

How To Handle Grief

Grief is emotional suffering brought on by bereavement, mishap, or disaster. To grieve is either to cause or feel sorrow or distress.

Have you suffered grief?

Have you lost someone close to you?

Are you going through some distress?

What Does The Bible Say?

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, 4 and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled,

beyond the reach of change and decay. 5 And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

6 So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. 7 These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (1 Peter 1:3–7 NLT)

When distressed, we still live with great expectations.

4 In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind. 5 We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and

gone without food. 6 We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us, and by our sincere love. 7 We faithfully preach the truth. God's power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense. 8 We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors. 9 We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed. 10 Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything. (2 Corinthians 6:4–10 NLT)

We have a purpose, a mission to keep going!

How Can You Obey?

13 And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. (1 Thessalonians 4:13 NLT)

When you lose someone very close to you, you can go on if you have a mission and purpose.

When you have nothing to live for, grief is worse!

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Notes:

Today's Deep Dive into the Bible comes from Martin J. Selman, 1 Chronicles: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 10, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 213–214.

Explore:

Helping Instead of Hurting

Keep the following in mind as you try to help someone who has lost a loved one.

Don'ts

- Don't say "Everything will be fine" or "Try not to think about it" or "He is in a better place" or "It was just God's will."
- Don't avoid talking about the loved one who passed away.
- Don't encourage the grieving person to just get on with his or her life.

- Don't avoid the grieving person, thinking your presence will cause him to think about the one he lost.
- Don't let the grieving person avoid being with others, including his or her church family.

Do's

- Pray for those who grieve, asking God to comfort them and give them the grace and strength they need.
- Encourage the grieving person to share memories and talk about his or her loved one.
- Share your fond memories of the person who died.
- Don't talk too much. Simply be present with the grieving person. Mourn with him or her.
- Assure the person you will be there as he or she works through the grieving process.
- Share encouraging Scripture when the person is ready.

- Help in practical ways such as providing food and doing things around the house.
- Send notes of encouragement.
- Help the person understand that there will be waves of grief that come at various times.
- Continue to check on the person as time goes by.
- Continue to include and invite the person even if he or she says no at first.

Explore:

Neither Chronicles nor Samuel offers any explicit reason why God was angry with David in the first place, nor why David's census should be regarded as a sin. Censuses in the Old Testament were not in themselves objectionable to God, and

were carried out a number of times—for military purposes (Num. 1:3, 45; 26:2), for sanctuary taxation (Exod. 30:11–16; 38:25–28; Num. 3:40–41), for populating the land (Num. 26:52–55; Neh. 7:4–5), for organizing the Levites (Num. 3:14–39; 1 Chr. 23:2ff.), and for building the temple (2 Chr. 2:17–18). This census, however, clearly displeased both man (vv. 3, 6) and God (v. 7). Schenker's analysis offers five possible explanations for this negative assessment: (a) the tribes felt a threat to their independence; (b) the charismatic ideal of God's holy war had become secularized; (c) God's blessing could not be reduced to mere statistics; (d) David failed to recognize the census as Yahweh's prerogative by not paying an expiatory ransom (cf. Exod. 30:12); and (e) it was an expression of human pride.

It seems in fact that it was the purpose to which a census was put that provides the clue to its meaning. Though the context of David's action was a military one, he seems to have forgotten that the people were not his but God's. His self-centred motive

expressed itself in one or more of the following errors: (i) he did not raise the halfshekel poll-tax mentioned in the Mosaic law, an omission which might result in a plague (Exod. 30:12); (ii) he failed to recognize that God's people could not ultimately be numbered because of the nature of God's promise (v. 3; 27:23–24); (iii) whereas all other Old Testament censuses anticipated a particular God-given purpose, this one seems to have been an end in itself. Even Joab recognized that God might yet multiply his troops a hundred times (v. 3), and Solomon also accepted that Israel could not be counted because they were the Lord's people (1 Kgs 3:8). Ironically, David's action resulted in a severe reduction in Israel's numbers (v. 14).

Because David's command was 'abhorrent to Joab' (v. 6, nrsv, rsv) and evil in the sight of God (v. 7), David brought guilt on Israel (v. 3). None of these phrases appears in Samuel, and Chronicles' use of guilt (Heb. 'ašmâ) is particularly interesting. This word regularly refers to actions which deserve God's wrath

(2 Chr. 24:18; 28:10, 13; 33:23; cf. the cognate verb in 2 Chr. 19:10).

Martin J. Selman, 1 Chronicles: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 10, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 213–214.

Explore:

Established ritual for grieving observed by a dead person's relatives and friends. It began with the closing of the eyes of the dead (Gn 46:4), the embracing of the body (50:1), and its preparation for burial. The hot climate necessitated that burial should take place immediately (Acts 5:1–10). But detailed information about burial earlier than NT times (Mt 27:59; Jn 11:44; 19:39, 40) is extremely meager. Excavations suggest that

the dead were buried fully clothed but not in coffins. The Israelites practiced neither embalming nor cremation but decent burial was essential.

At the news of a death it was customary to tear one's garments (Gn 37:34; 2 Sm 1:11; Jb 1:20), put on sackcloth (2 Sm 3:31), and take off one's shoes (15:30; Mi 1:8) and headdress; a man might cover his beard or veil his face (Ez 24:17, 23). Mourners put earth on their heads (Jos 7:6; 1 Sm 4:12; Neh 9:1; Jb 2:12; Ez 27:30) or rolled themselves in the dust (Jb 16:15; Mi 1:10) or sat on a heap of ashes (Est 4:3; Is 58:5; Jer 6:26; Ez 27:30). Such mourning rites as shaving the hair and the beard and making cuts on the body (Jb 1:20; Is 22:12; Jer 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37; Ez 7:18; Am 8:10), were condemned (Lv 19:27, 28; Dt 14:1) because of pagan associations. Mourners refrained from washing and discontinued the use of perfumes (2 Sm 12:20; 14:2).

Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Mourning,” Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1500.

Explore:

We have noted the emphasis on the return of Christ in the Thessalonian letters. Paul related Christ’s return to salvation (1 Thes. 1:9–10), service (1 Thes. 2:19–20), and stability (1 Thes. 3:11–13). In this paragraph, he related it to sorrow, and he showed how the doctrine of Christ’s return can comfort the brokenhearted.

Paul applied the word sleep to those believers who died. Jesus used the same expression (John 11:11–13). Paul was careful to state that Jesus died; the word sleep is not applied to His experience. It is because He died that we need not fear death.

However, Paul did not say that the soul went to sleep at death.

He made it clear that the soul of the believer went to be with the

Lord: “them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him” (1 Thes. 4:14). He cannot bring them when He returns unless they are with Him. It is not the soul that sleeps; it is the body. The Bible definition of death is given in James 2:26—“For as the body without the spirit is dead.” At death, the spirit leaves the body, and the body goes to sleep and no longer functions. The soul-spirit goes to be with the Lord, if the person has trusted Jesus Christ. “Absent from the body, and ... present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8).

The fact of our Lord’s return is comfort to us in bereavement, because we know that He will bring with Him His people who have “died in the Lord.” I recall stating to a friend, “I hear you lost your wife. I’m very sorry.” He replied, “No, I didn’t lose her. You can’t lose something when you know where it is—and I know where she is!” On the authority of the Word of God, we also know what will happen: Jesus Christ will one day return and bring His people with Him.

When will this event occur? Nobody knows, and it is wrong to set dates. The fact that Paul used the pronoun we in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17 suggests that he expected to be alive when the Lord returned. Theologians call this the doctrine of the imminent return of Christ. Imminent means that it can happen at any moment. As Christians, we do not look for signs, nor must any special events transpire before the Lord can return. These great events will take place “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:52).

Jesus Christ will return in the air, and this is where we shall meet Him (1 Thes. 4:17). Suddenly, millions of people will vanish! One summer a church camp staff staged an elaborate “rapture” while the camp director was off the grounds. When he returned, everybody was missing, clothing was on the ground as though people had “passed through” it, a motorboat was circling on the lake without pilot or passengers, and everything in the kitchen was functioning without a cook. A carefully timed phone

call from town (“Hey, what’s happening? Everybody’s missing over here!”) only added to the effect. “I’ve got to admit,” said the director, “it really shook me for a minute.” Just think of what effect this event will have on a lost world!

Whether we Christians live or die, we have nothing to fear because Jesus will come either with us or for us! The fact of His return is a comfort to our hearts.

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 179.

Question 1 of 5

Why is Scripture the best way to interpret other Scripture?

Question 2 of 5

Why would God allow Satan to do His bidding with King David in 1 Chronicles 21:1?

Question 3 of 5

Who is the person or person you have lost through death that hurt you the most? Why?

Question 4 of 5

What did you do to keep moving on in life after losing this particular person?

Question 5 of 5

Why don't Christians not grieve like people who have no hope?