



Grief = Loss.

- Hard to quantify because people react in different ways.
- Feeling of heaviness.
- Simple or complex.
 - Ex. moving, not getting on the sports team.
 - The loss of what's not going to happen.
 - Breakup.
 - Parents lose parents and kids grow up without grandparents.
 - When a person feels, This was significant TO ME.

Where is God when we're grieving?

- We know in our heads that He's there.
 - *"...Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you."* Deuteronomy 31:8 (NLT)
 - *"...I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."* Hebrews 13:5 (NLT)
 - Even though we know God's with us, it's normal to feel like He's left us.
 - This is part of living in a fallen world.
 - We know something is wrong.
 - We know we're meant for a perfect connection with God, but we don't get it in this life.
- Why does God let these bad things happen?
 - Again, we live in a broken world.
 - We don't have a definitive answer.
 - Ask yourself, What is God doing in this now?
 - We have to trust God and go to others who can help us when we're grieving.
 - There are consequences for sin in the world.
 - Sometimes we're hit with situations or consequences we don't feel we deserve.
 - We have to trust that God knows what He's doing.
 - *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.* Romans 8:28 (NLT)
 - Two important items to remember when someone else is grieving
 - Listen.
 - Validate the feelings the person is feeling.

Continued >



What does God's Word say to those who are grieving?

- Hebrews – Jesus is our high priest who understands our suffering.
 - God sacrificed his Son to save us.
 - Suffering is part of our journey.
- *My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth!* Psalm 121:2 (NLT).
- All with a heavy burden can come to Christ: Then Jesus said, *“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”* Matthew 11:28-30

When we come to the end of ourselves, we find God.

Two kinds of grief:

- Complicated grief.
 - Ex. Parents get divorced. Things to grieve: Dad's not around. Mom is stressed. We have less finances. How will other kids see me? Can I play sports now?
 - The tragedy affects many aspects of life.
- Compound grief.
 - Ex. Parents get divorced. Grandpa dies. They have to move.
 - New griefs occur before the previous ones could be processed.

What are the signs someone is grieving (especially with kids)?

- Sadness.
- Anger – masks sadness or loss of control.
- Lack of interest in things they used to love.
- Inability to connect.
- Extreme behaviors (ex. stealing, pornography, etc.)

How do we make faith tangible and cling to hope in hopelessness?

- *And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.* Romans 12:1-2
 - What we focus on determines how we process grief.
 - Scripture is always true.
 - Just because feelings seem true doesn't mean they are.
 - We have to ask God to help us experience what He promises in scripture.

Continued >



- God knows loss.
 - We need community. God provides people for us.
 - We need people who don't counsel us, but who will be present with us in our grief.
 - Sometimes the prayer of the person who isn't going through difficulty is what moves the griever forward.
 - God wants to do something new for us. *"But forget all that—it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?"* Isaiah 43:18-19 (NLT)
- Focus on God's Word, meditate on His truths, and have people who will be present with you.
- Sometimes people think they'll put the idea in the other person's head.
- Research shows the opposite. Talking about it helps the other person open up and become receptive to getting help.
- The biggest concerns are if they've tried or if they have a plan.
- Lead the other person to the decision to get help.
 - Greenville Suicide Hotline – 864.271.8888.
 - Talk to the person with someone else who loves him/her (community).
 - If they aren't willing to get help, call 911. and stay with the person until help arrives.
- Don't let people make you swear to secrecy.
 - You want them to stay open and share.
 - Be upfront: *If I feel you're in harm's way, I can't promise that.*
 - Before they share their secret, ask them if they're going to hurt themselves.

How can we help others who are grieving?

- Listen, be present and don't push.
- When the person is ready, he/she will talk about it.
 - We may not be the person he/she talks to, but we can be part of the process of helping him/her open up.
- What if someone appears to be in danger of hurting themselves?
 - Keep the relationship intact, but acknowledge when a situation is beyond what you can handle.
 - If the person seems unstable, don't be afraid to ask, *Are you thinking of hurting yourself?*

We as a culture (and the church) need to normalize grief, and let people feel their feelings.

- As believers, we want to move people to healing.

RESOURCES

- Greenville Suicide Hotline – 864.271.8888
- Support Group – GriefShare