

## The Grieving Process

### *Is grieving normal and necessary?*

Grief is an emotional suffering that is a normal and necessary process. It occurs when we experience a loss of some kind whether it is the death of a loved one, divorce, or intense disappointment.

### *Are there stages to grieving?*

There are several stages of bereavement and they do not need to be experienced sequentially or completely. However, it is important to work through the feelings and emotions experienced throughout the grieving process.

### *The stages of grief can include:*

#### **Shock and Numbness**

At first, the grieving person tends to deny the loss has taken place, and may withdraw from social contacts. The stage may last a few months or longer and can include additional characteristics such as:

Short attention span

Denial

Difficulty concentrating

Time confusion

Impaired decision making

Resistance to new experiences

Stunned disbelief

Failure to accept

#### **Searching and Yearning**

During this stage, the grieving person may be furious at the person who inflicted the pain or even at the world for letting it happen. They also may be angry with themselves for letting the event take place, even if nothing could have been done to stop it. Other characteristics of this stage include:

Resentment

Guilt

Dreams

Restlessness and impatience

Finding double meanings

Testing what is real

Irritability

Weight gain or loss

Sleeping difficulties

Preoccupation with the deceased

Headaches

Bitterness

Time confusion

Palpitations

Sighing

Lethargy

### **Disorientation**

The grieving person may feel numb and depressed while also experiencing underlying anger and sadness. During this stage, they may also experience:

Social withdrawal	Insomnia
Disorganization	Weight gain or loss
Forgetfulness	Sense of failure
Awareness of reality of loss	Sadness
Depression	Exhaustion
Guilt	Difficulty concentrating

### **Reorganization and Resolution**

This stage occurs when the anger, sadness, and mourning have tapered off. The person accepts the reality of the loss and also may experience the following:

Sense of release	Increased awareness and self-esteem
Renewed energy	Ability to laugh and smile again
Normal eating and sleeping habits	Need to make future plans
Ability to make decisions easier	

### ***Jesus understood the grief we humans go through.***

He wept at the tomb of Lazarus with Mary and Martha (John 11). He wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). He wept in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:36-38). He weeps with you. Look to Him to build your faith through this hard time. Look to Him to restore your broken heart and bring you peace.

Isaiah 53:3a – He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Isaiah 53:4a – Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;

Ps 30:5b – Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning