

“JOURNEYING THROUGH GRIEF” CLASS ONE: DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING GRIEF. PASTOR WILLIAM A. LEE, JR

1 Thessalonians 4:13 King James Version (KJV)

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

EXAMPLES

- * Two fourteen year old girls, best friends since high nursery school, are separated when one family moves to California.
- * A popular high school math teacher begins to lose his hearing, and students notice that he is becoming cranky.
- * A key figure in an organization loses his voice when his cancerous larynx is removed, and until he learns to speak again, the organization is paralyzed.

There is one common thread that run through these stories, They are all instance of loss and grief. It is not necessary to categorize losses as Big G's or Little G's because all loss has an effect upon us. Unless we understand that all losses, even "minor" ones give rise to grief, we shall misunderstand its fundamental nature. It is our conviction and premise that grief is a normal response to significant loss: grieving is not, as some writers have suggested, evidence of sickness or disease. It is something to live through rather than to cure. Experiences that evoke grief are much more frequent and more varied than most people imagine. As Powerful as the death of a loved one is, it is not death that teaches us what loss and grief are. We learn about loss much earlier in life; in fact, it comes before we know much about death at all. Grief is about loss. You can lose a job and go into a cycle of grief. You can experience divorce and go into the grief cycle- whether you are the spouse or a child. You can lose your home, a pet, normal body function, eyesight, ones ability to walk, have a heart attack or even to lose ones self confidence. All of these can launch us into the experience of Grief. We have already suggested that grief is a normal emotional response to significant loss. The abnormality of grief is frequently a consequence of the refusal to grieve or the inability of the grieving person to find those who are willing to care. Grief is universal and inescapable even when its existence and impact is denied.

"The word "grief" sounds too small for all we are feeling. That one simple word is asked to carry so much emotion- so much sadness, emptiness, loneliness, confusion, heartbreak, pain. All of this and so much more , is what we mean by grief." (Ronald J. Greer)

Grief- a composite of powerful emotions assailing us whenever we lose someone or something we value. Grieving is the intentional work grief-stricken persons engage in, enabling them to return to full, satisfying lives. It can be avoided as a very high cost to the one who refuses it.

"Grief is a house where the chairs have forgotten how to hold us, the mirror how to reflect us and the walls to contain us. Grief is a house that disappears when someone knocks on the door or rings the bell. A house that blows into the air at the slightest gust that buries itself deep in the ground while everyone is sleeping. Grief is a house where no one can protect you, where the younger sister will grow older than the older one, where the doors no longer let you in."

(JANDY NELSON "THE SKY IS EVERYWHERE")

Grief- from the latin word "gravis", which means heavy. It involves mourning and anguish. It involves the loss of someone or something that had a special place in your heart. Grief is the blow that hits you while mourning refers to how those feelings are expressed.

THE BIBLE AND GRIEF

Ecclesiastes 3:1

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance;

Job 1:20-22

At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said, "Naked came I into this world and naked I shall leave....."

Psalms 31:9-10

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away.

Psalms 34:18

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Goals of this Course

1. Why do people grieve, or what is the genesis of grief in human life
2. What are the dynamics of grief and the characteristics of grieving?
3. How can we help those who grieve?

Romans 12:15 King James Version (KJV) 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

The two most important times in the lives of people are when it is their time to rejoice and their time to mourn. It is not everyday that we get to celebrate, so when it is "our time" we remember those who were with us on our special day. The same principle is true for those who mourn. It is a time when people are emotionally vulnerable and sensitive. They will remember those who comforted and encouraged them.