



WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT YOUR GRIEF

COMFORT FROM SCRIPTURE
AFTER YOUR LOSS

A **GriefShare**® BOOK



Introduction

What does God say about your grief?

Laura was in the early stages of her grief—still reaching for two plates, still expecting to hear his car pull into the driveway, still accidentally pouring two cups of coffee.

It was during that season of her grief that God spoke to her unexpectedly through her husband's crinkled funeral program.

While it was his picture on the program that initially caught her eye, the Scriptures written in it spoke to her heart, reminding her of God's presence as she walked through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23).

In those early days, Scripture was a balm for her soul, a lifeline for her. But lately something seems to have shifted. Her grief feels heavier now, more jagged. She's not just sad, she's angry, anxious, overwhelmed, and lonely. Her friends seem to be avoiding her. She wonders if God is even listening. Does the Bible speak to that?

Dr. Richard Bewes, former rector of All Souls Church in London, once spoke of how some may experience the Scriptures when grieving. He says,

When someone is caught in the swirling tides of bereavement, prayer may fly out of the window. The Bible may seem like a dead book. . . . "I don't know what to read. It's just words coming off the page."

While passages like Psalm 23 are still true, they may not *feel* as helpful. If those are the only verses about grief that you have in your arsenal, you might wrongly assume that God's Word has nothing to say about the sharper edges of grief.

That's why we've written this book. It's a Scripture reference book, but it's a little different from others. It's different because grief isn't something that you can just throw a few Bible verses at and hope it heals.

We believe the Bible is far more than a book of helpful sayings—it's the living Word of God, meant to meet you, shape you, and dwell in you. God meets you with His Word in every aspect of your grief. Our goal isn't to simply give you a few verses centered on a theme, but to have the world of the Bible gently "collide" with the world of your grief.

Scripture doesn't stand outside your grief. Ever. It steps into it and speaks with both authority and tenderness. This book is here to help you see how Scripture speaks to every aspect of your grief.

This is not a devotional, and it's not meant to be read straight through. Think of it as a companion—a guide to help you connect to your Bible when your feelings are overwhelming or when you're too tired, numb, or angry to know where to turn.

The structure of the book

The book has five main sections—Daily Life, Emotions, Relationships, Thoughts, and God—each containing short chapters. The chapters begin with a situation you might face in grief, followed by Scripture passages that speak directly to that experience. These verses, drawn from the whole of Scripture, aren't chosen for how they sound, but for how honestly they speak to real sorrow in their original context.

You'll also find pages highlighting 12 Scripture passages on key themes or 12 biblical figures who faced some aspect of grief. These sections are meant to give you a broad sweep and invite you to study each passage further.

There is also a section for you to learn more about biblical laments and even learn to write your own (p. 119). They are ways for us to cry out to God within a biblical framework.

Wherever you are in this book—whether you’re sitting with one passage or skimming through a list—our hope is the same: that you’d find not just words on a page, but *God’s voice*.

Whether your grief is fresh or decades old, we believe this book will assist you in hearing God speak through your pain. We pray that this book helps you discover what has been true all along: God’s Word speaks to everything you face in grief.

Who we are

What God Says About Your Grief is written by GriefShare, a ministry that has been helping grieving people find Christ-centered comfort and guidance, through its support groups and other resources, for over 25 years. You can learn more about how GriefShare can help *you* on page 132.



DAILY LIFE

94 Scripture passages to help get you
through each day

Sometimes it's the day in and day out of living with grief that's hardest of all. You just don't get a break. This is where we might assume that God's Word is mostly silent. Does the Bible actually address those days when nothing feels normal and your whole world has fallen apart?

In this section you'll find Scriptures that address those days and others. You'll see how God guides you when you're unsure what to do next. You'll find help in dealing with responsibilities, work, and finances. You'll learn how God's faithfulness can be a place of security through sorrow and change.



CHAPTER 1

I don't know what to do next

If you've ever watched *The Wizard of Oz*, you may have noticed how slowly and cautiously Dorothy steps into the Technicolor land of Oz. She's "not in Kansas anymore." Grief, too, is unfamiliar terrain, leaving you cautious, fearful, and uncertain about this new situation. But unlike *The Wizard of Oz*, you've moved from Technicolor reality ... into a grim black-and-white picture.

In the Bible, Mary Magdalene could relate to the uncertainty and disorientation of loss. After Jesus' death, the disciples went back to their home. But Mary, at Jesus' tomb, stood frozen in grief with nowhere else to go.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. John 20:11 ESV

Take small steps

Maybe, like Dorothy and Mary, you feel frozen—not sure about your next steps. To find her way home, Dorothy had to follow the yellow brick road through an unfamiliar world. God has provided a guide for you: As you walk through grief, you can be guided not by what you can see, but by the truth of His Word.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light on my path. **Psalm 119:105***

When you're overwhelmed by uncertainty, understand that Scripture doesn't ask you to handle everything at once. Scripture calls you to daily trust—taking one faithful step forward at a time.

*Give us today our daily bread. **Matthew 6:11***

*The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand. **Psalm 37:23–24***

Even though you didn't ask for this season of grief, it is the one you are in. Accepting this reality will help you in moving forward.

*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance. **Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4***

Thankfully, you don't have to walk your path of grief alone. Don't hesitate to ask for help, because community is God's design for sustaining and encouraging us:

*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. . . . Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. **Ecclesiastes 4:9–12***

God isn't asking you to know your future, but to know Him. If the next step is uncertain—begin with trust.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. **Proverbs 3:5–6***



CHAPTER 2

Nothing feels normal

When someone you love dies, it can feel like your world has been overturned and you're in a foreign place. If that's your experience, you're not alone. In the Bible, the Israelites knew what it meant to wake up in a world that no longer felt like home.

The Babylonian exile—described in Daniel, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and elsewhere—was one of the most devastating seasons in their history. They were torn from their land, their routines, even the center of their worship life, and placed in an entirely foreign place. To be clear, they were exiled because of their disobedience, which is different from your situation. Still, the *experience* of exile—displacement, loss, confusion—mirrors what many feel in grief.

I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is. So I say, "My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the LORD."

Lamentations 3:17–18

*By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs. . . . How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land? **Psalms 137:1–4***

Maybe you feel that way too. The rhythms of life are off. And it's not just your surroundings that feel different—you do too. Even Job, who

wasn't part of the exile and wasn't suffering because of sin, gives words to this feeling of internal unraveling:

*Terrors overwhelm me; my dignity is driven away as by the wind, my safety vanishes like a cloud. And now my life ebbs away; days of suffering grip me. Night pierces my bones; my gnawing pains never rest. The churning inside me never stops; days of suffering confront me. **Job 30:15–17, 27***

When your life is upended, where is God?

When nothing feels normal, you begin to wonder if God is present in the chaos. That was a question that confronted the Israelites while in exile. You may not catch it at first glance, but these words of Ezekiel are a powerful answer to that question.

*In my thirtieth year . . . while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. On the fifth of the month—it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin—the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. There the hand of the LORD was on him. **Ezekiel 1:1–3***

God revealed Himself right in the midst of the exile. Not in the temple and not in Jerusalem (where they'd expect to meet God), but by the river in Babylon. God met the Israelites where they were. And He can do the same with you. Let this verse be an anchor for you in this season:

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea. **Psalms 46:1–2***

Jesus promises in Hebrews 13:5, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” He is with you. Always. (See also Hebrews 13:8.)



CHAPTER 3

I need relief

Grief can strip you of known comfort and place on you a weight that feels too heavy to bear. It can also be isolating; you look around for others to help carry the load, but it seems that this is yours to bear alone. If this is your experience, it matches that of people throughout the Bible.

*This is why I weep and my eyes overflow with tears. No one is near to comfort me, no one to restore my spirit. My children are destitute because the enemy has prevailed. **Lamentations 1:16***

*When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted. I remembered you, God, and I groaned; I meditated, and my spirit grew faint. **Psalms 77:2–3***

Thankfully, Jesus invites those carrying unbearable burdens to come to Him for relief:

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **Matthew 11:28–29***

*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. **Isaiah 41:10***

*Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. **1 Peter 5:7***

Grief may feel like it will last forever, but God assures us that joy will return in time—if not in the present, assuredly in the new heavens and new earth when Christ comes again:

Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

Psalms 30:5

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

Revelation 21:4

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. **Romans 8:18***

You’ve maybe heard before that “God won’t give you more than you can handle.” While statements like that are meant to let us know we can make it through things, Scripture tells a different story. God often gives us more than *we* can handle, but never more than *He* can.

*But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. **2 Corinthians 12:9***

*My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. **Psalms 73:26***



12 VERSES ON WAITING AND PATIENCE

If you're agitated by a slow-moving grocery checkout line, it's fitting for a friend to gently encourage you to be patient. But if that same friend tells you to "be patient" in your grief, those words feel not only impossible, but hurtful. Unsympathetic.

Yet, waiting is part of grief. Healing from the pain doesn't happen all at once, and answers don't usually come quickly. Grief is something that needs to be walked through, not skirted around. You're trying to patiently persevere through the difficulties of grief, waiting for the day when the sharper edges of it soften. So being patient on your grief journey is necessary (but not easy).

It can help to know that waiting in grief isn't passive. Waiting is active trust. And God meets us in the waiting.

Psalms 27:14

Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

Isaiah 40:31

But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Lamentations 3:25–26

The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

James 5:7–8

Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop. . . . You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

Psalm 130:5–6

I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning.

Romans 8:25

But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Ecclesiastes 7:8

The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.

Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Hebrews 10:36

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you.

Proverbs 20:22

Do not say, “I’ll pay you back for this wrong!” Wait for the LORD, and he will avenge you.

Micah 7:7

But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.