

Christian Grief

Grief is a natural, necessary and healthy response to the death of those we love. Not only death but other losses as well create a grief response. In the Bible there are many examples of individuals of strong faith grieving including David, Moses, Ruth, Jacob, Job, Mary, Martha - even Jesus. Feeling grief is not an indication of a lack of faith but rather it is a common human experience among believers and nonbelievers alike. Christians can experience the same stages of grief as our non believing peers. The five stages of grief model was developed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and they are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. They are often talked about as if they happen in order, moving from one stage to the other but this is not the case. In fact Kübler-Ross, in her writing, makes it clear that the stages are non-linear – people can experience these aspects of grief at different times and they do not happen in one particular order. You might not experience all of the stages, and you might find feelings are quite different with different bereavements.

God's Word does tell us that as Christians we grieve differently than the world but we need to be cautious not to misunderstand and think we should not have feelings of grief if we truly believe. So how can we as Christ followers grieve differently? In a word we grieve with **HOPE**.

Alecia Milano, a Christian author who has worked with grieving families for years, writes about RPM Ministries Biblical Model of grieving and growing where they identify eight scriptural "stages" of our response to life's losses:

Stages of Hurt

1. Denial/Isolation — Candor: Honesty with Myself
2. Anger/Resentment — Complaint: Honesty with God
3. Bargaining/Works — Cry: Asking God for Help
4. Depression/Alienation — Comfort: Receiving God's Help

Stages of Hope

1. Regrouping — Waiting: Trusting with Faith
2. Deadening — Wailing: Groaning with Hope
3. Despairing/Doubting — Weaving: Perceiving with Grace
4. Digging Cisterns — Worshiping: Engaging with Love

Whether you prefer to think of grief in five stages or eight, there are endless Bible verses about grief to help you along the way. Here are just a few:

"So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy." — John 16:22

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength". — Philippians 4:13

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."— Psalm 34:18

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away". — Revelation 21:4

*"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." — Romans 8:18 - **My personal favorite***

There is no set timeline to resolve our grief. We don't "get over" losses quickly, despite the unkind words of people who wonder why we're still struggling. The process of healing does not submit to a clock nor a calendar. Instead we are to admit and submit our grief to the Lord, trusting Him to lead us and heal us in His perfect timing. Sometimes this includes godly friends and counselors. Counseling can help us to experience the biblical reality that it's normal to hurt and necessary to grieve. We can learn how to move from denial to personal honesty (candor), from anger to honesty with God (complaint), from bargaining to asking God for help (crying out), and from depression to receiving God's help (comfort). God truly does provide us with everything we need for this life and our eternal life with Him. Through the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and the people of God, we can find what we need for our healing. It is important to remember, grief isn't something to be fixed or cured – it's something to be walked through with God as our companion. On Good Friday 2026 Pastor Lucas shared this video/song and it has been a great comfort to me in my grief. I pray it ministers to you as well. I plan to go to Italy to see this for myself. Let me know if you want to join me. 😊

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=_G5U0NDxdxU&ra=m

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