



excess **BAGGAGE**

Unpacking your hurts, habits & hang ups



PART 4

"Healing and Freedom Through Grief and Loss"

ICEBREAKER |

What's a place you've always wanted to travel to?

INTRODUCTION |

If you ever get the chance to visit Israel, make sure to take time to spend in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is the place where Jesus spent the final hours with His disciples before going to the cross. He prayed to God, a prayer so intense the Bible said He sweat blood. The word "Gethsemane" literally means "olive press," and just like those crops were put under intense pressure, so was Jesus. He knew that we also would experience grief and loss, so He showed us the way. In this lesson, we will look at the steps of biblical grieving to make sure we do it in an emotionally healthy way.

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All of us have experienced some kind of loss in life. It's not always the loss of a loved one. It could be the youthfulness we lose as we grow older, or our kids who leave the home when they grow up. Some of us lose our hair, while others lose their hearing. We also experience greater loss, like a job or a marriage. Anytime there's change, there's loss.

We often try to minimize these losses or speed through the grieving process. When we come to church feeling sad, we feel guilty or that something's wrong with us. Like we're failing at being spiritual. There's this false idea that we need to be joyful and deny our feelings of loss and grief.

But God wants to enlarge your soul through grief and loss. Read the following scripture:

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and He rescues those whose spirits are crushed."
Psalm 34:18 (NLT)

When we are sad or grieve a loss, He doesn't want you to just get over it. He wants to walk through it with you to help you find healing and freedom.

Why do you think that some Christians feel as if being sad is wrong?

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Jesus endured incredible suffering on the cross. He faced ridicule and rejection while dying for our sins. Hebrews 12:2 says that He despised the shame of the cross and took it up anyway. That's because He knew that what was about to happen, our sins would be forgiven, and our freedom secured.

But that doesn't mean the decision was an easy one. He agonized about what was to happen. Read Jesus' plea with The Father.

"My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from Me. Yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine."
Matthew 26:39 (NLT)

Jesus prayed that God would take away the cup of suffering – of excruciating pain, grief and loss. If Jesus was saddened by loss, then it's okay for us to become emotional as well.

Knowing that Jesus Himself was affected by grief and loss, how does that make you feel about your own loss?

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Let's look at three steps to biblical grieving. The first is to ***Pay Attention to Your Grief and Loss.***

Jesus provided the example for us. Instead of hiding His feelings, He let them out in anguish and prayer. He shows us that instead of denying, minimizing, or avoiding our feelings, we're to present them to God. God cares for you and wants you to share your feelings with Him.

Cast all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully].
1 Peter 5:7 (AMP)

Whenever you feel sad, take a moment to stop and ask the simple question, "Jesus, what am I sad about?" Often we have feelings and we're not sure why. It's as if we can't locate them. These lost feelings can lead to doubt and confusion. But when you can locate the reason behind a feeling, you can be open and honest with God and others about it.

Do you ever feel sad but you're not sure why? In those instances, what is your automatic response?

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The next step to biblical grieving is to ***Wait in the Confusing In-Between.*** This can be the hardest step because it's not really a step at all. It's a stop. We wait on God. We wait for a chance to move forward. We wait on the next shoe to drop.

David found himself in the confusing in between more than once. When he did, he knew that waiting on the Lord was the best response.

*Yet I am confident I will see the LORD's goodness while I am here in the land of the living. **Wait patiently** for the LORD. **Be brave and courageous.** Yes, wait patiently for the LORD.*
Psalm 27:13-14 (NLT)

What are some things that make waiting difficult? (Example, being unsure of your next step, wanting to get an answer now) Is there something you're grieving and waiting on God?

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The third step of biblical grieving is to **Let the Old Birth the New**. When we are sure that all things work to our good as we serve the Lord, we can be confident that any loss will lead to greater gain.

The difficult part is that new birth doesn't always look like we want it to look. Job suffered greatly, but then received a double blessing in restoration. That's not always the case. You may suffer loss in order that someone else receives a blessing. That's the lesson that Paul learned about his own losses.

Death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.
2 Corinthians 4:12 (NIV)

What you have lost may never be restored on this side of eternity. But by facing that grief, you can provide hope and healing to someone else.

Have you ever been helped by someone else's pain and loss? Think of a time when they suffered but you were helped because of it.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

The three steps of biblical grieving are not easy, but they are well worth the effort we put on them. Taking these steps alone can make it that much more difficult. This week, reach out to someone who is going through a loss and help them walk through this process:

- Pay Attention to Your Grief and Loss.
- Wait in the Confusing In-Between
- Let the Old Birth the New

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Do at least one (1) SOAP Devotions this week
- Share with your group one of your SOAP Devotions from this past week
- Invite a friend to your small group

CLOSE IN PRAYER

God, thank You for always caring for us. It's difficult sometimes to face our own grief and loss. We would all love to always be happy, but we understand that great gain can come from even the smallest of losses. So get us ready for the next time we lose something. Give us the wings of eagles as we wait on You. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; He is mine forever.
Psalm 73:26 (NLT)

Day 2:

For no one is abandoned by the Lord forever. Though He brings grief, He also shows compassion because of the greatness of His unfailing love.

Lamentations 3:31-32 (NLT)

Day 3:

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (CSB)

Day 4:

Whoever lives by believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?

John 11:26 (NIV)

Day 5:

I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among His people! He will live with them, and they will be His people. God Himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."

Revelation 21:3-4 (NLT)