

DISPELLING
THE

myths

OF GRIEF

An **Honest** Conversation About Child Loss

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Redeeming **HER**

A FEW WEEKS AFTER MY SON'S FUNERAL..

I found myself lost in a sea of grief, unsure of how to navigate these tumultuous waters. Despite others' well-meaning words, I felt increasingly isolated, my own emotions drowned out by the weight of comforting those around me. Desperate for comradery and kindred spirits, a friend suggested I visit online grief support groups.

Entering this virtual realm, I was met with a flood of heartbreaking stories and raw pain from mothers who, like me, were grappling with the devastating loss of a child. Yet, amidst the tears and anguish, I couldn't help but notice a glaring absence of direction and hope for healing. Despite the passage of time, many moms remained trapped in grief, their sorrow echoing across the digital landscape, offering empathy but no tangible guidance. It was a sobering realization of how grief could leave one stranded in a seemingly endless cycle of pain and regret.

The common thread was they would never let go of grief for fear they would lose their child forever. Perplexed by such comments, I asked why, as if death and the grave weren't permanent enough. That opened Pandora's box, and fear bubbled out like troops lining up for execution. It was then the Holy Spirit gave me insight. Here's what I discovered.

The premature death of our child is out of order, and it extends beyond comprehension as they've now slipped away from our ability to change the outcome. After all, moms make things better and find solutions; now, there isn't one, and this feels like failure. Internally, we are out of control, looking at an endless pit of emotion, but nothing is obvious.

Now, we are being told to get over the grief, get on with life, and move forward. If the fear that is wrapped around permanent loss disrupts our ability to feel them, then we'll never want to let go. **This is why the conversation around grief must shift.**

WHAT IS GRIEF?

Loss is a very personal, intimate experience, especially if you're a mom who has lost her child. Whether their death was anticipated or unexpected, the impact of grief interrupts our lives, rearranges everything, and leaves us feeling lost. The journey forward isn't easy, but we aren't without hope or direction. Jesus. His words, His touch, His eyes, all spoke the message of Love. He emanated love in the midst of His grief but didn't allow Himself to reside there.

Grief is a natural response that starts inside us, where our body automatically reacts to signals from our brain. For instance, hearing about the loss of someone dear can make our heart beat faster, and our breathing become shallow and rapid. At the same time, our body releases hormones that bring waves of indescribable emotions. Such emotions cause anxiety, weeping, anger, disbelief, fear, deep sorrow, and great sadness. This happens to all of us. Nobody can control internal systems that affect the body, brain, and our emotions. It's how God made us.

Secondly, grief can't distinguish what's real and what's not. More importantly, when we validate our grief and make room for it to process, our defense systems can stop triggering our mind and body to react. Ignoring or suppressing grief delays your healing, but embracing it as a source of comfort will always leave you feeling empty.

Third, grief is a shared experience that impacts each of us differently. Our beliefs, personalities, family ties, and cultural backgrounds influence how we respond during this undesirable pilgrimage. However, recognizing the role and purpose of grief gives you permission to feel and release emotions as you process through the pain of such loss.

GRIEF

Myth #1

GRIEF IS A PLACE OF REFUGE

The prevailing message among grief influencers and experts is that grief is a place of safety or comfort. Webster's dictionary defines refuge as shelter or protection from danger or distress. Although this misbelief has good intentions, it couldn't be further from the truth.

Grief is not a sanctuary, nor will it protect you from the distress of losing your child. Grief is an intense response to inexplicable loss, which releases an overwhelming stack of challenges that we, as moms, must face.

What does the Bible say about finding a refuge?

*"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord; **He is my refuge and my fortress**, my God in whom I trust."*

Psalms 91:1-2

*"The Lord's name is a **strong tower, a fortress** where He invites us to run to and find strength." Proverbs 18:10*

This is a far cry from making grief a refuge or sanctuary, nor does it hold a candle to God's immeasurable love and kindness for us.

Like you, I don't have all the answers about my son's death. This is why I fall back on the character of God instead of the sayings of well-meaning people. God didn't need help in Heaven. His mercy, kindness, and grace were demonstrated when Jesus fulfilled everything through His death and resurrection. He gave His son, He didn't need mine early.



Myth #2

GRIEF IS A LIFELONG COMPANION

Another common belief is that the intensity of grief may change over time, but you will never live without it. If we embrace this belief, then we allow grief to move into our lives like a newfound companion who offers solace and support.

The grieving process helps us move toward healing. Yet, God never intended for a body system to become humanized to a level of permanent companionship.

Knowing our human frailties, Jesus provided a long-term companion who is not bound by time or space. He's our Comforter, friend, and defender, found in the person of the Holy Spirit. Proverbs 18:24 (TPT)

During the Last Supper, Jesus anticipated the challenges his loved ones would soon encounter. Despite knowing the weight of grief and the depth of sorrow awaiting them, he remained selfless. "Loving me empowers you," he assured them, "and I will ask the Father to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of Truth, who will be **your constant companion**, just like me. He will never abandon you." John 14:16-17 (TPT).

Second to our relationship with the Holy Spirit, we often experience healing through friendship with others. The Bible is full of examples showing the power of companionship. Jonathan and David exemplified a covenant friendship that carried them through tough challenges and great victories. They were faithful friends, rich in loyalty, sacrifice, and covenant heart (1 Samuel 20:16 TPT).

We need to acknowledge that grief is essential for healing after loss. If the Holy Spirit is Jesus' chosen companion, maybe He understands more than we realize. He wants to bring people together and guide us in communicating with God and each other about our experiences. This can help lessen the impact of grief and support each other as we focus more on love. Love is what unites us, and God's love is what heals the brokenhearted, not grief. We're stronger together as companions, even though nobody asked to join this club.

Myth #3

GRIEF AND LOVE ARE INSEPERABLE

THREE

This was a big gulp for me.

This message, taught by brilliant psychologists and therapists, not only caught my attention but provoked me to find out how they came to this conclusion:

“Grief is the evidence and the price of love; they are inseparable. Without pairing them, you dishonor your loved one.”

In all my years of education, grief training, and trauma work, I have never found a clinical document proving grief and love are inseparable. When I compared the brain system that triggers a grief response to the one that triggers a love response, I found that their reactions were completely different.

Grief makes our brain want to protect us by making us step back from what’s causing the pain. On the other hand, love makes our brain want to respond by making us feel warm emotions and drawing us closer to what we love. They both play a role in healing, but Grief is not the validation of our capacity to love.

Grief should drive us to love. Nowhere in the Bible have I found a scripture that binds love and grief together. Instead, it speaks of Jesus, who was acquainted with grief but didn’t let it move in, nor did He carry it to the grave.

Reading the story of Lazarus, Jesus’ friend, in the book of John 11:1-44 (TPT) revealed compassion and humanity from Jesus’ response to loss. Diving into ancient Hebrew writings, the interpretation of the scripture “Jesus wept” was that Jesus felt Mary’s and Martha’s pain. I suspect He felt hope as well. Overwhelming grief can have a mixture of emotions, as I am sure you have also experienced.

In verses 33-35, Jesus is said to have shuddered with emotion and melted with compassion for the family and mercy for Lazarus. As He approached the tomb, “tears streamed down Jesus’ face.” Love dispels the myths of grief so we can be free to know, hold, and keep our loved ones with us without it costing us anything else.

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE

In the months after Jeremy’s passing, I found myself lost in a whirlwind of emotions, struggling to comprehend the enormity of his absence in my life. Despite my knowledge of the typical stages of grief, I felt like I was navigating uncharted territory. I desperately needed spiritual wisdom to pull me through the valley of the shadow of death and into the arms of love.

In His kindness, Jesus showed me how to move through grief, not set up camp there. He taught me how to mourn Jeremy’s loss while finding glimpses of joy in his life and my future. Losing my son has been the most complex and painful experience I’ve ever faced. Yet, time and again, Jesus has proven Himself faithful by meeting me in my most profound moments of life.

Momma, I want you to know there’s no one-size-fits-all approach to dealing with grief or pain. It’s personal, intimate, and unique. It also takes time and patience. It’s messy and sometimes overwhelming, but it’s so incredibly beautiful in its way. It’s a story that only God can write, and He’s with us every step of the way.

I share His wisdom in the hope that you will receive the same comfort and healing that Jesus brought to me. I pray that Jesus, our Great Defender, meets you exactly where you are, lifting your head to resuscitate life today as He mends your hope for tomorrow.

May His truth push out all confusion, tear down any apprehension, and open your heart to hope, trust, and belief. I pray every lie holding you captive will be uprooted so that you can reframe your story and redeem your future. **For when you know the Truth, it shall set you free** (John 8:32).

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- **Do you compare grief to God?**

Why consider grief any comparison to God who knows exactly what it's like to lose His only child?

- **Do you talk to God about your grief?**

He knows your heart is broken, and He desires to mend your tomorrow so you can experience joy again.

- **Have you dismissed Christ's humanity?**

He laid down His deity for us to know He truly understands what we live through.

- **Is the pain you want to stop feeling triggering grief?**

Grief invokes an emotional response, which may feel like it's the only connection you have left with your child.

I take no refuge in humanizing grief, carrying it with me, nor allowing it to be my comforter.

- Deborah Larson



Hello, I'm Deborah!

I help moms who have lost a child let go of grief and, through the eyes of Love, reframe their identity, unlock their purpose, and experience guilt-free joy.

Find more encouraging resources at
redeemingher.com.

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