



# portraits of GRIEF

READ Lamentations 3:19-23.

## DAILY PRAYER:

Holy Spirit, help me to learn from You and Your Word  
about how to journey through loss.  
Walk with me through the darkness  
as I make my way to the light once again.  
Though I may feel as if my sorrow will consume me,  
whisper Your promise of hope to my heart.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY: Lamentations 3:21-22

## STEP ONE

READ John 16:33, 1 Peter 4:12, and 1 Peter 1:6.

**THE PROMISE:** At some point on your journey, something  
or someone you love will be lost and you'll experience grief.  
It's part of being human. *Maybe you've lost ...*

- *your father, mother, brother, sister, friend or even your child*
  - *a job, marriage, or dream*
  - *a business, a home, or something else you've spent a lifetime securing and protecting*
  - *the security of how it was for so many years now that you've moved away from family and friends*
  - *the relationship of a close friend*
  - *your health (or someone close to you has lost his/her health)*
  - *an opportunity*
  - *the faith and trust of those you love because of bad choices*
- Perhaps you feel as though you've suffered such profound loss that your question becomes: **WHAT HAVEN'T I LOST?**

? **TAKE** a few minutes to journal your response to the following questions:  
*What have I lost? Will you share this now with your small group?*

## STEP TWO

READ aloud Psalm 31:9. When we experience loss our grief shakes us to our foundation and can cause us to question everything we believe.

? **READ and DISCUSS** the following statements about grief.  
*With which ones do you most identify? Why?  
What other statements about grief would you like to add to this list?*

**THERE ARE NO RULES** - *There are principles, but no hard fast rules.*  
**THERE'S NO SCHEDULE** - *I can't rush it. I can't see where I am in the process and conclude what's next or how long I'll be here.*

**I CAN'T FIX ANYTHING** - *I can't change the reality of the loss. I can't make it go away or make it different. I can scream in anger at the top of my lungs or plead through tears, but nothing fixes it.*  
**IT'S EMBARRASSING** - *I'm supposed to be strong. I'm supposed to feel comforted because "God is in control."*  
**THE EMOTIONS ARE SO POWERFUL** - *From out of nowhere, they rush over me. I feel vulnerable and afraid. I feel angry and become frustrated with those around me.*  
**I FEEL A PUSH-PULL TOWARDS OTHERS** - *How can they go on? How can they laugh? I want them near me then I want them to leave me alone. I look at others, even complete strangers and become resentful that they don't understand my loss.*  
**I'M NOT IN CONTROL** - *No matter how much I pray, cry, or try, I'm not in control and can't control what has happened.*

## STEP THREE

READ Psalm 13:2a. READ the excerpt from A Grace Disguised by Jerry Sittser. After experiencing the tragic loss of his mother, wife, and daughter in an automobile accident, he writes:

*The quickest way for anyone to reach the sun and the light of day is not to run west, chasing after the setting sun, but to head east, plunging into the darkness until one comes to the sunrise. I discovered in that moment that I had the power to choose the direction my life would head, even if the only choice open to me, at least initially, was either to run from the loss or to face it as best I could. I decided from that point on to walk into the darkness rather than try to outrun it, to let my experience of loss take me on a journey wherever it would lead, and allow myself to be transformed by my suffering rather than to think I could somehow avoid it... The decision to face the darkness, even if it led to overwhelming pain, showed me that the experience of loss itself does not have to be the defining moment in our lives. Instead the defining moment can be our response to the loss. It is not what happens to us that matters as much as what happens in us.*

*How will I respond? READ and CONSIDER the following questions:  
On what will I FOCUS? Will I avoid thinking about it and focus on everything but my loss? Will I walk with the Spirit of God?  
What will my ATTITUDE be toward grief? Will I believe it's hopeless - never expecting joy in my life again? Will I turn toward it and journey through it?  
Will I take time to REFLECT? Will I ignore the pain and emotions I feel, believing I just need to get over it?  
Will I live in AWARENESS? Will I try to convince myself and others that my loss is more profound than any other? Will I be okay with the reality that I'm not okay right now? Will I give myself permission to grieve? Will I give myself permission to live?  
Will I GROW through it? Will I let this loss grind down my soul until nothing's left? Will I let my loss make me more?*

? **CONSIDER and SHARE** with the group:  
*How am I responding to my grief right now? How have I responded in the past?*

PRAY THE PRAYER FOR WHEN WE'RE GRIEVING  
(on the weekend message outline)

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