



Grief

Grief is a natural response to one of many kinds of loss. It's the emotional suffering you feel when something or someone you love is taken away. You may associate grief with the death of a loved one – and this type of loss does often cause the most intense grief. But grief can be caused by a relationship breakup, loss of a job or financial stability, miscarriage, relocation, etc. The more significant the loss, the more intense the grief. However, even subtle losses can lead to grief. For example, you might experience grief after moving away from home, graduating from college, changing jobs, selling your family home, or retiring from a career you loved.

We All Grieve Differently

Grieving is a personal and highly individual experience. How you grieve depends on many factors, including your personality and coping style, your life experience, your faith, and the nature of the loss. 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.

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 is grieving 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.

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. Draw loved ones close, rather than avoiding them, and accept the assistance that's offered. Oftentimes, people want to help but don't know how, so tell them what you need – whether it's a shoulder to cry on or help with funeral arrangements.
- Draw comfort from your faith – Spiritual activities that are meaningful to you can offer solace. If you're questioning your faith in the wake of the loss, talk to a pastor or others in your church family.
- 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. Long Hollow routinely offers GriefShare for people who are dealing with grief.
- Talk to a counselor – If your grief feels like too much to bear, call the church office (615-824-4006) to set up a counseling appointment.



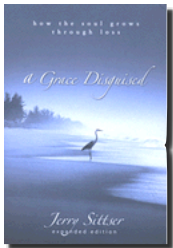
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A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit. The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly (Proverbs 15:13-14).

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:4-6).

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14).

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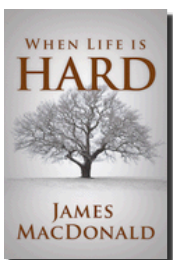
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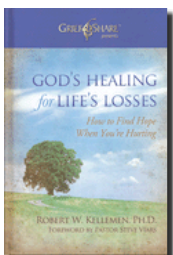


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GriefShare at Long Hollow

Let us help you through your journey of mourning to joy! GriefShare is a grief recovery support group that meets for encouragement weekly. During class you will get a chance to view feature interviews with leading authors, counselors, speakers, and pastors of expertise in grief recovery.

To find out more about the GriefShare curriculum, visit their website at griefshare.org. Books are \$15 and may be purchased at Resource Central before class. GriefShare is offered on the Hendersonville Campus Sundays at 10:00am and Wednesdays from 6:00-8:00. Check longhollow.com/grow for the specific room numbers.