'll be better able to cope emotionally. Combat stress and fatigue by getting enough sleep, eating right, and exercising. Don't use alcohol or drugs to numb the pain of grief or lift your mood artificially.





Try to maintain your hobbies and interests. There's comfort in routine and getting back to the activities that bring you joy and connect you closer to others can help you come to terms with your loss and aid the grieving process.

Don't let anyone tell you how to feel, and don't tell yourself how to feel either. Your grief is your own, and no one else can tell you when it's time to "move on" or "get over it." Let yourself feel whatever you feel without embarrassment or judgment. It's okay to be angry, to yell at the heavens, to cry or not to cry. It's also okay to laugh, to find moments of joy, and to let go when you're ready.

Plan ahead for grief "triggers." Anniversaries, holidays, and milestones can reawaken memories and feelings. Be prepared for an emotional wallop and know that it's completely normal. If you're sharing a holiday or lifecycle event with other relatives, talk to them ahead of time about their expectations and agree on strategies to honor the person you loved.

*For help facing up to and managing distressing emotions like grief, use HelpGuide's free Emotional Intelligence Toolkit.*

### **When grief doesn't go away**

As time passes following a significant loss, such as the death of a loved one, it's normal for feelings of sadness, numbness, or anger to gradually ease. These and other difficult emotions become less intense as you begin to accept the loss and start to move forward with your life. However, if you aren't feeling better over time, or your grief is getting worse, it may be a sign that your grief has developed into a more serious problem, such as complicated grief or major depression.

### **Complicated grief**

The sadness of losing someone you love never goes away completely, but it shouldn't remain center stage. If the pain of the loss is so constant and severe that it keeps you from resuming your life, you may be suffering from a condition known as complicated grief. Complicated grief is like being stuck in an intense state of mourning. You may have trouble accepting the death long after it has occurred or be so preoccupied with the person who died that it disrupts your daily routine and undermines your other relationships.

Symptoms of complicated grief include:

- Intense longing and yearning for your deceased loved one
- Intrusive thoughts or images of your loved one
- Denial of the death or sense of disbelief
- Imagining that your loved one is alive
- Searching for your deceased loved one in familiar places
- Avoiding things that remind you of your loved one
- Extreme anger or bitterness over your loss
- Feeling that life is empty or meaningless
- The difference between grief and depression



Distinguishing between grief and clinical depression isn't always easy as they share many symptoms, but there are ways to tell the difference. Remember, grief can be a roller coaster. It involves a wide variety of emotions and a mix of good and bad days. Even when you're in the middle of the grieving process, you will still have moments of pleasure or happiness. With depression, on the other hand, the feelings of emptiness and despair are constant.

Other symptoms that suggest depression, not just grief, include:

- Intense, pervasive sense of guilt
- Thoughts of suicide or a preoccupation with dying
- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness
- Slow speech and body movements
- Inability to function at home, work, and/or school
- Seeing or hearing things that aren't there

### **Can antidepressants help grief?**

As a general rule, normal grief does not warrant the use of antidepressants. While medication may relieve some of the symptoms of grief, it cannot treat the cause, which is the loss itself. Furthermore, by numbing the pain that must be worked through eventually, antidepressants delay the mourning process.

### **When to seek professional help for grief**

If you recognize any of the above symptoms of complicated grief or clinical depression, talk to a mental health professional right away. Left untreated, complicated grief and depression can lead to significant emotional damage, life-threatening health problems, and even suicide. But treatment can help you get better.

Contact a grief counselor or professional therapist if you:

- Feel like life isn't worth living
- Wish you had died with your loved one
- Blame yourself for the loss or for failing to prevent it
- Feel numb and disconnected from others for more than a few weeks
- Are having difficulty trusting others since your loss
- Are unable to perform your normal daily activities
- If you're feeling suicidal...

Seek help immediately. Please read [Suicide Help](#), talk to someone you trust, or call a suicide helpline:

In the U.S., call 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

In the UK, call 08457 90 90 90.

In Australia, call 13 11 14.

Or visit [IASP](#) to find a helpline in your country.



**"Just Be Held," (Verse three) Casting Crowns**

Lift your hands, lift your eyes  
In the storm is where you'll find Me  
And where you are, I'll hold your heart  
I'll hold your heart  
Come to Me, find your rest  
In the arms of the God who won't let go

So when you're on your knees and answers seem so far away  
You're not alone, stop holding on and just be held  
Your world's not falling apart, it's falling into place  
I'm on the throne, stop holding on and just be held  
(Stop holding on and just be held)  
Just be held, just be held  
Just be held, just be held



**"Praise You in This Storm," (Verse one) Casting Crowns**

I was sure by now, God you would have reached down  
And wiped our tears away,  
Stepped in and saved the day.  
But once again, I say amen  
That it's still raining  
As the thunder rolls

I barely hear your whisper through the rain  
I'm with you

And as your mercy falls  
I raise my hands and praise  
The God who gives and takes away

And I'll praise you in this storm  
And I will lift my hands  
That you are who you are  
No matter where I am  
And every tear I've cried  
You hold in your hand  
You never left my side  
And though my heart is torn  
I will praise you in this storm

I lift my eyes unto the hills  
Where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the Lord  
The maker of heaven and earth  
I lift my eyes unto the hills  
Where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the Lord  
The maker of heaven and earth

And I'll praise you in this storm  
And I will lift my hands  
That you are who you are  
No matter where I am  
And every tear I've cried  
You hold in your hand  
You never left my side  
And though my heart is torn



I will praise you in this storm  
And though my heart is torn  
I will praise you in this storm

