



A weekly resource to spark biblically-centered conversations with your kids about the issues they face in today's youth culture.

# GRIEF

**BY: BILLY J EVANS**, CPYU Research Fellow and Pastor of Youth and Family at New Life Evangelical Free Church, Watertown, SD

*Parents, now is the time to prepare your children and teens to face the various times of grief that are sure to visit them throughout the course of their lives. Ever since the Fall in the garden, mankind, as well as creation, lives in a broken, sin-affected world which is why all of us will experience death and grief. Everyone at some point will encounter grief either through losing a loved one, divorce, moving, etc. Since this is 100% guaranteed to happen, we need a biblical worldview of grief as well as biblical instruction for handling the grief that is sure to come our way.*



WORLD

## What is Happening?

Grief is defined by the American Psychological Association as “the anguish experienced after significant loss, usually the death of a beloved person.”

- Grief is not solely related to the death of a loved one. The symptoms, characteristics, and process of grieving can be similar after other types of loss (e.g., divorce, transition, moving).
- By the end of high school, 5 percent of today's students will have lost one of their parents and 20 percent will have experienced the death of someone close by age 18.
- Those who lost a parent growing up said it took over six years before they could move forward. In addition, 57 percent of those kids said that support from family and friends waned within the first three months following the loss.
- The world will often give some poor advice when it comes to grief. For instance, “the pain will go away faster if you ignore it” or “the pain will go away in a couple of months.” Both of these statements are in error because they assume that each person grieves the same. Simply stating that by thinking more positive thoughts the sorrowful thoughts will go away assumes that grief is just in your head. Stating that there is a set timeline on grief ignores the reality that it is different for each and every person.





## WORD

### What Does God's Word Say?

**Grief is a godly emotion to have.** Jesus, the God Man, was deeply grieved by the loss of a close friend, Lazarus. In John 11:35 it says, "Jesus wept." If our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ felt the pain and heartache, so can we.

Even later in the account it says that he was "deeply moved again," meaning he did not just cry one time and then he was done. Jesus continued to feel the pain at the death of his friend. If Jesus the perfect messiah did everything that was pleasing to God the Father, then weeping and grief is a good thing. It reflects the compassion, love, and care that God has for all his people.

**Grief is promised.** In Philippians 1:29 it says that we have been graciously given two gifts by God for the sake of Jesus, to believe in Jesus and to suffer for his sake. Now, many of us are overjoyed to experience saving faith and a relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. However, few of us share the same zeal for the second gift of suffering. However, according to the Holy Spirit it is a gift that we experience both of these things in our lives. A perspective we could all benefit from adopting is explained by Dr. James White, "Do you see these as gifts? If you do, you will have the key to grief: hope."

**Hope in the midst of Grief.** Something hopeful we can think about is the reality that one day all this grief will be no more. John had it revealed to him by God that one day every tear would be wiped away and we would be in perfect peace with God (Revelation 21:4). This should remind and encourage us that these things we face as believers are momentary. Not only that, but God has greater things planned for those He loves. How can we have this hope? Christ is the one who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, paying the ultimate price for our sins, and has merited us this hope through his death and resurrection (Isaiah 53:4). We can live in the light of the eternal glory that God through Jesus is preparing for those He loves.

**Grief should cause us to reach out to the one who loves us.** In Psalm 18:6-19 David is crying out to God. David makes an amazing statement, "he heard my voice." The God of all creation, powerful, and mighty, listened to the voice of David. We all have the privilege as believers to know that God not only hears our prayers, but wants to hear from us. We need to go to him in our darkest hour and know that he wants to hear from us.



**WALK**

*For further reflection:  
Scan the QR code to  
watch the short video  
“Glorifying God in  
Unshakable Grief”  
from John Piper.*



## Conversation Starters and Questions:

- Talking about grief can be a daunting task with anyone, especially your teen. Start by asking them how well they think people handle grief or other traumatic events in life? What do they turn to in those situations? Do you think those things are ultimately helpful?
- Be compassionate with your teen. It is imperative that you are patient as they work through the grieving process. Pray that you will resist the temptation to be discouraged if there is a setback. While at the same time helping them to confront the reality of the loss. Be willing to ask questions about the person or situation. Have them share about the person or event and not be afraid to use the past tense when talking about the person.
- Also, it is important to surround your teen with a healthy support network. Whether that is a Christian counselor your church recommends or a mature adult in the congregation who has been through a similar situation. It is imperative that these supports continue on and become lasting relationships that are a source of stability to help them through not only this grief but others that may come.
- Teens, one of the most important things you can do if you are going through grief is to go to Jesus in prayer. It can be helpful to keep a journal or track your prayers on your Notes app. That way you can see how God has worked in some of the difficult situations. Just like David in the Psalms, who truly poured out his heart, we are encouraged to be the same way. God knows your thoughts, He knows your pain, and He wants you to go to Him in those moments. He is the only one who can truly bring you comfort.
- A short video to watch together as a family about grief would be by Pastor John Piper, [“Glorifying God in Unshakable Grief.”](#) which brings reality and encouragement to the subject of grief.
- Youth workers, it would be a great opportunity for your youth group to hear from another student who is navigating grief in a godly way. Who in your youth group would be willing to share how God met them in their pain of grief and helped them to grow closer to him?

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

*(II Corinthians 1:3-4 )*



Phone: (717) 361-8429  
E-Mail: [CPYU@CPYU.ORG](mailto:CPYU@CPYU.ORG)  
Web: [WWW.CPYU.ORG](http://WWW.CPYU.ORG)

Mail: PO BOX 414,  
ELIZABETHTOWN  
PA 17022, USA