

portraits of GRIEF

THE PROMISE

*At some point on your journey,
something or someone you love will be lost.*

(Jesus said) "In this world you will have trouble." John 16:33b

THE DARK HOLE

Then his wife said to him,
"Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" Job 2:9 (NKJV)

- *Isolate yourself from people and God*
- *Designate your grief as special*
- *Escape into compulsion and addiction*
- *Deny the grief*
- *Internalize your feelings*

JESUS WEPT

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

³⁴ "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" John 11:32-37

PRINCIPLES FOR THE PATH

■ FOCUS ■

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."

John 14:16-18

*Grief is hard work. I will need God and the promises in Scripture.
I will look to the Holy Spirit and the hope of eternal things.*

■ ATTITUDE ■

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33 (see also 1 Peter 4:12-13)

*Grief is part of the human journey I'm called to take. God is with me and
I will trust Him to light my path. The path doesn't end with despair.*

■ REFLECTION ■

The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.

¹⁸ The Lord is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:17-18

*I will not deny my feelings.
I will take the time to grieve. I will take care of myself.*

■ AWARENESS ■

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those
in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

*I need other people to walk with me who are grieving and
who have grieved before. I need a safe community in which to grieve.*

■ GROWTH ■

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that
suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.

⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love
into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Romans 5:3-5 (see also Psalm 119:49-50; 67)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be
mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4

Some growth only comes through loss.

PRAYER OF AWARENESS FOR THE GRIEVING

*Holy Spirit, I know that walking the path of grief is part of the human journey.
Help me understand there are no rules for how I'm supposed to walk and
no schedule to rush through. There's nothing I can fix, but there's much You
can build in and through me. Do Your work in me. Give me courage to feel
what I'm supposed to feel, learn what I'm supposed to learn and do what
I'm supposed to do. Give me grace to receive and walk with those You put
in my life. Give them patience to be ok when I'm not ok. Give me wisdom
and courage to let them near and not push them away. Protect me from
the overwhelming emotions which could drive me to unhealthy, extreme,
and even sinful behaviors in a desire to escape. When it's dark, help me
find hope knowing that one day I will once again taste love, joy, peace and
happiness. Forgive me for the folly of believing I was ever in control. You are
in control and it's into Your kind hands I place myself. In Jesus name. Amen.*

NEXT STEPS

For Further Study and Reflection (* available at JW Bookstore):

*The Problem of Pain -- C.S. Lewis

*A Grace Disguised -- Jerry Sittser

One Thousand Gifts -- Ann Voskamp

A Grief Observed -- C.S. Lewis

Confessions of a Grieving Christian -- Zig Ziglar

GriefShare Small Group -- Monday Night in JW Fireside Room

GriefShare Seminars -- November 19 and December 17 (3rd Saturday)

October 15/16, 2011