A BIBLE STUDY FOR GRIEVING HEARTS

Walking Through Grief

An Eight-Week Bible Study



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Trinfinity Enterprises

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A note before you begin. This book is written to teach the Bible and encourage faith. It shares my understanding of Scripture and is offered for study and spiritual growth. It is not counseling, medical, legal, or financial advice. If you are facing a crisis, a health problem, or a legal or money problem, please reach out to a qualified professional as well as your pastor and church family. To the fullest extent the law allows, Andrew Dominguez, Trinfinity Enterprises, and Andrew Dominguez's heirs, estate, successors, and assigns accept no liability for how this material is used.

A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Book

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this book direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

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Contents

Before You Begin....1
Week 1: What Grief Is....3
Week 2: Jesus Wept: God Meets Us in Grief....7
Week 3: The First Weeks....11
Week 4: Honest Prayers....15
Week 5: Guilt, Regret and Anger....19
Week 6: Holidays, Anniversaries and Hard Days....23
Week 7: Grieving With Hope....27
Week 8: Comforted to Comfort Others....31
A Closing Word....35
Memory Verses....36
Psalms for Grieving Hearts....38
Things I Want to Remember About Them....39
Notes for Group Leaders....40
About This Study....42

Before You Begin

> *The LORD **is** near to the broken of heart, and the crushed of spirit He saves.*
>
> Psalm 34:18 (SLB)

If you are holding this book, someone you love has died, or you are walking beside someone who is grieving. I am sorry. There are no words that make it right, and I will not pretend there are.

Over the years I have stood beside a good many families at funerals and in the weeks after. I have watched people carry grief in very different ways. Some cried for days. Some did not cry at all and wondered what was wrong with them. Some leaned hard on God. Some were angry at Him. What I have learned is that there is no one right way to grieve, but there is a God who does not leave us alone in it.

What This Study Is

Walking Through Grief is an eight-week Bible study for people who are grieving. It does not try to rush you or fix you. It walks beside you, one week at a time, through what the Bible says to people in sorrow.

- **Week 1:** What grief is
- **Week 2:** Jesus wept: God meets us in grief
- **Week 3:** The first weeks
- **Week 4:** Honest prayers
- **Week 5:** Guilt, regret and anger
- **Week 6:** Holidays, anniversaries and hard days
- **Week 7:** Grieving with hope
- **Week 8:** Comforted to comfort others

How Each Week Works

Each week has a Bible passage printed in full, plain teaching, a few fill-in-the-blank questions, questions to think through with room to write, a short list of daily readings, a memory verse, one small step for the week and a prayer. There are also blank pages for your own thoughts. Many grieving people find that writing helps.

Go at your own pace. If a week is too much, stay there for two. If you can only read the Bible passage and the prayer, that is enough. Grief is tiring, and there is no grade at the end.

Three Ways to Use This Study

On your own. Keep it by your chair or your bed. Read a little at a time.

With a friend. Ask someone you trust to read along and meet with you once a week. Grief is lighter when it is shared.

In a grief group. Many churches offer grief support groups. Notes for group leaders are at the back of this book.

When to Get More Help This study is not a substitute for a doctor, a pastor or a counselor. If you cannot sleep, eat or function for weeks, if you are using alcohol or other substances to get through the day, or if you have thoughts of harming yourself, please talk with your doctor or a counselor. If you are thinking about suicide, call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, any time of day or night. In an emergency, call 911.

About the Scripture

The Scripture in this book comes from the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB), a word-for-word translation in today's language. Words added in English to make the sense clear are printed in bold italics.

Week 1: What Grief Is

> *Blessed **are** those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
>
> Matthew 5:4 (SLB)

Grief is the price of love. We grieve because we loved. If the person had not mattered to us, their death would not hurt so much. That does not make the pain any smaller, but it can help us understand it. The ache you feel is a measure of the love you shared.

Read It

> *For everything **there is** an appointed time, and a time for every matter under the heavens: a time to give birth and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance* (Ecclesiastes 3:1-4)

Understand It

There is a time to weep

Solomon wrote that there is "a time to weep" and "a time to mourn." God built grief into the seasons of life. Weeping is not a lack of faith. Mourning is not weakness. It is right and human to grieve when someone we love is gone.

Some Christians feel guilty for grieving, as if a strong believer should only smile. But Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Notice that He did not say, "Blessed are those who never mourn." He blesses the mourners, and He promises them comfort.

Grief touches everything

Grief is not only sadness. It can show up in many ways:

- **In your body:** tiredness, trouble sleeping, sleeping too much, no appetite, aches, getting sick more often.
- **In your mind:** trouble thinking, forgetting things, losing track of time, replaying the last days over and over.
- **In your feelings:** sadness, shock, numbness, anger, guilt, fear, relief, loneliness, sometimes all in one day.
- **In your faith:** questions, doubts, feeling far from God, or clinging to Him more than ever.

All of these are common. They do not mean you are going crazy or losing your faith. They mean you are grieving.

Grief does not follow a schedule

You may have heard of "stages" of grief. They can be helpful words, but grief rarely moves in a straight line from one stage to the next. It comes in waves. You may have a good day, then a terrible one. You may feel fine for weeks, then a song or a smell knocks you to your knees. That is normal.

Every loss is different

Losing a parent is different from losing a spouse. Losing a child is different again. A sudden death is different from a long illness. A death by suicide, an overdose or violence brings its own hard questions. A miscarriage is a real loss, even when others do not see it that way. Do not compare your grief with anyone else's, and do not let anyone tell you how you should feel.

Fill It In

1. a time to _____ and a time to laugh; a time to _____ and a time to dance **(Ecclesiastes 3:4)**

2. Blessed ***are*** those who _____, for they will be _____. **(Matthew 5:4)**

Think It Through

1. Who are you grieving? Write their name and one thing you loved about them.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Which of the signs of grief in this week's teaching have you noticed in yourself?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Has anyone told you how you should be grieving? How did it make you feel?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Daily Readings This Week

- Day 1: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
- Day 2: Matthew 5:1-12
- Day 3: Psalm 34
- Day 4: Psalm 121
- Day 5: Isaiah 41:8-13

MEMORY VERSE

*Blessed **are** those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

Matthew 5:4

One Step This Week Write down three memories of the person you lost. Keep them in this book. Add more as they come back to you.

Prayer

Lord, I hurt. You know the person I have lost, and You know how much I loved them. You said those who mourn will be comforted. I am mourning. Please comfort me. In Jesus' name, amen.

My Thoughts This Week

Week 2: Jesus Wept: God Meets Us in Grief

> *who heals the broken of heart and binds up their wounds.*
>
> Psalm 147:3 (SLB)

When we are grieving, one of the hardest questions is, "Where is God?" This week we look at one of the shortest verses in the Bible, and one of the most comforting. When Jesus stood outside the tomb of His friend Lazarus, He wept.

Read It

> *Therefore when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her weeping, He was deeply moved in the spirit and troubled Himself. And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They say to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. Therefore the Jews were saying, "Look how He was loving him dearly!"* (John 11:33-36)

Understand It

Jesus knew what He was about to do

Here is what makes this passage so striking. Jesus knew He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead. In a few minutes, Lazarus would walk out of that tomb. And still Jesus wept. He did not tell Mary and Martha to stop crying because everything would be fine. He entered their sorrow and cried with them.

That tells us something about God's heart toward you. He does not stand at a distance from your grief. He is "deeply moved." He weeps with those who weep.

A man of pains

Isaiah describes the coming Savior as "a man of pains and acquainted with sickness." Jesus knew sorrow from the inside. Joseph is not mentioned during His ministry, and many believe Jesus had already buried the man who raised Him. He was betrayed by a friend. He wept over Jerusalem. He felt the full weight of the cross. When you tell Him you are hurting, you are talking to Someone who understands.

> *For we do not have a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but* ***one*** *who has been tempted in all things according to likeness, without sin. Let us therefore come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.* (Hebrews 4:15-16)

Near to the broken of heart

Psalm 34:18 says, "The LORD is near to the broken of heart." When your heart is broken, God draws near. You may not feel it. Grief can make God seem far away. But His promise does not depend on our feelings. He is near.

Come as you are

Hebrews says we can "come with boldness to the throne of grace" to find mercy and grace "for timely help." You do not have to clean up your feelings before you pray. You can come to God tired, confused, angry and in tears. He invites you to come just as you are.

Fill It In

1. Jesus _____. **(John 11:35)**

2. The LORD ***is*** _____ to the _____ of heart, and the crushed of spirit He saves. **(Psalm 34:18)**

3. who _____ the broken of heart and binds up their _____. **(Psalm 147:3)**

Think It Through

1. Why do you think Jesus wept, even though He knew He would raise Lazarus?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Have you felt that God is near, or far away, in your grief? Be honest.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What would you like to say to Jesus about your loss? Write it as a prayer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Daily Readings This Week

- Day 1: John 11:1-27
- Day 2: John 11:28-44
- Day 3: Isaiah 53:1-6
- Day 4: Hebrews 4:14-16
- Day 5: Psalm 147:1-11

MEMORY VERSE

*The LORD **is** near to the broken of heart, and the crushed of spirit He saves.*

Psalm 34:18

One Step This Week Read John 11:35 every morning this week. Picture Jesus standing beside you, sharing your sorrow.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You wept at Your friend's tomb. Thank You that You understand sorrow. Thank You that You are near to the broken of heart. I am broken. Draw near to me, and help me draw near to You. In Your name, amen.

My Thoughts This Week

Week 3: The First Weeks

> *Come to Me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.*
>
> Matthew 11:28 (SLB)

The first weeks after a death are often a blur. There are arrangements to make, people to call, papers to sign and a service to plan. Then, after the funeral, everyone goes home, the casseroles stop coming, and the house gets very quiet. For many people, that is when the grief really hits.

Read It

> *Even when I walk in a valley of deep darkness, I will not fear evil, for You **are** with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.* (Psalm 23:4)

> *Come to Me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke **is** easy, and My burden is light.* (Matthew 11:28-30)

Understand It

Through the valley

David wrote, "Even when I walk in a valley of deep darkness, I will not fear evil, for You are with me." Notice the word "through." The valley is not where we live forever. We walk through it. And we do not walk it alone. The Shepherd is with us, with His rod and staff to guide and protect.

Come and rest

Jesus said, "Come to Me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." Grief is heavy labor. It wears you out in body and soul. Jesus does not hand you a list of things to do. He invites you to come to Him and rest.

Take care of your body

God made us body and soul, and grief affects both. In the first weeks, the simple things matter:

- **Eat something,** even when you are not hungry. Small, simple meals are enough.
- **Drink water.**
- **Rest,** even if you cannot sleep well. Lie down. Close your eyes.
- **Get outside** for a short walk if you can.
- **See your doctor** if you are not sleeping or eating for more than a few days, or if you feel sick.

A warning about numbing the pain

It is tempting to reach for something that dulls the hurt: alcohol, pills, food, screens, staying busy every minute. I know this one from the inside. After a serious hiking accident in 2014 and four

major surgeries, I used alcohol to mask the pain. It started small and became an addiction that took me six years to face. Numbing does not take grief away. It only postpones it and adds new problems. If you find yourself leaning on something to get through the day, tell someone you trust, and get help early.

Let people help

Many people want to help but do not know how. When someone says, "Let me know if you need anything," give them something specific: a meal, a ride, mowing the lawn, sitting with you for an hour, helping with paperwork. Letting others help is not weakness. It gives them a way to love you.

Big decisions can wait

If you can, wait before making big decisions such as selling a house, moving or giving away all of the person's belongings. Grief clouds judgment. There will be time later. If a decision cannot wait, ask a trusted friend to help you think it through.

Fill It In

1. Even when I walk in a _____ of deep darkness, I will not fear evil, for You ***are*** _____; Your rod and Your staff, they _____ me. **(Psalm 23:4)**

2. Come to Me, all who labor and are _____, and I will give you _____. **(Matthew 11:28)**

Think It Through

1. What has been the hardest part of the first weeks for you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. How are you doing with eating, sleeping and taking care of yourself?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Is there anything you are using to numb the pain? Who could you talk to about it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Write down two specific things other people could do to help you right now.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Daily Readings This Week

- Day 1: Psalm 23
- Day 2: Matthew 11:25-30
- Day 3: Psalm 46
- Day 4: 1 Kings 19:1-8
- Day 5: Isaiah 40:28-31

MEMORY VERSE

*Even when I walk in a valley of deep darkness, I will not fear evil, for You **are** with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

Psalm 23:4

One Step This Week Say yes to the next offer of help. Give the person one specific thing to do.

Prayer

Shepherd of my soul, I am walking through a dark valley. Walk with me. Give me rest when I am worn out, strength to do the next small thing, and the humility to let others help. Keep me from numbing my pain in ways that hurt me. In Jesus' name, amen.

My Thoughts This Week

Week 4: Honest Prayers

> *Trust in Him at every time, people; pour out your heart before Him; God **is** a refuge for us. Selah.*
>
> Psalm 62:8 (SLB)

Grief can make prayer hard. Some people stop praying altogether because they do not know what to say, or because they are angry with God. Others feel they have to pray polite, cheerful prayers. The Bible shows us a better way. About a third of the Psalms are laments: honest prayers of sorrow, complaint and questions, poured out to God.

Read It

> *How long, LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long will I set counsels in my soul, **with** sorrow in my heart by day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?* (Psalm 13:1-2)

> *And I, in Your steadfast love I have trusted; let my heart rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for He has dealt bountifully with me.* (Psalm 13:5-6)

Understand It

How long?

David starts Psalm 13 with four questions that all begin, "How long?" He feels forgotten. He feels God is hiding His face. He has "sorrow in my heart by day." This is not a prayer of a man with a weak faith. It is a prayer of a man who brought his real feelings to the only One who could do something about them.

God put these prayers in the Bible on purpose. They give us words when we have none, and they give us permission to be honest.

Pour out your heart

Psalm 62:8 says, "pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us." Pouring out means holding nothing back. You can tell God you are angry, confused, lonely, afraid or numb. He already knows. Telling Him is an act of trust.

The turn

Most laments have a turn in them. David does not stay in "How long?" In verse 5 he says, "And I, in Your steadfast love I have trusted." Nothing about his situation has changed yet. What changed is where he put his eyes. He remembered God's steadfast love and chose to trust it.

You may not be ready for the turn yet. That is all right. Some laments, like Psalm 88, end in darkness. But keep praying. Over time, many grieving people find that honest prayer slowly turns toward trust.

Write your own lament

A lament usually has four parts. You can use them to write your own prayer:

1. **Turn to God.** Speak to Him directly. "Lord…"
2. **Tell Him the truth.** What hurts? What are you asking?
3. **Ask.** What do you need from Him?
4. **Trust.** Even a small step. "I will still trust You."

Fill It In

1. _____, LORD? Will You _____ me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? **(Psalm 13:1)**

2. Trust in Him at every time, people; _____ your heart before Him; God ***is*** a _____ for us. Selah. **(Psalm 62:8)**

Think It Through

1. Have you found it hard to pray since your loss? Why?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Which of David's words in Psalm 13 are closest to how you feel?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Write your own lament using the four parts above.

Daily Readings This Week

- Day 1: Psalm 13
- Day 2: Psalm 42
- Day 3: Psalm 62
- Day 4: Psalm 77
- Day 5: Lamentations 3:19-33

MEMORY VERSE

Trust in Him at every time, people; pour out your heart before Him; God ***is*** *a refuge for us. Selah.*

Psalm 62:8

One Step This Week Pray your written lament out loud once a day this week. Notice if anything changes.

Prayer

Lord, You know everything I feel, even the things I am afraid to say. I pour out my heart to You. Be my refuge. When I cannot see the way, help me trust Your steadfast love. In Jesus' name, amen.

My Thoughts This Week

Week 5: Guilt, Regret and Anger

> *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous so that He may forgive us the sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
>
> 1 John 1:9 (SLB)

Two of the heaviest parts of grief are guilt and anger. "If only I had…" "Why didn't I…" "Why did God let this happen?" "How could the doctors miss it?" These thoughts can go around and around. This week we bring them into the light.

Read It

> *Be gracious to me, LORD, for it is distressing to me; my eye has wasted away with vexation, my soul and my body. For my life has been spent in sorrow and my years in groaning; my strength has stumbled because of my iniquity, and my bones have wasted away.* (Psalm 31:9-10)
>
> *Be angry, and do not sin; let the sun not set on your anger* (Ephesians 4:26)

Understand It

False guilt and real guilt

Almost everyone who grieves feels some guilt. Much of it is false guilt: blaming ourselves for things we could not have known or could not have changed. "If I had called that day, maybe I would have noticed something." Maybe. But you are not God. You did not know what was coming. You did the best you could with what you knew at the time.

Sometimes the guilt is real. Maybe there were hard words that were never taken back, or a visit you put off, or a relationship you let drift. If so, the answer is not to carry it forever. It is to bring it to God.

Forgiven

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous so that He may forgive us the sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confession is simply agreeing with God about what we did. Forgiveness is His promise. You cannot go back and fix the past, but you can receive God's forgiveness for it. You can also ask Him to help you forgive yourself.

When the other person cannot forgive you

Sometimes the person we hurt is gone, and we cannot ask them to forgive us. That can be one of the hardest things about grief. You can still tell God. Some people find it helps to write a letter to the person who died, saying what they wish they had said. Then give it to God and let it rest with Him.

Anger

Grief often brings anger: at the person who died for leaving, at doctors, at family members, at ourselves, even at God. Anger is a normal part of grief. Paul says, "Be angry, and do not sin." The feeling is not the sin. What matters is what we do with it.

Do not stuff anger down, and do not take it out on the people around you. Bring it to God, as the psalmists did. Talk it through with a trusted friend. Exercise. Write it down. Over time, ask God to help you let go of the anger that hurts you and others.

Angry at God

If you are angry at God, tell Him. He can handle it. Job said some hard things to God in his grief, and God answered him. The worst thing you can do with anger at God is walk away from Him. The best thing is to keep talking to Him, even in anger.

Old wounds

Sometimes a death brings up old, unresolved hurts in a family. Sometimes relationships were strained before the death and stay strained after. If that is your story, you are not alone. Do what is right on your side, pray for the others, and leave the rest with God. Doing what is right does not mean others will forgive you or change. That part is in God's hands.

Fill It In

1. If we _____ our sins, He is _____ and righteous so that He may _____ us the sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **(1 John 1:9)**

2. Be _____, and do not _____; let the sun not set on your anger **(Ephesians 4:26)**

Think It Through

1. Are there "if only" thoughts that keep coming back to you? Write them down.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Which of those are false guilt? Is there any real guilt you need to bring to God?

3. Who or what are you angry at? What would it look like to bring that anger to God?

A Letter I Wish I Could Send

If it would help, use this space to write to the person you lost. Say what you wish you had said.

Daily Readings This Week

- Day 1: Psalm 32
- Day 2: 1 John 1:5-10
- Day 3: Psalm 103:1-14
- Day 4: Job 42:1-6
- Day 5: Romans 8:1-4

MEMORY VERSE

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous so that He may forgive us the sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

One Step This Week Name one "if only" out loud to God. Then, if it is false guilt, tell Him you are setting it down. If it is real, confess it and thank Him for His forgiveness.

Prayer

Father, I bring You my regrets and my anger. Forgive what I have done wrong, and free me from the guilt that is not mine to carry. Help me be angry without sinning, and teach me to let go. In Jesus' name, amen.

My Thoughts This Week

Week 6: Holidays, Anniversaries and Hard Days

> *The steadfast loves of the LORD, for we are not finished, for His compassions do not come to an end.* ***They are*** *new in the mornings; great* ***is*** *Your faithfulness.*
>
> Lamentations 3:22-23 (SLB)

Just when you start to feel steadier, a hard day comes around: a birthday, a wedding anniversary, the first Thanksgiving or Christmas, Mother's Day or Father's Day, the anniversary of the death. Grief often comes back hard on these days. Planning ahead can help.

Read It

> *When you pass through the waters, I* ***will be*** *with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you; when you walk through fire, you will not be burned, and a flame will not burn you.* (Isaiah 43:2)

> *The steadfast loves of the LORD, for we are not finished, for His compassions do not come to an end.* ***They are*** *new in the mornings; great* ***is*** *Your faithfulness.* (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Understand It

When, not if

Isaiah says, "When you pass through the waters." Not if. God does not promise that we will never face deep water. He promises, "I will be with you." The hard days will come. So will He.

New every morning

Jeremiah wrote Lamentations after the fall of Jerusalem, in the middle of terrible loss. Even there, he wrote that God's compassions "are new in the mornings; great is Your faithfulness." On the hardest days, you do not need strength for the whole year. You only need today's mercy, and God gives it new each morning.

Plan for the hard days

Hard days often feel worse in the days leading up to them than on the day itself. A plan helps:

- **Mark the dates.** Know which days are coming so they do not surprise you.
- **Decide ahead of time** what you will do and who you will be with. It is fine to change old traditions, keep them, or do something new.
- **Tell people.** Let family and friends know the date is coming and that it will be hard.
- **Plan a way to remember.** Light a candle, visit the grave, look at photos, cook their favorite meal, give to a cause they cared about, or tell stories about them.
- **Plan something restful** for the end of the day.
- **Give yourself permission** to leave a gathering early, to cry, or to laugh.

Holidays with family

Holidays bring families together, and that can be a comfort or a strain. Different people grieve differently. One person wants to talk about the person who died. Another cannot bear to. Talk about it before the day. Agree on ways to include the person's memory that everyone can live with.

Laughter is not betrayal

Many grieving people feel guilty the first time they laugh or enjoy something after a loss. Laughing does not mean you have stopped loving them or that you are "over it." The same passage that says there is "a time to weep" also says there is "a time to laugh." Both can live in the same heart.

Fill It In

1. When you pass through the _____, I ***will be*** _____; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you; when you walk through fire, you will not be burned, and a flame will not burn you. **(Isaiah 43:2)**

2. ***They are*** _____ in the mornings; great ***is*** Your _____. **(Lamentations 3:23)**

Think It Through

1. Which dates in the coming year do you expect to be hardest?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. How would you like to remember the person you lost on those days?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Who could you be with on the hardest day?

   _____

_____

_____

_____

My Plan for a Hard Day

The day: _____

Who I will be with: _____

How I will remember them: _____

Something restful I will do: _____

Who I will tell ahead of time: _____

A verse I will read that morning: _____

Daily Readings This Week

- Day 1: Isaiah 43:1-7
- Day 2: Lamentations 3:19-26
- Day 3: Psalm 30
- Day 4: Psalm 121
- Day 5: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

MEMORY VERSE

The steadfast loves of the LORD, for we are not finished, for His compassions do not come to an end. ***They are*** *new in the mornings; great* ***is*** *Your faithfulness.*

Lamentations 3:22-23

One Step This Week Fill in "My Plan for a Hard Day" for the next hard date on your calendar, and share it with one person.

Prayer

Faithful God, the hard days are coming. When I pass through deep water, be with me. Give me new mercy each morning. Help me remember with love, and let me find moments of rest and even joy. In Jesus' name, amen.

My Thoughts This Week

Week 7: Grieving With Hope

> *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The **one** believing in Me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone living and believing in Me will certainly never die. Do you believe this?"*
>
> John 11:25-26 (SLB)

For a Christian, grief is real, but it is not the end of the story. Paul tells believers not to grieve "just as also the rest who have no hope." He does not say we should not grieve. He says we grieve differently, because we have hope.

Read It

> *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve, just as also the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus.* (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)

> *because the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout of command, with **the** voice of an archangel and with **the** trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are living, who remain, will be caught away together with them in **the** clouds to meet the Lord in **the** air; and so we will always be with **the** Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.* (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

Understand It

Fallen asleep

Paul calls believers who have died "those who have fallen asleep." Sleep is not the end. You expect a sleeping person to wake up. For those who belong to Christ, death is real, but it is not final. Their body rests, and they are with the Lord.

The Lord Himself will come

Paul describes what is coming. "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven." The dead in Christ will rise first. Then believers who are alive will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord. And then, "we will always be with the Lord." That is our hope: Jesus is coming back, the dead in Christ will rise, and we will be together with Him and with each other.

Paul ends with these words: "Therefore encourage one another with these words." This hope is meant to comfort grieving people.

A place prepared

On the night before He died, Jesus told His friends:

> *Let your heart not be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In the house of My Father are many dwelling places; but if not, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am, you also may be.* (John 14:1-3)

Jesus is preparing a place for His people. He promised to come back for them. Heaven is not a vague idea. It is a real place, prepared by a real Savior, for real people.

No more tears

The Bible's last chapters describe a new heaven and a new earth. And there is this promise:

> *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death will not be any longer, nor mourning nor crying nor pain will be any longer, because the first things passed away.* (Revelation 21:4)

Every tear. No more death, no more mourning, no more crying, no more pain. That is where the story is heading.

What if I am not sure?

Some grieving people do not know whether the person they lost knew Christ. That can add a deep layer of pain. Here is what we can hold on to. We do not always know what passed between a person and God in their last days or hours. God is perfectly just and perfectly merciful, and the Judge of all the earth will do right. You can entrust the person you loved to Him.

This hope is also an invitation to you. If you have never trusted Christ yourself, His promise of resurrection is open to you today. Jesus asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" He asks you the same question.

Fill It In

1. But I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not _____, just as also the rest who have no _____. **(1 Thessalonians 4:13)**

2. Jesus said to her, "I am the _____ and the _____. The ***one*** believing in Me, even if he dies, will live," **(John 11:25)**

3. And God will wipe away every _____ from their eyes; and _____ will not be any longer, nor _____ nor crying nor pain will be any longer, because the first things passed away. **(Revelation 21:4)**

Think It Through

1. What is the difference between grieving with hope and grieving without hope?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Which promise in this week's passages means the most to you right now? Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Jesus asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" How would you answer Him today?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Daily Readings This Week

- Day 1: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- Day 2: John 14:1-6
- Day 3: 1 Corinthians 15:50-58
- Day 4: 2 Corinthians 5:1-8
- Day 5: Revelation 21:1-7

MEMORY VERSE

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve, just as also the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

One Step This Week Read Revelation 21:1-7 out loud, slowly. Then write down one thing you look forward to in the new creation.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are the resurrection and the life. Thank You for the hope of seeing You and those who belong to You again. Teach me to grieve with hope. I entrust the one I love to You, and I look forward to the day You wipe away every tear. In Your name, amen.

My Thoughts This Week

Week 8: Comforted to Comfort Others

> *who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those in every affliction through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God*
>
> 2 Corinthians 1:4 (SLB)

We come to the last week of this study. That does not mean your grief is finished. Grief changes over time, but for many people it never fully goes away. You learn to carry it. This week we look at how God uses even our sorrow, and at how to keep walking forward.

Read It

> *Blessed **be** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those in every affliction through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God* (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

> *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep* (Romans 12:15)

Understand It

The God of all comfort

Paul calls God "the Father of compassions and God of all comfort." Look back over the past weeks. Where has God comforted you? Maybe through a verse, a friend, a meal, a quiet moment, a memory. Comfort often comes in small, ordinary ways. Write those moments down. They are evidence of God's care.

So that we may comfort others

Paul says God comforts us "so that we may be able to comfort those in every affliction." Your grief is not wasted. Someday, maybe not soon, you will sit with someone else who is grieving, and you will know what to say, or what not to say. You will be able to weep with those who weep.

What helps grieving people

Here is what grieving people often say helped them most:

- Someone who showed up and sat with them.
- Someone who said the person's name and shared a memory.
- A practical gift: a meal, yard work, a ride, help with paperwork.
- A card or call weeks or months later, after everyone else had moved on.
- Someone who remembered the hard dates.

And what did not help: being told “they are in a better place” too soon, “everything happens for a reason,” “I know exactly how you feel,” or “you should be over it by now.” Often the best words are, “I am so sorry. I am here.”

Carrying Them With You

People sometimes talk about “moving on.” For many grieving people, that phrase hurts, because it sounds like leaving the person behind. A better way to say it is that you carry their memory and your love with you into the life God still has for you. You will laugh again. You may find new purpose. The love does not end. It changes shape.

When grief does not ease

For most people, the sharpest pain slowly softens over months and years. For some, grief stays so heavy that it keeps them from living. If, after many months, you still cannot function, cannot find any joy, or are thinking about harming yourself, please talk with your doctor, your pastor or a Christian counselor. Getting help is not a lack of faith. If you are thinking about suicide, call or text 988.

Fill It In

1. Blessed ***be*** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of _____ and God of all _____ **(2 Corinthians 1:3)**

2. Rejoice with those who _____, and _____ with those who weep **(Romans 12:15)**

Think It Through

1. Looking back over these eight weeks, where have you seen God comfort you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Who has comforted you well? What did they do?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Is there someone else who is grieving that you could reach out to, now or someday?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. What would it look like for you to carry their memory with you into the life God still has for you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Daily Readings This Week

- Day 1: 2 Corinthians 1:3-11
- Day 2: Romans 12:9-16
- Day 3: Ruth 1:1-18
- Day 4: Psalm 116
- Day 5: Romans 8:31-39

MEMORY VERSE

*Blessed **be** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those in every affliction through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God*

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

One Step This Week Write a short note to someone who helped you during your grief, and thank them for what they did.

Prayer

God of all comfort, thank You for walking with me through these weeks. Thank You for the people You sent to comfort me. Keep carrying me. And in Your time, use what I have been through to comfort someone else. In Jesus' name, amen.

My Thoughts This Week

A Closing Word

> *For I have been persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God which* ***is*** *in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
>
> Romans 8:38-39 (SLB)

You have walked through eight weeks of grief with God's Word. Some weeks may have been easier than others. Some days you may have been unable to open this book at all. That is all right. You are still here, and God is still with you.

Keep coming back to the Psalms. Keep praying honest prayers. Keep letting people help. Keep remembering the person you love. And keep holding on to the hope that one day, every tear will be wiped away.

Nothing, not even death, can separate those who belong to Christ from the love of God. That love is holding you now.

> *Father, bless everyone who has walked through these pages with a broken heart. Be near to them. Carry them through the hard days. Fill them with the hope of the resurrection. And let them know, every morning, that Your compassions are new. In Jesus' name, amen.*

Memory Verses

MEMORY VERSE

*Blessed **are** those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

Matthew 5:4

MEMORY VERSE

*The LORD **is** near to the broken of heart, and the crushed of spirit He saves.*

Psalm 34:18

MEMORY VERSE

*Even when I walk in a valley of deep darkness, I will not fear evil, for You **are** with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

Psalm 23:4

MEMORY VERSE

*Trust in Him at every time, people; pour out your heart before Him; God **is** a refuge for us. Selah.*

Psalm 62:8

MEMORY VERSE

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous so that He may forgive us the sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

MEMORY VERSE

*The steadfast loves of the LORD, for we are not finished, for His compassions do not come to an end. **They are** new in the mornings; great **is** Your faithfulness.*

Lamentations 3:22-23

MEMORY VERSE

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve, just as also the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

MEMORY VERSE

*Blessed **be** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those in every affliction through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God*

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Psalms for Grieving Hearts

When you do not know what to read, try one of these.

When you feel…	Read
Alone	Psalm 23; Psalm 139:1-12
Forgotten by God	Psalm 13; Psalm 77
Overwhelmed	Psalm 46; Psalm 61
Afraid	Psalm 27; Psalm 91
Exhausted	Psalm 121; Isaiah 40:28-31
Guilty	Psalm 32; Psalm 51
Hopeless	Psalm 42; Psalm 43
Unable to pray	Psalm 88; Romans 8:26-27
In need of hope	John 14:1-6; Revelation 21:1-7

Things I Want to Remember About Them

Notes for Group Leaders

Thank you for walking with grieving people. It is holy work.

Before You Start

- **Keep the group small.** Four to ten people works well.
- **Plan for eight weeks,** and think about a ninth gathering a month or two later.
- **Invite, do not require.** Some people will not be ready to talk. Let them listen.
- **Have tissues ready** and a quiet space where people can step out if they need to.
- **Know where to refer.** Have a list of local Christian counselors, grief support services and your pastor's contact information.

A Simple Meeting Plan (about 75 minutes)

Time	What to do
10 minutes	Welcome. Let people settle in.
5 minutes	Open in prayer.
10 minutes	Read the week's passage out loud.
40 minutes	Talk through the Think It Through questions. Let people share at their own pace.
10 minutes	Read the One Step together and close in prayer.

Tips for Leading

- Listen far more than you speak.
- Do not try to fix anyone's grief or rush them.
- Avoid easy answers. Point to the Scripture and to Jesus.
- Say the names of the people who died. It matters to the people grieving them.
- Keep what is shared in the group private.
- Watch for anyone who seems at risk. If someone speaks of harming themselves, talk with them privately right away, and help them get help. They can call or text 988, or call 911 in an emergency.

Week 1: What Grief Is

1. Ecclesiastes 3:4: weep; mourn
2. Matthew 5:4: mourn; comforted

Week 2: Jesus Wept: God Meets Us in Grief

1. John 11:35: wept
2. Psalm 34:18: near; broken
3. Psalm 147:3: heals; wounds

Week 3: The First Weeks

1. Psalm 23:4: valley; with me; comfort
2. Matthew 11:28: burdened; rest

Week 4: Honest Prayers

1. Psalm 13:1: How long; forget
2. Psalm 62:8: pour out; refuge

Week 5: Guilt, Regret and Anger

1. 1 John 1:9: confess; faithful; forgive
2. Ephesians 4:26: angry; sin

Week 6: Holidays, Anniversaries and Hard Days

1. Isaiah 43:2: waters; with you
2. Lamentations 3:23: new; faithfulness

Week 7: Grieving With Hope

1. 1 Thessalonians 4:13: grieve; hope
2. John 11:25: resurrection; life
3. Revelation 21:4: tear; death; mourning

Week 8: Comforted to Comfort Others

1. 2 Corinthians 1:3: compassions; comfort
2. Romans 12:15: rejoice; weep

About This Study

Walking Through Grief is one of a set of free Christian books from Trinfinity Enterprises. All Scripture quotations come from the Steadfast Literal Bible. This study is not a substitute for medical care, pastoral care or professional counseling. Questions or corrections are welcome at andrew@trinfinityenterprises.com.