

Bible Study Syllabus
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Stages of Grief and the Healing Process

The Stages of Grief (Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Deep Sadness, Acceptance) are a natural/emotional response to a tragic event, loss or pending loss (hospice). The goal is to move through the Stages of Grief and avoid getting “stuck” (fixated) in one of the Stages. As we move throughout the Stages of Grief, the comfort of the Holy Spirit will facilitate healing.

ATTACHED
- PPT
- HEALTH
- JOB
- DIVORCE
- RELATIONSHIP

I. Some varied reasons to grieve – sins (Jam 4:7-10, Jer 4:8, 6:26, 7:29), death (Jer 31:15), loss (Job 1-2), trauma (II Sam 13:18-19, Judges 11:29-40), catastrophic events (Ps 126).

II. Everyone grieves (John 11:35) – It’s normal to feel hurt/loss (Acts 20:37-38), comforting to grieve (Matt 5:4) and necessary to heal (Proverbs 20:30, Luke 4:18, Psalms 34:18, Psalms 147:3).

III. Mourning ceremonies are throughout the Bible as a outward manifestation of inward grief and to help facilitate the grief process – Professional mourners (Matt 9:23, Jer 9:17-22), the renting of clothes, lying in dust, ashes and in sackcloth (II Sam 1:2, Josh 7:6, Job 1:20, 2:11-13) are all customary for the grief process.

IV. Some examples of unresolved grief (not healing/processing grief appropriately) are – anger without a cause, immobilizing depression, endless “why” questions (John 11:21, 32, 39), isolation and detached relationships.

V. Prayer (James 5:13, Phil 4:6-7), Holy Spirit guidance (Acts 9:31) and supportive fellowship (Hebrews 13:3) are throughout the grieving process.

IV. We are to comfort others – Rom 12:15, II Cor 1:3-4, I The 5:14, (Acts 4:36 with Acts 9:26-28), Gal 6:1-2, 6:1-2 Avoid false and negative comforters (Job 19) Psalms 1).

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Holding on to what was
- Loss: unconditional
Love

Stages of Grief

Denial – Emotional response (Luke 24:25-26). This is the shock reaction. “It can’t be true.” “No, not me.” “I can’t believe that they’re gone”. We refuse to believe what happened.

Biblical goal – Trusting with Faith/Waiting on God (Mark 9:23-24). Migrating from denial to personal honesty (candor). – This is when we are honest with the reality of the situation and our feelings.

Anger – Emotional response (Job 2:9). “This isn’t fair!” “If God were all powerful, he wouldn’t let this happen.” We direct blame toward God, others, and ourselves. We feel agitated, irritated, moody, and on edge. Vertical anger (God) or horizontal anger (others) or singular anger (self).

Biblical goal – Groaning with Hope/Wailing to God (Psalms 142). Migrating from anger to honesty with God (complaint) – This is when we began to express our anger to God rather than our anger at God.

Bargaining – Emotional response (John 11:21). This is the ‘if I would of, could of, should of’ grief (hypotheticals). Also included are survival guilt and circular why questions, such as “Why me?”, “Why my child?”, “Why do good people die and bad people live?” We try to make a deal, insisting that things be the way they used to be. “God, if you heal my little girl, then I’ll never drink again.” If I would have been there to help, he never would have died. At times, we may call a temporary truce with God.

Biblical goal – Perceiving with Grace/Weaving in God’s Truth (Ps 42:11). Migrating from bargaining to asking God for help (crying out) – This is when we end the hypotheticals and circular questions and seek his truth.

Deep Sadness/Depression – Emotional response (Psalms 38). This may be caused by a Spiritual attack or life’s circumstances, or an organic chemical imbalance.

Biblical goal – Resting with Comfort (II Cor 1:3-4). Migrating from deep sadness/depression to receiving God’s help (comfort) – This is when admitting our loss brings sadness (which can be healthy mourning and grieving) versus hopelessness (which is unhealthy mourning and grieving).

Acceptance – Emotional response (Acts 21:10-14). This is not always agreeing with the outcome or condoning the outcome, just accepting that we are not in control of the outcome. Now we face our loss calmly. It is a time of silent reflection and regrouping. “Life has to go on. How? What do I do now?”

Biblical goal – Engaging with Love/Worshipping God (Ps 30:5, Ps 126:5-6, II Cor 13:14). Migrating from acceptance/resolution to worship, praise and of God – This is when we have personal perspective on the entire situation, restore our relationship vertically with the Trinity and restore our relationships horizontally as we celebrate/honor their memory.

II SAM 12:15-23