

Blockages when Grieving

It is possible to have a blockage in the recovery process at any of the points on the diagram. This indicates a need for counselling. The main blockages that can occur are as follows.

- *Resentment and bitterness*
- *Anger against God*
- *A refusal to come to terms with one's feelings.*
- *Blocking feelings with drugs, addictions etc.*
- *A grieving spirit*
- *A refusal to hand grief over to the Lord (Isaiah 53:4)*
- *A refusal to readjust one's circumstances and one's life.*

Facilitating the Grieving Process

The following are some useful practical tips we can suggest to those grieving to help them facilitate the grieving process:

- *Nature your relationship with God.*
- *Accept the grief*
- *Talk about the loss*
- *Keep busy*
- *Take care of yourself*
- *Eat well*
- *Exercise regularly*
- *Get rid of imaginary guilt*
- *Accept your understanding of the loss*
- *Join a small group*

- *Associate with old friends*
- *Postpone major decisions*
- *Put your thoughts into a journal*
- *Turn grief into creative energy*
- *If necessary get professional help*

The beautiful old hymn of Joseph Scriven puts it so well:

*What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and grief to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer.
Oh, what peace we often forfeit
Oh, what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.*

*Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer.*



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What Is Grief?

Grief is a natural healing response following a loss or a change in life. It is a process that involves your whole being. It is a physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual experience. When you lose someone or something, like a job, that gave you purpose, value, meaning, or security, you grieve. Grief is universal, individual, painful, cumulative, normal and hard work.

Is Grieving A Sin?

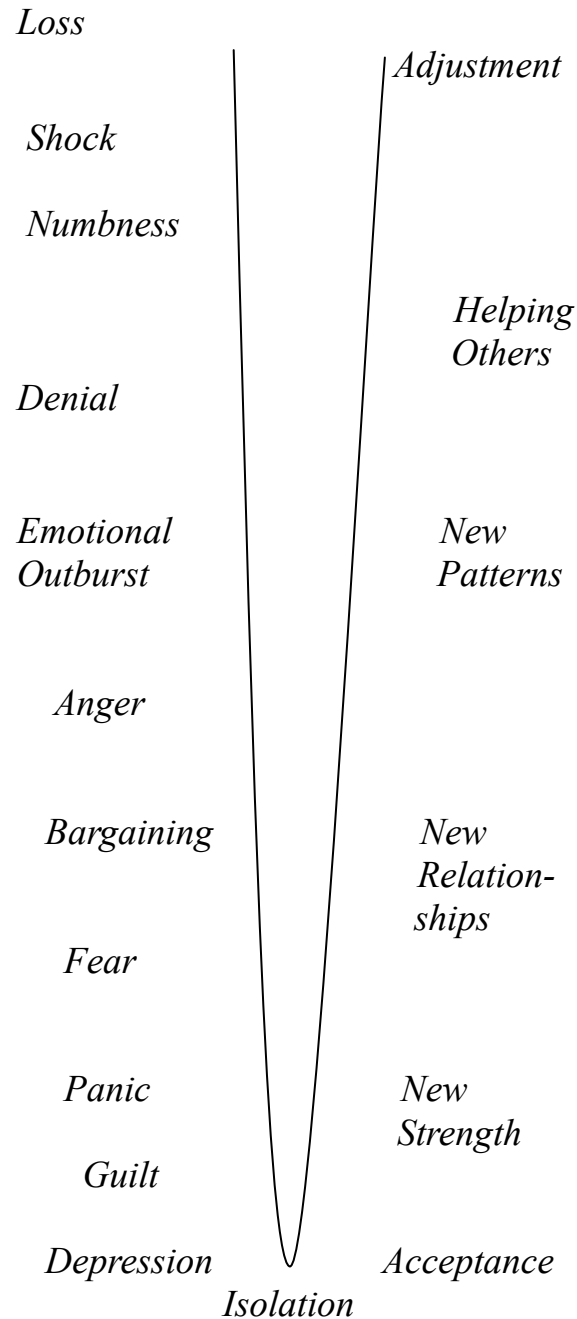
No! Jesus Himself wept over the death of His friend Lazarus in John 11:35. There are many other examples in the Bible of people grieving. In Genesis 23:2 we read that Abraham grieved the death of his wife Sarah. King David grieved over the death of his infant son in 2 Samuel 12:16. In these accounts God never expresses condemnation. Both then and now, He allows people to go through the grieving process and then come out on the other side to go on with their life. Although a person who is

grieving may feel as if God has abandoned him, he can be assured that God will keep His promise from **Hebrews 13:5**, *I will never leave you: never will I forsake you.*

Stages of Grief

The stages of grief, or recovery after a loss, were first described by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. You can see the stages of grief on the grief curve next page. Stages of grief are as following.

- **Shock** - This manifests itself in numbness, violent expressions of intense feelings, and distortion of perceptions.
- **Denial** - This is a protective device, which dilutes the reality while we muster our emotional forces to cope.
- **Anger and bargaining** - These alternate. Anger is associated with resentment and bitterness (against parents, others, God) and a deep sense of injustice. Anger helps us to separate.
- **Depression** - This helps us explore the full impact of the loss. It slows us down so we can eventually let go of the pain of the loss without burying its memory. Here we can experience guilt, remorse, loneliness, panic and fear of the future. It will bring us closer to acceptance of the situation.
- **Acceptance** - This is a time of refocusing and exploring new options with new energy. New strength are mustered, new



- relationships are developed, and a new Pattern of life begins. The person coming out of grief can look back and see the healing process.
 - **You are not alone** - The Lord supports and sympathises with those who grieve. The following passages referring to the manner in which God intervenes in the grieving process are helpful.
 - The God who grieves (John 11:33-36; Luke 13:34)
 - The God who sees our losses - this helps us in facing reality (Mark 5:21-34)
 - The God who hears us when we are depressed - this helps us in our identity, self-esteem and gives us hope (Psalm 42:1-4; 7-11)
 - The God who loves us when we feel afraid - he helps us deal with fear (Mark 16:1-8)
 - The God who is with us when we feel alone - he helps us face loneliness and the embarrassment of others (Psalm 142)
 - The God who offers healing - Jesus bore our grief so we do not have to have prolonged grief (Isaiah 52:4)
 - The God who helps us reinvest in life (Psalm 30)
- Jesus took our grief and sorrows at the cross and bore them so that we do not have to. *Come unto Me all you who labour and are heavy burdened and I will give you rest.... (Matthew 11:28)*