

Handling Loss



ROCK SPRINGS
CHURCH

Dear Friend,

Grief is often the toughest thing we experience in life. It may seem like there is no hope, and the pain can feel overwhelming, but God is our rock in times of struggle. My hope and desire is that you find encouragement as you move through your stages of grief. In this booklet, you will find resources to help you with that process.

Psalms 34:18 tells us, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Even if you feel alone, God is with you always. In the moments you may not think he is near, he is still watching over you.

God Bless,

Benny Tate

Pastor Benny Tate



SERMONS

Pastor Benny has several messages on handling loss, grief, heaven and more.

[ROCKSPRINGSONLINE.COM/GRIEF](https://rockspringsonline.com/grief)

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OVERCOMING GRIEF SCRIPTURES

Psalms 34:18 "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Romans 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

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

Matthew 11:28-30 "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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Revelation 21:4 "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."

John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."

John 16:22 "So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy."

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT GRIEF

How long should grief last?

While the grieving process is different for each individual and situation, your grief may last a year or more. Most people find that their grief lessens but that there is always a small part of them that will grieve.

Even though a 'typical' timeline for grief is several months to several years, that doesn't mean that it follows a pattern. Just as you may move forwards or backwards through the stages of grief, you may experience progressive days and days that are harder.

You may even experience a rise in grief due to the dwindling support of friends and family. Shortly after a loved one passes, your friends will usually show a large amount of support. But as life continues, support usually lessens. This may cause you to feel a sense of loneliness or abandonment. This is normal and may be a part of your grief journey as well.

During the first year after someone's passing, you may find that certain days, special occasions, or anniversaries are difficult as they are your "first" without them. They may be large events on the calendar or small things that remind you your loved one is no longer with you.

Am I grieving correctly?

There is no one way to correctly grieve. There are common responses and somewhat uniform feelings but each individual is different.

Just as there are introverts and extroverts that connect with others in unique ways, each person experiences loss in their own way.

The best way to grieve is to follow your own natural instincts and take each day as it comes. As we've previously stated, grief can come in waves. You may feel like you're progressing too fast or even regressing but either way, you will have a unique journey.

How do I get closure?

It's unrealistic to think that you will never feel sadness or mourn the loss of a loved one once you reach 'closure'. It's more realistic to want to get to a point where you no longer feel an intense pain every time you think about the deceased. There is no obvious end point to grief rather, it changes and evolves.

Also, remember that when you lose a loved one, your life has changed and your life will not return to the exact way it was before. After some time, the loss will not be as intense as it first was but it's important to remember life will be different.

COMMON REACTIONS FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE

There are several common reactions following the loss of a loved one: sadness, shock, disbelief, avoidance, guilt, anger, and relief. All of these reactions are normal and you may experience some or all of them during the course of your mourning. Rest assured, these are common for a reason; because as humans, we all have fairly uniform reactions to death with variations from person to person.

Sadness: Sadness is the most common reaction to the death of a loved one. For some people, sadness may lessen over the course of a year and some people may find that it doesn't follow any pattern at all. It may be more intense at certain times of day or dissipate based on your weekly schedule. However, sadness should lessen as time passes. If you are concerned that your sadness has deepened into depression, please seek professional counseling. You can find more information about counseling at the end of this booklet.

Shock: Other than sadness, shock is one of the most common reactions following the death of a loved one. Many people go through some period of shock after learning a loved one (parent, child, spouse, etc.) has passed. This shock may last a few hours or several weeks, depending on how anticipated the death was.

Shock may be lessened if you've previously experienced loss beforehand. Nevertheless, you may not cry during this stage and rest assured that is also a normal reaction. Your reaction may be different depending on your age, your experience with grief, or your relationship to the deceased.

Disbelief: Depending on your relationship with the deceased, it may take some time to fully understand their absence. Most people experience some disbelief reactions during the early stages of grief. For instance, you may hear your phone ring

and momentarily think, "That's my mother calling," or "That's my husband," before remembering they are gone. These momentary "lapses" are common and not an indicator that you are avoiding your loss. These are normal thoughts and reactions to the death of a loved one and may happen for months.

Avoidance: You may find that you want to avoid thinking about your loved one after their death. This is normal. It's not healthy to constantly think about the deceased and you should take breaks from your grief. You deserve time to focus on yourself, your other loved ones, and the practical challenges that you now face. It does not mean you do not miss the deceased or do not care, and it does not mean you are grieving incorrectly.

Guilt: It is normal to feel pangs of guilt after your loved ones' passing. For some, it is the nagging "What if" or "Why didn't I" questions. For others, it is the guilt of making difficult medical decisions prior to death. It's natural to wonder these things or question your choices. It can be difficult to let go of feelings of guilt however we encourage you to show yourself at least as much patience and grace as you would show a friend who is grieving.

Anger: For some, it is easier to feel angry rather than sad. During intense times of grief, we as humans tend to want to find something or someone to blame for our loved one's death. In most instances, there is no one thing that takes the blame but in others, there is a person or thing that is responsible for their death, in cases of sudden or unexpected passing. It is imperative that you determine whether the blame is justified.

Whether there is something/someone at fault or not, it is important to recognize that your grief is being expressed as anger and determine what steps to take in order to move past it. If you are afraid to give up your anger or guilt because you believe that it is not honoring or remembering the deceased, know that it is unhealthy to hang onto these destructive feelings.

It is far more beneficial to replace that feeling with the grace and forgiveness that God gives us.

Relief: After some time, you may begin to feel relief after the passing of your loved one. If the deceased was suffering or you took on a major care-taker roll, you may feel a weight has been lifted after their death. Or if you begin to feel the heaviness of sadness lift, this may also be your way of experiencing relief. In any case, this does not mean you did not love or honor your relationship with the deceased. It is a normal human reaction to death.

NEXT STEPS TO HEALING

Be kind to yourself

It can be easy to beat yourself up when you feel that you should be progressing more quickly or feeling a certain way. We encourage you to treat yourself like you would a dear friend or fellow family member. You would never yell at them to “move on”. You would simply listen and allow that person to move through their grief at their own pace.

Say ‘Yes’ to Socialization

For many people who are grieving, it’s hard to re-enter social situations, even if they are a safe environment. If you feel that it’s an appropriate time, you can gently allow yourself to be around others again. This may feel forced at first but over time, your sense of normalcy may return due to being around others.

Self-Care

During this time, it’s imperative that you take care of yourself. For some, their grief takes on an ‘action’ mindset while others tend to have a more lethargic approach. Whatever natural reaction you have, be sure to eat healthy, exercise, and take care of your physical body. While grief affects your emotional health, it also has an impact on your physical body.

Continue with Hobbies

If you’re an avid painter or play an instrument, it can be helpful to keep practicing your normal hobbies. While you may feel uninspired at first, engaging in these activities can help bring some sense of joy to your grief.

Talk it Out

No matter if you process grief internally or externally, it is important to set aside time and space when you feel comfortable and safe talking to others about your feelings. This person (or people) can be anyone including a family member, friend, pastor, or even therapist. When you engage in a conversation with someone who is outside your grief, it may give you new perspective or renewed energy.

Honor the Deceased

For some, honoring the memory of their loved one may be a final step in coming to terms with their death. There are many ways you can honor your loved one: donate money to their favorite charity, plant a tree in remembrance of them, create a memory book to look back on, or carry a special memento that lets you feel close to the deceased.



GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION:

At Rock Springs, we believe life is better together, especially in seasons of grief. Our grief support group, GriefShare, offers support and encouragement on your journey to healing.

Where:

**Original Campus at Rock Springs Church
219 Rock Springs Rd | Milner, GA 30257**

Lead by: **Mary Fickling**

No cost, everyone welcome, childcare available

More Information:

(678) 429-6277 or (770) 229-8663



COUNSELING INFORMATION:

There is a river of hope for each and every situation.

Jabbok Counseling is Christ-centered and Bible based; offering everyone the hope that is found only in the One who is hope...**Jesus Christ.**

Where:

**Jabbok Ministries
1102 Chappell Mill Rd | Milner, GA 30257**

More Information:

(470) 771-8364 | JabbokMinistries.com



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