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GRIEF	SORROW	DEPRESSION
The process of suffering following the loss of something deeply valued or someone dearly loved	Intense unhappiness; emotional distress	A complex mental health disorder; can involve biological, psychological, social, and spiritual factors; characterized by loss of motivation/interest, low moods, and significant impairment in life

2

FOUNDATIONS

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON GRIEF

1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 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.

**The apostle proceeds to comfort those who were mourning the death of their friends. The death of believers in the New Testament is frequently called "sleep." "He fell asleep" is a common epitaph on early Christian tombstones. It is to be observed that it is not of the dead generally that the apostle speaks, but of the dead in Christ...Some suppose that sorrow for our deceased friends is here utterly prohibited; inasmuch as if we had a firm belief in their blessedness we would rejoice and not mourn. But the sorrow here prohibited is a despairing and an unbelieving sorrow; we are forbidden to sorrow as those who have no hope, no belief in a blessed resurrection. The tears of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus have authorized and sanctified Christian sorrow.*

"Paul," observes Calvin, "lifts up the minds of believers to a consideration of the resurrection, lest they should indulge excessive grief on occasion of the death of their relatives, for it were unseemly that there should be no difference between them and unbelievers, who put no end or measure to their grief, for this reason, that in death they recognize nothing but destruction. Those that abuse this testimony so as to establish among Christians stoical indifference, that is, an iron hardness, will find nothing of this nature in Paul's words."

**From The Pulpit Commentary, Rev. Joseph S. Exell and Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones*

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FOUNDATIONS

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SORROW

Romans 9:1-5 - I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Luke 13:34 - "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"

Luke 19:41 - And when [Jesus] drew near and saw the city, he wept* over it.

**No merely silent tears of mute sorrow, but ἐκλαυσεν (eklausen), he wept aloud. All the insults and the sufferings of the Passion were powerless to elicit from the Man of sorrows that expression of intense grief which the thought of the ruin of the beloved city called forth.*

**from The Pulpit Commentary, Rev. Joseph S. Exell and Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones.*

4

FOUNDATIONS

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON DEPRESSION

Proverbs 25:20 (NIV) - Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on a wound, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.

"Causeless depression is not to be reasoned with, nor can David's harp charm it away by sweet discourings. As well fight with the mist as with this shapeless, undefinable, yet all-beclouding hopelessness. One affords himself no pity when in this case, because it seems so unreasonable, and even sinful, to be troubled without manifest cause; and yet troubled the man is, even in the very depths of his spirit. If those who laugh at such melancholy did but feel the grief of it for one hour, their laughter would be sobered into compassion.

Resolution might, perhaps, shake it off, but where are we to find the resolution when the whole man is unstrung? The physician and the divine may unite their skill in such cases, and both find their hands full, and more than full. The iron bolt that so mysteriously fastens the door of hope and holds our spirits in gloomy prison needs a heavenly hand to push it back."

**From The Minister's Fainting Fits, a sermon by Charles H. Spurgeon*

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ENGAGEMENT

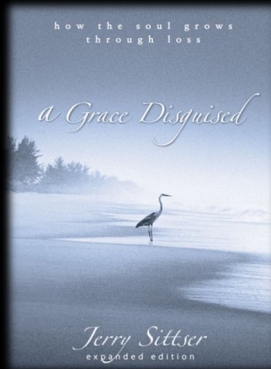
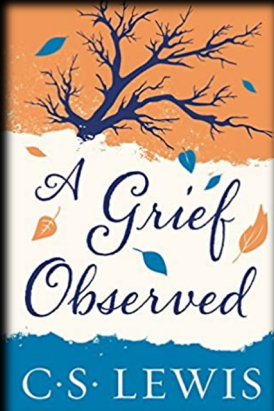
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. In the midst of deep grief, C.S. Lewis wrote: "Talk to me about the truth of religion and I'll listen gladly. Talk to me about the duty of religion and I'll listen submissively. But don't come talking to me about the consolations of religion or I shall suspect that you don't understand." What was he getting at?
2. Paul writes in **2 Corinthians 6:10** that the servants of God are "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." Explain.
3. Can Christians suffer from depression? How might the we (the church) support a brother or sister who is?

6

HOW DOES GRIEF FEEL?



"I had to face what felt like one wave of sorrow after another. I could not get away from it, no matter what I tried. The pain was relentless, like midday heat in the Sahara."

-Jerry Sittser

"I did not get over the loss of my loved ones; rather, I absorbed the loss into my life, like soil receives decaying matter, until it became a part of who I am."

-Jerry Sittser

"The death of a beloved is an amputation."

-C.S. Lewis

"Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape."

- C.S. Lewis

"Her absence is like the sky, spread over everything."

-C.S. Lewis

7

WHAT DOES GRIEF REVEAL?

"When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight."

– Kahlil Gibran

"The greater the love the greater the grief," writes Lewis. Grief is directly related to love. It is a testimony to the depth of love. To grieve is to prove that love has the power to "endure all things" (1 Cor. 13:7), even death.

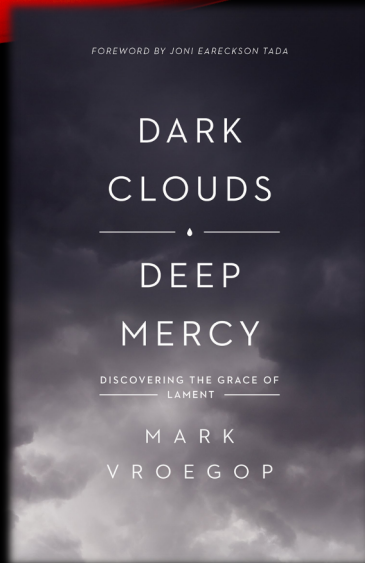
The Jewish poet Yehuda Helevi wrote these moving words about grief:

*'Tis a human thing, love,
a holy thing, to love
what death has touched*

Have you ever loved "what death has touched"? What did the experience reveal?

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LAMENT: A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO GRIEF



Turn to God ("O LORD, how many are my foes!" -Psalm 3:1a)

Address God as you come to him in prayer. This is sometimes combined with complaint.

Bring Your Complaint ("Many are rising against me." -Psalm 3:1b)

Identify in blunt language the specific pain or injustice. *Why* or *how* is often part of the complaint.

Ask Boldly ("Arise, O LORD! Save me, O my God!" -Psalm 3:7a)

Specifically call upon God to act in a manner that fits his character and resolves your complaint.

Choose to Trust ("But you, O LORD, are a shield about me..." -Psalm 3:3a)

Affirm God's worthiness to be trusted, and commit to praising him.

"Lament is the song we sing while living in a world that is under the curse of sin...A broken world will bring its share of grief, but it can also bring wisdom if we are willing to slow down, listen, and learn. Lament is an uncomfortable yet helpful teacher. It is true: *"The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning."* (Ecclesiastes 7:4)

9

TAKE HOME

- Offer a prayer of Lament for a loss you have suffered in your life. Pray through each step slowly.
- Read Isaiah 25:6-9 to recall the joyful hope we await through Christ our Savior and our God!



On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.
He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.
It will be said on that day,
"Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

-Isaiah 25:6-9

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