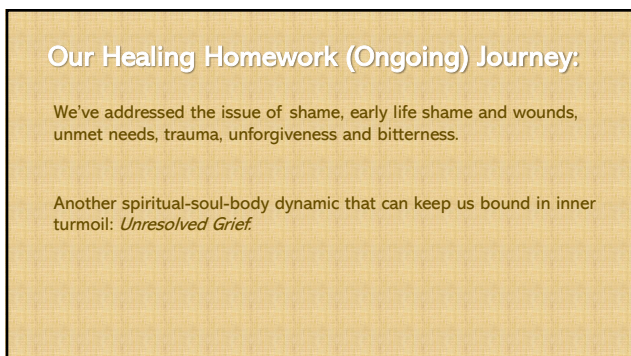
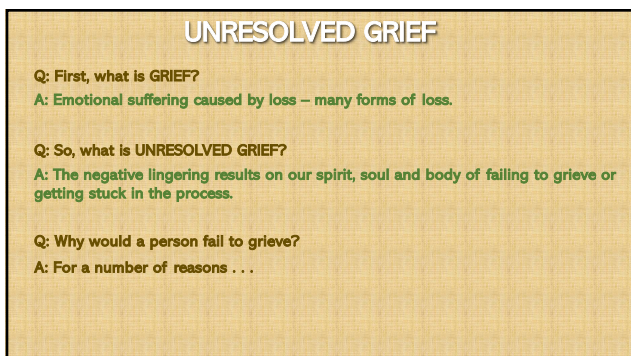




1



2



3

Why Would a Person Fail to Grieve?

- The emotional pain may be more than we can bear; we determine to block/suppress the pain (form of denial).
- Life's demands don't allow us time and space to mourn.
- Our grief is tied to a secret or something shameful we don't want to think about (ex: sexual assault or sexual sin).
- We can't accept the loss - another form of denial.
- We get stuck in anger.
- We've been taught tearful emotion is weak or forbidden.
- Others around us aren't grieving the loss (ex: truth about dad). As a society, we move on quickly.
- We didn't realize the extent of the loss at the time because:
 - A) We couldn't grasp it (ex: girlfriend's abortion)
 - B) We were too young (ex: my parents' separation and divorce).
- We're alone . . .

4

We're Not Meant to Grieve Alone

Even though grief may make us want to isolate, God wants us to allow Him and others to help carry our sorrows.

Without the care of others, we cannot see hope beyond the grief.

Neuroscience: When someone empathizes with our pain and grief, even in expression only, it is healing to the thought structures associated with the pain/grief. (Healing = Transformative)

... weep with those who weep. Romans 12:15 (coach vs nurturer – Patrick's hurt)

Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows... Isaiah 53:4

... they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. Matthew 27:34

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men who have no hope... 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

5

ALL Will Be Made Right and SAFE!

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. '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." Revelations 21:3-4

All acts of injustice will be brought into account.

No more sickness or accidents or death.

No more strife, abandonment or broken relationships.

Nothing to cry about or grieve.

6

For Now, In This Life...

Grief does not need to be healed. Grieving is healing.

- Grief is the response to the wound. Healing comes from looking into the wound.
- Releasing pent up emotion relieves the confusion and fatigue that often comes with grief.
- A person needs a safe environment with someone who allows them to process their thoughts and feelings.
- Getting stuck in grief feels helpless and hopeless . . .

7

Hopelessness Tempts us to go into DENIAL, Which Often Leads to the Following...

- Prolonged Grief: if a grieving person (especially a child) cannot receive comfort, he/she may continue to grieve indefinitely. ie, Loss of childhood friend
- Delayed Grief: if a person/child denies his loss, when another loss occurs later, he/she may think the grieving is only about the more recent loss (mirror trauma / mirror loss).
 - A) Example: Loss of pet triggers suppressed grief over previous loss of parent, but the person thinks its only grief over the pet.
 - B) Delayed grief is identified when the grief about a recent loss is greater than the loss calls for or would be expected.

8

Hopelessness Tempts us to go into DENIAL, Which Often Leads to the Following...

- Suppressed Grief: a person/child in denial may never recognize his/her grief at all. He or she may turn unresolved grief into depression, anger, inability to feel (NUMB HEART)...
- Example: a neglected child suppresses grief by vowing never to bond. As an adult, still cannot bond, and cannot feel love.
- An infant does not grieve the loss of mother. Years later the adult remains clingy and fearful of losing relationships.
- We're susceptible to Suppressed Grief any time the need to grieve is not commonly recognized . . .
- parents who have experienced miscarriages, still births or abortions // older adults who have lost adult children // divorcees // persons whose spouses have had an affair // adopted children // any child who has not been comforted.

9

Why Children Get Stuck in Grief...

Children are more likely to go into denial about their pain or need to be comforted when...

No one is there to comfort, so the pain is too overwhelming to face.

The child believes he/she was to blame for the loss (trapped in shame).



Absalom's instructions to sister Tamar upon hearing she'd been sexually violated by her brother Amnon: *"Her brother Absalom saw her and asked, 'Is it true that Amnon has been with you?' Well, my sister, keep quiet for now, since he's your brother. Don't you worry about it." So Tamar lived as a desolate woman in her brother Absalom's house. 2 Samuel 13:20*

10

Physical & Emotional Symptoms (Indicators) of Unresolved Grief...

Waves of fear (can be intense).

Alarming sense of shock like getting the news all over again.

Heavy sadness dropping over you.

Difficulty focusing / indecisive / distracted (taking energy).

Autoimmune illnesses.

Other emotions and physical symptoms associated with suffering:
Irritable, anger, loss of appetite, loss of self-care, life lacks purpose

11

Four Responses to Grief

• Most do not even think to connect present problems to unresolved grief. The real loss remains uncomforted, and the seeker remains stuck in any of the following responses, which used to be called "stages."

• They are no longer called stages because we now know they can come in any order. They may occur more than one at a time. We may revisit them over and over, or even skip some entirely. For the sake of convenience, they are presented here in the traditional order . . .

12

Four Responses to Grief

A) SHOCK AND DENIAL: Involves lack of emotion or feeling of disbelief.

- Those grieving a death sometimes engage in "freezing time" – keeping some things exactly the way they were before death.
- Denial allows us to brace for the feelings that are coming (prepare the funeral, handle immediate life changes, comfort others).
- Some get stuck by turning to "Christian joy and hope" prematurely to suppress the pain (Dana's story). God wants us to properly grieve.
- In healthy situations, the right timing and support allows us to move past shock and denial.

13

Four Responses to Grief

B) ACUTE GRIEF (MOURNING): We feel the loss and associated painful emotions.

- May involve sorrow, crying, anger, insomnia, lack of care for daily needs, loss of appetite.
- Especially difficult for those who feel guilt/fault connected to the loss or had unresolved conflicts with their loved one.
- We can become stuck here if:
 - 1) We lack support and become overwhelmed by emotions.
 - 2) Victimization becomes my "victim" identity.
 - 3) If present sorrow connects to past grief.
- In healthy situations, we process the pain with Jesus and others, and painful emotions migrate toward peace.

14

Four Responses to Grief

C) READJUSTMENT: Learning to embrace a "new normal."

- May involve depression or feelings of emptiness and/or meaninglessness.
- Those grieving a death might resent having to acquire - or feel inadequate to acquire - the roles and skills of the deceased.
- If we cannot find meaning without the person or thing we lost, or we cannot take up new roles or skills, we might get stuck in this response. Could be loss of a spouse, parent, ministry leader, etc.
- In healthy situations, we experience God's grace and provision to adjust and see the goodness of God at work in our "new normal."

15

Four Responses to Grief

D) ACCEPTANCE & REASSUMPTION OF LIFE: Our joy, peace and purpose in life is restored.

- If we centered our life on the person or thing lost, we may not see a reason to go on.
- Those grieving a death might feel afraid to "dishonor" the deceased by resuming life without him or her.
- In healthy situations, we come to the place where we're at peace with God's sovereignty in allowing the loss, and we see God working good in our lives through the loss.

16

Additional Points about Grief...

- Children grieve in spurts. Adults with locked away childhood grief will often grieve like children. We can recognize those grieving moments and help others process.
- As feelings surface, we do not have to go through a prolonged grief process. Grieving as an adult for childhood losses is usually a shorter duration as we feel less helpless and more reliant on God and others' support.
- Remember, however, that the length of time needed to grieve can vary from person to person and loss to loss. Some may grieve a loss within minutes. Others may need a season to process grief.
- Beware of violating God's Word by "contacting" dead loved ones – demonic open door.

17

Homework...

Get alone with the Lord and prayerfully consider . . .

- 1) Do I have any unresolved grief?
- 2) If I recognize an area of loss, prayerfully process all that I lost.

Recognizing what was lost is key to releasing the pain. It's not just the person but the friend, confidant, comforter, etc. - what that person or thing meant or was to you. Might be helpful to write it out . . .

18

Let's Pray . . .

Lord, I realize I have suffered losses that have not healed. I need to share the pain with You. When I lost _____, so many feelings came up inside. I wasn't able to process them then, but I want to now with You. I need to tell You what I have lost. (Tell Him who or what you lost). I need to tell You what I felt and feel about the loss. (Tell Him all of your feelings. Take as long as you need.) I need to tell You how I feel about You. (Are you angry? Do you have questions? Be as honest as you can.) Lord, thank You for listening. Thank You for caring. Thank You for being a safe person to share my heart and be real.

*Lord, restore my sense of order and hope. Help me to see You still have a future for me, despite what I lost. Help me to see Your plans for me and that You still have good purposes for my life. Help me to accept and embrace life again, trusting that you work all things together for my ultimate good.
In Jesus' name, amen.*

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