




IS THIS NORMAL?

1 SESSION

YOU WAKE UP AND THE GRIEF IS STILL THERE; thirty minutes later you're still at the bathroom sink, toothbrush in hand. You can't remember your coworker's name ... again. Tears come without warning. The knife in your heart twists and turns. Other people just don't get it; they go about their days as if nothing has changed. How long is it going to be like this? *I don't know if I can make it through*, you worry.

As you view this week's video and complete the daily **FROM MOURNING TO JOY** exercises and **MY WEEKLY GRIEF WORK**, you'll begin to see:

-  Why your grief experience is harder than you imagined
-  Why the intensity and duration of your emotions are normal and appropriate
-  Despite how you feel right now, there is reason for hope

VIDEO OUTLINE

Use this outline to write down important concepts, encouraging words, or questions you have while viewing the video.

WHAT IS GRIEF?

Intense and chaotic

"Am I losing my mind?"

Something we hide

A proper response to loss

"God doesn't expect us to put a plastic smile on a broken heart." —Dr. Stephen Viars

Something Jesus did

PERMISSION TO GRIEVE

Honestly express your emotions

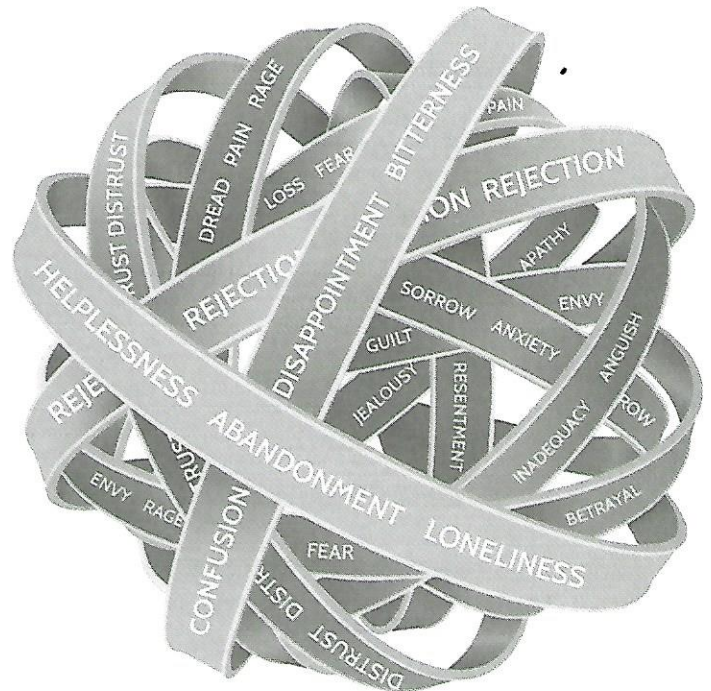
Don't suppress your feelings (Psalm 61:1-2, Matthew 5:4)

Consequences of suppressing grief

THE INTENSITY OF GRIEF

A tangled ball of emotions

The pain won't last (Ecclesiastes 3:4)



"God values authenticity." —Dr. Stephen Viars

DEALING WITH GRIEF

Lean into grief

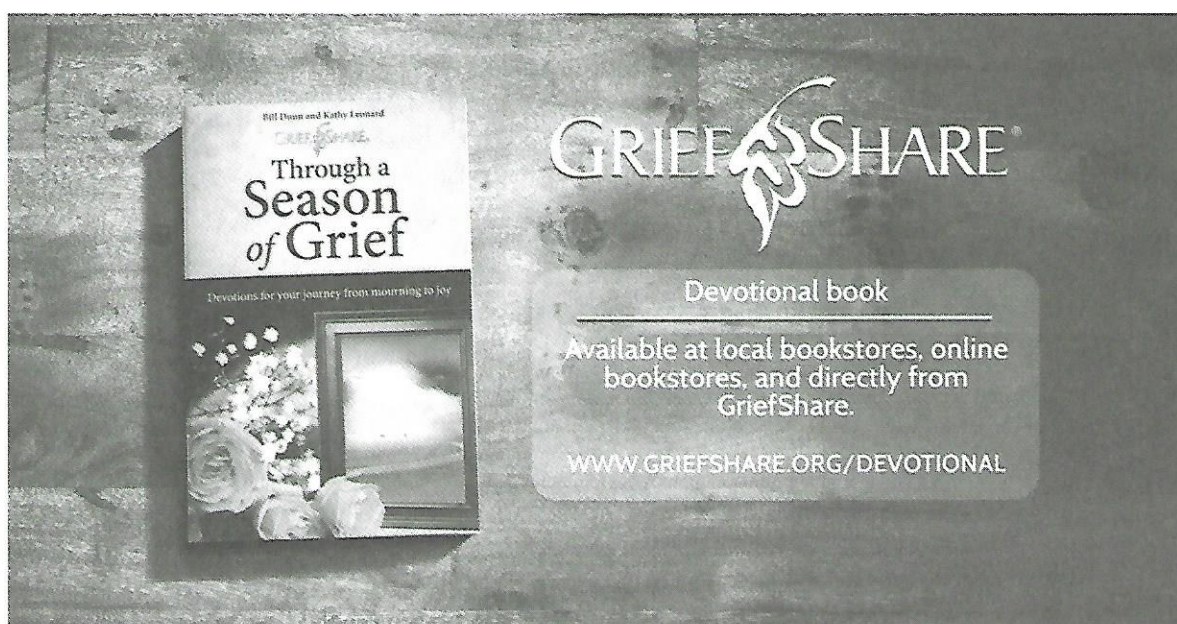
Postpone big decisions

Do the next thing

Commit to GriefShare (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

In this week's From Mourning to Joy exercises ...

Debi shares honestly about her deep pain after her daughter's death, her struggle to function, and her lack of desire to pray. Each day this week, you'll look at Bible passages addressing these struggles and others you might be facing.



"If I'm not sharing, then other people don't know I'm hurting." —Dr. Elias Moitinho

COMMON RESPONSES TO THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE

The responses below were shared by people who've faced a loved one's death.
Having an idea of what is normal in grief can be helpful.

You'll likely experience many emotions at once. Grief emotions are not orderly, but are more like a tangled ball. And some of the emotions listed here are polar opposites! Note that this list, while long, is not exhaustive. After looking over this list, if you're not sure if your grief experience is normal, talk with your GriefShare group leader. He or she will be able to help you.

Please understand that thinking you don't want to go on is normal, but thinking about suicide—especially making plans to take your life—is not normal. Seek help immediately.

- Abandoned
- Afraid of facing emotions
- Ambushed by grief
- Anger with others, self, loved one, and/or God
- Anguish
- Annoyance
- Anxiety
- Apathy
- Avoiding church
- Avoiding grief
- Avoiding thinking about the death
- Being harsh with others
- Betrayed
- Bitterness
- Blame
- Can't pray
- Can't talk about loved one
- Change of priorities
- Comparing your grief to other people's
- Compassion
- Complaining
- Concerned about your family members
- Confusion
- Consumed by grief
- Crisis of beliefs
- Crying
- Dazed
- Denial
- Depending on God
- Depression
- Desire for justice
- Despair
- Devastation
- Disappointment
- Disbelief
- Discontentment
- Discouragement
- Disorganized
- Disoriented
- Distracted
- Diving into work
- Don't want to go on
- Drained
- Drawing closer to God
- Dread
- Emotional wreck
- Emptiness
- Encouragement
- Envy
- Exhaustion/weakness
- Fatigue
- Fear of future
- Feeling judged
- Feeling like everything is in slow motion
- Feeling like everything is too hard
- Feeling like God isn't there
- Feeling like mush
- Feeling like something's missing
- Feeling like you're doing something wrong
- Feeling like you're losing your mind

- Feeling like your faith isn't working
- Feeling like your grief is marginalized
- Feeling out of control
- Feeling part of you is gone, ripped away
- Feeling rushed
- Feeling you're being a burden
- Financial worries
- Flashbacks
- Forgetfulness
- Frustration
- Full of questions
- Going through the motions
- Guilt
- Hallucinations
- Happy your loved one is no longer suffering
- Heartbroken
- Heightened emotions
- Helping everyone but yourself
- Helplessness
- Hiding grief
- Hope
- Hopelessness
- Hurt
- Impatience
- In a dark tunnel
- Inability to do things as well as you used to
- Inability to function
- Inadequacy
- Increased appetite
- Insomnia
- Internalizing grief
- Intrusive thoughts
- Irritable
- Isolating self
- Jealousy
- Lack of concentration
- Lack of focus
- Loneliness
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of identity
- Loss of purpose
- Making silly mistakes
- Memory loss
- Mental fog
- Missing loved one
- Nervous
- Nightmares
- No interest in doing things
- No sense of time
- Not allowing self to grieve
- Not enjoying what you used to enjoy
- Not trusting God
- Numbing pain
- Out of control
- Overwhelmed
- Panic attacks
- Peace
- Physical problems: stomachache, headache, chest and heart hurting, nausea, hurting all over, migraines, shortness of breath
- Prayer
- Pretending you're okay
- Questioning your sanity
- Questions about heaven
- Rage
- Refusing joy
- Regret
- Rejection by friends
- Relief
- Roller coaster emotions
- Sadness
- Second-guessing
- Self-pity
- Shame
- Shock
- Shutting down
- Shutting people out
- Sleeping a lot
- Social and relational struggles
- Sorrow
- Squashed
- Staying busy
- Staying in bed
- Stress
- Stuffing down emotions
- Surprise
- Tangled emotions
- Thankfulness
- Tired
- Trying to take care of everything yourself
- Turning to God
- Unable to make decisions
- Uncomfortable with others
- Unproductive
- Unwilling to accept help
- Vindictiveness
- Vulnerable
- Wanting to rush through this
- Worry
- Other _____

FROM MOURNING TO JOY

ENCOURAGEMENT AND COMFORT FROM GOD'S WORD

Session One - Is This Normal?

Every session includes five short, daily exercises. Each day you'll read a Bible passage relevant to the emotions, struggles, and questions grieving people face. Then you'll learn how to apply it to your life and how it is relevant as you seek comfort and healing. At the end of each session is **My Weekly Grief Work**, a tremendous tool with practical steps you can take to aid in healing.



DEBI: "I DIDN'T WANT TO GO ON"

"When I lost my daughter, I didn't want to go on. Life was sucked out of me. I had prayed for healing for her, and this was the way God answered. I couldn't read my Bible. I didn't even pray really. I couldn't do simple things at home. Parents aren't supposed to bury their children. It's supposed to be the other way around. How can I continue to go on?"

Are you hurting? Exhausted? Overwhelmed? Like Debi, do you wonder how you can possibly go on? Maybe you feel that way, but you pretend you're okay. Be assured these are common responses to grief. This week's exercises will help you understand what's typical in grief and how turning to God will help, even when you wonder if God is really here.

DAY 1

I feel like I'm losing my mind

What you are experiencing is normal. It's all part of the grief process. You must go through it in order to heal. But you can make it through.

GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU

"I am worn out from sobbing. All night I flood my bed with weeping, drenching it with my tears. My vision is blurred by grief." (Psalm 6:6-7a NLT)

1. What does your grief look and feel like?

2. David, the writer of Psalm 6, describes how worn out he is in his grief. Describe your energy level and how it's affecting your daily life.

3. Why do you think attending GriefShare will be helpful?

CONSIDER THIS

"There are no shortcuts to grieving. We're going through the pain in order to heal, because pain does heal."

—Dr. Susan Zonnebelt-Smeenge

"It's like a roller coaster ride. And I hate roller coasters." —Debi