

# Good Grief

“No rule book, no time  
frame. No judgment.

Grief is as individual  
as a  
fingerprint.”



**Key Verses:** I Thessalonians 4:13; Psalm 147:3; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Recently, I watched a touching scene...people placing personalized ornaments on a lovely tree, remembering loved ones who had died. Some spoke; others were silent. Some were visibly emotional; others weren't. Some had lost a loved one recently; others years ago. We formed a circle, held hands and prayed. The truth of "no rule book, no time frame. No judgment. Grief is as individual as a fingerprint" hit home. Grief, sorrow, despair, and anguish are associated with death. Christians do not sorrow as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13), but we do sorrow. Perhaps we have emphasized that hope, ignoring the reality of sorrow. The only people who think there's a time limit for grief have never lost a piece of their heart. Take all the time you need.

### How do we handle grief?

Dealing with grief is a challenge. It's easy to say we should surrender it to God, but it doesn't come easily. We find loss of various loved ones in the Bible. If you are thinking you're the only one going through this, please read these passages.

**Loss of a spouse: Genesis 23 and Ruth 1**

**Loss of a child: 2 Samuel 12; 18:33-19:8; John 19:25-30**

**Loss of a dear friend: 2 Samuel 1; John 11**

**Loss of both father and grandfather: II Samuel 4:4**

Think about these characters. Consider how they handled grief. How can you apply these passages to your losses?

Funeral homes offer services to help the grieving; some include aftercare visits. Hospices and churches have grief support groups. Always remember grief is personal and varies from individual to individual. Take the necessary steps to find what works for you and/or help others find what works for them.

## Reflective Questions

Read Isaiah 43:2 and 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

What assurance is found in Isaiah 43:2?

According to 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, what are we able to do with the comfort we receive?

## Have you renewed your mind?

Romans 12:2 contains the idea of choosing your focus. Think on good memories; thank God for the time you had with this person. What if there aren't good memories?

Renewing one's mind is a process. Grief has stages. Both from personal experience and people who have talked to me, I conclude we go through most of these, not necessarily in the same order or spending the same amount of time in each. These include shock, emotional release, preoccupation with the deceased, physical and emotional distress, hostile reactions, guilt, depression, and withdrawal.

Once I talked with a woman about these; she instantly pointed to hostile reactions and said,

"that's where I am." Time and sharing of feelings will lead to new relationships and readjustments to a world in which the deceased is not a part. The scar is always there; cycles of grief return intermittently; an emotional outburst may occur.

Everyone grieves differently, but everyone grieves. Don't try to avoid the pain; share your feelings. By experiencing deep emotions and accepting these, you grow in warmth, depth, understanding, and wisdom. You will never be the same; you can be a stronger person as you renew your mind. May you be able to truthfully sing:

***"All to Jesus I surrender,  
Lord, I give myself to  
Thee; Fill me with Thy  
love and power, Let Thy  
blessing fall on me."***

**Reflective Questions**

Read Romans 12:2

How can you be transformed?

How do you renew your mind?

How often should you renew your mind?

**How do we help the grieving?**

God uses people to help us with all we go through, including grief. Allow God to use you to help others. Be careful as you try to help, though. Never say you understand, because you don't. If you've lost your spouse and are talking to someone who has lost hers, remember every situation and every person is different.

One who has lost a spouse understands better than one who hasn't, yet there is a difference between being married 69 years and ten years. What if the spouse was murdered in the prime of life, but your spouse lived a long life? Consider the wife, seven months pregnant, whose husband died from an accident.

If your husband was the pastor, the whole church is grieving and wondering how you will

cope. Perhaps you've lost a child because of suicide, a drug overdose, or the cause of death could never be determined? How can a grandmother be comforted after tragically losing the grandchild she raised?

You've lost a parent. You were single, living hundreds of miles from family. Who will comfort you? All of these scenarios are real. They should cause us to think about how God may use our pain and suffering. Only God can bring peace and comfort, but may we point people to Him. When you tell someone you will pray for them, do so.

Grief raises its head at times in the future. It may be on the anniversary of the death, birthday of the loved one, holidays, Father's Day, Mother's Day, and other times. My dad, a World War II veteran, was laid to rest

on December 7; my mother was laid beside him on the Sunday before Mother's Day. The God of all comfort sees me through these times. Everyone's story is different. I've learned that we go through seasons; God knows we can deal with only so much at a time. He sees us through one season and another season later.

### Reflective Questions

List practical ways to help someone who is grieving? Example: shop for groceries, run errands, go with them to support group meetings.

Do you know someone who could use your help?

## What else causes grief?

Have you, a family member, or a friend experienced divorce? It's unlikely any reader can say no. Divorce affects the couple, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and others. Effects can last for generations. Ask the 75 year-old who was taken away from his dad and family when he was four. Fortunately, his wife urged him to reconnect before their first child was born, and the story has a good ending. Grief caused from divorce must be surrendered to God for humans cannot handle it on our own.

A lady whose heart is broken over her children knows she

made bad choices and doesn't want her children to follow suit. She wants to surrender those children to God. God heals the broken hearted (Psalm 147:3).

Christian parents have children who have not turned into the adults they imagined. Perhaps these children have turned to drugs, alcohol, and crime. They may have been affected adversely by circumstances over which they had no control. They may literally be imprisoned or imprisoned by bad habits or unhealthy relationships. Have these cases been surrendered to God?

Broken relationships come for many reasons, among them distance, hurts, and disagreements. These, too, bring grief. I've moved

many times over the years and sometimes lost contact with friends. I am so appreciative of Facebook and other technology in this age! But should we think on broken relationships? Philippians 4:8 tells us what things to think on; broken relationships aren't on that list.

Do you grieve over loss of health and/or youth? Mother aged gracefully, rarely complaining. My sister and I pray we do the same. Our times are in God's hands (Psalm 31:15). As long as He gives breath, He has a purpose for us here. When we are grayheaded, God will not forsake us and He wants us to show His power to others (Psalm 71:18). Besides, gray hair is beautiful (Proverbs 20:29). May God teach us to number our days as we apply our hearts to wisdom (Psalm 90:12).

### Application

So is grief good? Each person must answer that in their own way. When Mother went to Heaven, one of my former students sent me the booklet "Good Grief." It is available from Amazon. Originally published over 50 years ago, it's worth a read.

2 Corinthians 1:3 says, "God is the God of all comfort." Read the next verse and realize it isn't talking about just comfort after a death. My prayer for each of you is that you will realize that truth whatever your situation.

### RESOURCES:

[www.randallhouse.com](http://www.randallhouse.com): Dr. Edward Moody's books

[www.messengerstationery.com](http://www.messengerstationery.com): Thomas Kinkadee grief brochures (click products, then aftercare)

[www.centerforloss.com](http://www.centerforloss.com): (Dr. Alan Wolfelt)

[www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org): (Dr. Cengra Lynn)

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org): (local groups meet across the country)

[www.riemannfamily.com](http://www.riemannfamily.com): click grief and healing (included there are interactive videos, 365 days of help through e-mails.)

Check funeral home sites in your area for resources. Some employ grief counselors. If your loved one was on hospice, check there. Some Christian chaplains do work for hospices.

[www.rbc.org](http://www.rbc.org): type grief in the "search box." Free resources are available.

**About the Writer:** Dale (Edwards) Young, Ed.D, spent years in Christian education. A native of Tennessee, she now lives in Gulfport, Mississippi, where her husband Eddie pastors Gulf Coast Free Will Baptist Church. Dale is a family service counselor with Riemann Family Funeral Homes.