

# Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled

How Christ Jesus helps us in our loss and  
carries us through the grief process.

Bill Stevens



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## Dedicated to

Dedicated to my greatest joys! May you know God's healing power, the joy and peace of His presence, His unfathomable amazing grace, and His personalized grace to help each of you in your times of need throughout your lives. May you always be family to one another, especially in the difficult times of life.

*Liz*

*Si*

*Sarah*

*Grace*

*John*

- God has great things for you!
- You are going to make it!
- God is with you!
- God loves you unconditionally!
- You can do the impossible!
- God is for you!
- There is nothing you will do or can do to stop God's purpose for your life! You are not big enough to make that kind of mess that God cannot clean up and fix!
- Follow Jesus, our Good and Great Shepherd!

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:16*

## Author's Preface

In seven months in 2021 I lost the three most influential and closest men in my life. My dad (78) who died of congestive heart failure, then three months later my pastor and the closest I have ever had to a big brother (62), and then then months later my second “dad” who was my closest prayer partner who actually passed away on my father’s birthday. It took the wind out of my sails.

We were nationally going through the uncertainty, anxiety, and grief of Covid chaos. Personally, I was already going through horrendous grief in my immediate family, then these deaths happened. Earthly finality of these relationships – they were over. My go-to prayer partners and “sources” of strength were gone. The older I got the more I cherished and appreciated these relationships, even with the personality clashes with my dad and “second” dad at times.

I had performed nearly 150 funerals in 25 years of ministry and walked nearly as many families through the grief process, but I was not prepared for this level of grief.

I could always turn to these men for wisdom, encouragement, and support. Some people are just not replaceable, and they are not.

My source of strength had to become 100% Jesus, and some days I did better than others. The grief weeks, months, and even now years later would hit me like a wave and knock me down, but Jesus was there to hold me up.

I take hope and encouragement in the life giving and truth-filled words of Jesus on the night before He was going to be crucified and when He told His followers that He was going to be crucified.

*“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup>In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” John 14:1-3*

There is something deeply powerful about the Word of God. God’s Holy Spirit personally works it into His children’s lives as we focus and give it our attention and belief.

I can read these words of Jesus and literally feel the peace of God take the stress, pain, grief, and sadness away. Now it comes back later, but the more I focus on the God of who gave this promise and the truthfulness of it, I feel deep comfort.

God is a God of comfort and help in our time of need!



God is a delivering God! God the Father resurrected His only Son, King Jesus to defeat Death and the Grave! Death and the grave cause us to have pain, grief, and sadness. It was not supposed to be this way in the beginning. Death was not part of God's original design! Seriously, check out Genesis 1-3. Life and living was God's original design!

God wants to carry you through this troubling time of your life as you walk through the grief process, this valley of the shadow of death. He wants you to know His presence personally and Him helping you in a real and tangible way.

He is with you right now and as you read this look to Him as the Source of Help in your time of need. He is the only One who can heal your deepest wounds. I look forward to seeing my King Jesus and my family and friends who follow Him one day when I go through that door that they have already gone through. But until then, "To live is Christ and to die is gain!"

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## **CAN YOU MAKE IT THROUGH THIS? CAN JESUS REALLY HELP US?**

Yes, you can make it through it with Christ's help! I have seen Christ help us and many of our friends!

### **What about?**

- What about my friends who lost a child during pregnancy? Yes, Jesus helped them and is helping them!
- What about my friends who thought there was absolutely no hope when their dad died? Yes, Jesus helped them and is helping them!
- What about my friends who lost their child unexpectedly? Yes, Jesus helped them and is helping them!
- What about my friends who lost their son to recklessness? Yes, Jesus helped them and is helping them!

- What about my friend who lost her husband, the sole breadwinner, and left her with kids at the house? Yes, Jesus helped them and is helping them!
- What about my young friends who lost their dad way before time? Yes, Jesus helped them and is helping them!
- What about my friend who lost his wife, way before her time? Yes, Jesus helped them and is helping them!
- What about my friends who lost their new-born baby, to fetal alcohol/drug syndrome? Yes, Jesus helped them and is helping them!
- What about my friends who lost their child in an accident when they were momentarily distracted? Yes, Jesus helped them and is helping them!
- What about my friends who lost their dad and mom when they were a child? Yes, Jesus helped them and is helping them!

- What about my friends who lost their child, brother, dad, and friend to suicide? Yes, Jesus helped them and is helping them!

No matter your loss! Christ is the Only One who can really help you through the pain! He is able to touch the deepest part of your soul and begin healing it and helping you through this dark journey called grief. Christ's death on the cross was not only for our forgiveness, but it was a statement to us. He understands your pain. He really knows this suffering personally, He knows you, He sees exactly what you are going through, and He wants to help you through it.

The first step is simply asking Him to help you.

*Lord Jesus,*

*Please help me through this pain and help me make sense of what has happened.*

*Help me to receive your help each day and each moment. Thank you for your promises to help me.*

*Amen.*

## PART 1

# THE PROMISE OF HEAVEN

*“We were promised sufferings. They were part of the program. We were even told, ‘Blessed are they that mourn,’ and I accept it. I’ve got nothing that I hadn’t bargained for. Of course, it is different when the thing happens to oneself, not to others, and in reality, not imagination.”*  
— C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*

### 1. THE TROUBLE WITH DEATH

Jesus said, *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.”*

John 14:1 (NKJV)

Death is a troubler. There is nothing more painful than death. There is nothing more heart wrenching than grieving someone who you deeply loved. Have you ever lost someone you deeply cared for and they deeply cared for you? Someone you relied on and they relied on you. Someone you relied on and they relied on

you. Someone whom you depended upon and they depended upon you. Someone who invested their lives in you and you in them. There is trouble and all kinds of trouble come to us.

**Death troubles your heart with anxiety and worries.**

It will play on your nerves, mind, emotions, and cause you to act in unhealthy ways. Death can shake us to our core and cause us to seek to stop the pain no matter what. What am I going to do? How am I going to live without them being here? If you depended upon this person financially and there was no plan for financial stability without them, that can cause significant trouble and fear.

*No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid. The same fluttering in the stomach, the same restlessness, the yawning. I keep on swallowing.*  
C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*



## **Death troubles your heart with fear for our own lives.**

Everyone fears death at some point in their life. Christ's Word teaches us that humanity has been kept in fear of death. Now we can seek to become stoic, gladiator-like bravery, and say there is never a fear of death. But friends, that is movies and not real life. The truth is even the most competent, capable, and mighty of men and women, are attacked with fear of their own death at times. Not only attacked but kept in a prison for fear of their own death. So they do things to make their mark, leave a legacy, preserve their life, and be remembered. There is nothing wrong with these things, and I believe we should seek to do them. But the one that is driven by fear of their own mortality is never at peace, especially when their worldly achievements fall apart. Their personal peace is built upon their achievements, which will never last forever.

**Death is troubling because it is an appointment made for everyone.**

*God's Word says, "And as it is appointed for a person to die once, but after this the judgment," Hebrews 9:27*

Death is real. Some try to live in denial of it. Some try to live nonchalantly about it. Others live in fear of it. Some try to cheat death, but friends it is impossible to cheat death. No matter what a person believes or does – death is an appointment for every one of us.

**Everyone knows there is more to life than this life.** God's Word, the Bible says *"God has set eternity in the hearts of men/women."* (Ecclesiastes 3:11) We know there is more to life than this life. We can try to lie to ourselves, but God has made it abundantly clear in our heart – that there is an eternity and we either have certainty facing it or uncertainty facing it. We will either enter eternity in peace with God or without peace in meeting God.

**Christ Jesus came to free us from the fear of death.**

Jesus tells us in His Word, *"Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son (Christ Jesus) also became flesh and*

*blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.* <sup>15</sup> *Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.* Hebrews 2:14–15 (NLT)

There is no way around it, death is a troubler. The prospect of someone you love dying brings fear, anxiety, worry, pain of all kind, heart ache and heart break, and fear of them suffering. But Christ Jesus came to remove the fear of death and He gave us specific instructions on how He can help each of us through the pain of death and fear of dying.

## 2. CHRIST CAME TO HELP US THROUGH OUR GRIEF

**Jesus gave us specific instructions on how to connect with Him, so He could help us through our grief.**

Jesus dropped an emotional bomb on his closest friends the night before He was crucified, that He was going to be betrayed by one of them and then killed. These were His closest friends who had left everything, jobs, careers, and even time with family to learn day and night from Him for the previous three years. They were more than grieved. They were deeply troubled, and He gives them (and us) some specific instructions.

Here are the words Jesus spoke to comfort them:

*Jesus said, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. <sup>2</sup> There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> When everything is ready,*

*I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.*

<sup>4</sup> *And you know the way to where I am going."*

<sup>5</sup> *"No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"*

<sup>6</sup> *Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*

<sup>7</sup> *If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"*" John 14:1-7 (NLT)

Look at what He says!

First, he says you can make it through the pain and to overcome your fears and troubles. He said, "Don't let your heart be troubled!" That is a huge statement for anyone grieving the death of a loved one. God Himself, Christ Jesus, says, "Don't LET your heart be troubled." Getting on the path to making it through this pain is a choice you have to make. He didn't say that they were going to be victims of circumstances beyond their control, but they could be

victorious and make it through the pain if they would choose to follow His path of instruction.

Second, He says, the only way to make it through the pain and troubles of grief is by faith! He said, "You believe in God, believe also in me." The word "belief" in the Bible is our word for "faith." Faith is the key to overcoming the pain, trouble, and heartache of death. Christ Jesus is the only One who can speak definitively on death and the afterlife. He is God who became man to help us do what we could not do ourselves. He explained God to us, and then made a way for us to have forgiveness and peace with God. He died, was buried, and arose from the grave alive on the third day securing forgiveness for whoever would put their trust in Him. His resurrection proves He is God and was God in human form. He calls each of us to put our faith in Him like you would have faith in God. Putting your faith in Him will remove the fear of death.

Many times, we are afraid of thinking about God we have a list of regrets that we know God would not approve. The Bible calls those sins,

rebellious actions against the ways of God. But Jesus understands our human weakness and He died on the cross to pay the punishment for our sins. Yes, His death made atonement for everyone's sins in the entire world, so that anyone who put's their faith in Him will be forgiven and fully accepted by God. How do we know if we place our faith in Christ's death as payment for our rebellious actions that God will forgive us and accept us fully? The resurrection of Christ was God the Father's stamp of approval upon His Son's amazing selfless act of sacrifice for you and me, and the entire world. Jesus was perfect – unlike us. He was tempted in every way we are tempted but never sinned (rebelled against God.) Putting your faith in Christ will remove the fear of punishment. Christ becomes our lawyer, our advocate who makes the undeniable perfect case of total forgiveness for everyone who places their faith in Him.

*“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”* John 3:16 (NLT)

Faith in Him also gives us eternal life! Eternal life is not a phrase we use very often at all. Eternal life is not being immortal – living forever in this body. Imagine how horrible that would be – always stuck in this world that is growing worse and worse. God’s Word teaches that Eternal Life as a present reality and an amazing future reality. When you place your faith in Christ something amazing happens inside you immediately – present reality! You are forgiven by God and He fills you with peace, love, and joy. He does something spiritually inside you to bring you to life. You possess this amazing new quality of life, called eternal life. But you also are given this assurance of being with God in His Heaven forever!

Christ didn’t come to judge us and slam us! He came so that we might not be condemned!

*“God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.”* John 3:17 (NLT)



### 3. CHRIST PROMISES US AN AMAZING HEAVENLY HOME

*"There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?" John 14:2*

Christ has prepared a perfect place for His followers to live forever with Him. No, it is not floating upon the clouds and no, you do not become an angel either. The Bible does not teach either of these. So what is Heaven? Heaven is the home of God. It does not exist in the universe as we know it. God exists outside of time, outside of this universe, in a realm that we might describe as eternity. Heaven is more beautiful than you can imagine. There are angels, streets like that of transparent gold, and it is called the City of God. It is a place where there is no pain, no sorrow, no tears, no hospitals, no funeral homes, no suffering, no sickness, and no graveyards. And Christ Himself will wipe away all your tears. The Bible teaches you will have a perfect body, no disabilities, and you will be the person God originally intended for you to be!

*"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 21:4 (NLT)

More importantly than all these things – it is where Jesus is. Christ the One who loves you so much that He willingly surrendered His life for you, so you might have Eternal Life with Him forever! Will you get a mansion or a room? Some translations use the term "mansions." I guess a room in God's house would be a mansion! But technically it is a word that was used 400 years ago in a very old translation (King James Version), but technically the original Greek word means "rooms." The real meaning is not about having a big mansion, but that God Himself has personally prepared you a place in His very own home. Our good-good Heavenly Father cares deeply for His children, to make place for all of them – not temporarily – but forever!

Followers of Christ will not just see and be with Jesus, but with all the followers of Christ. There

will be a great reunion day for all followers of Christ. It will be awesome and an amazing reunion day with family and friends!

*"When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am."*  
*John 14:3*

Reunited with all our believing loved one and friends. All of God's children will be together one day. Jesus is coming again to receive His children to Himself. Followers of Jesus will either enter His presence through the doorway of death or when He returns, we will be gathered together by Him and taken to Heaven with Him. Christ Himself will return to this earth, not to be crucified again, but to receive His children to Himself, defeat all the evil once and for all in this world, and set up His reign and rule upon this earth. God's Word calls this the Resurrection Day, or the Day of the Lord. The dead will be raised to have a resurrected body like Jesus.

Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after*

*dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this?"* John 11:25–26 (NLT)

## 4. THE WAY TO HEAVEN

Jesus finished talking to His followers that night by telling them how they could go to Heaven with Him one day!

*<sup>4</sup> And you know the way to where I am going."*

*<sup>5</sup> "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"*

*<sup>6</sup> Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*

*<sup>7</sup> If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"*" John 14:4–7 (NLT)

Notice what Jesus did not say. He did not give a list of rules to follow, how good you had to be, or how religious you need to be. Actually, He never did that. God is about relationships, more than rules. Notice everything, He speaks of in this passage is about being in relationship with Him – like a brother to Him, and a son to the Father. Christ was very loving but very exclusive. He is God who created the entire

universe. It is His and He offers amazing eternal life to everyone, but it is all dependent upon a person acknowledging that Jesus is the only way. He is Lord, master, or boss if you will, of the entire universe. The way to the Father is through the Son, Jesus. What does that mean? First, placing your faith in Christ's death on the cross as your only hope of forgiveness and eternal life. Second, allowing Christ to be the boss/leader of your life. He will then guide you through this life personally and He promises you will be with Him forever. What a good God He is!

## PART 2: YOU CAN MAKE IT THROUGH THE PAIN-FILLED VALLEY

The valley of the shadow of death is a frightening place for anyone. It is an image that conjures up dread, despair, .... and death. God's Word the Bible uses many images of how God describes our relationship to Him. One of those images is the Shepherd and the sheep.

### Psalm 23 (NKJV)

*<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

*<sup>2</sup> He makes me to lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside the still waters.*

*<sup>3</sup> He restores my soul;*

*He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His  
name's sake.*

*<sup>4</sup> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of death,*

*I will fear no evil; For You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

*<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of  
my enemies;*

*You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.  
<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All  
the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.*

Why images? A simple picture communicates so much more than we can describe in thousands of words. But more importantly, why this image of a shepherd and his sheep?

*“Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.”*

*Psalm 100:3*

*Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” John 10:27*

**Christ cares for you like a shepherd does for his sheep**

The shepherd takes care of the sheep’s needs. He leads them to water, food, and provides a shelter and protection for them. The shepherds were strong, tough men who lived out in the



fields, and were warriors protecting the sheep from dangerous animals. They were caring as well, petting the sheep, giving them each a name, training them to recognize his voice, and being a loving veterinarian for them when they were hurt.

Christ is our good shepherd, who wants to provide for us in the same way. He wants to lead each one of us and provide for each of our needs. He wants to help us physically, relationally, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually like a shepherd cares for his sheep.

### **When we hurt, He cares the most**

*He restores my soul;*

Christ cares about your pain and grief, and He wants to personally help you through it. When someone we love dies, we are injured emotionally and spiritually, which can make you sick physically. Healing begins on the inside, because the wound is deep. Your emotions are torn and need the healing touch of God's love. Only God himself can bring true

healing to the wound of grief. The world offers nothing that can really help you through this pain.

Many times, we look everywhere, but to Christ for our spiritual healing. Some try to find healing in self-control and self-discipline or other relationships. Some just say, “the hell with it!” and go out binge drinking or doing some kind drugs to ease the pain. While others turn to work, busyness, and “being strong” all the while they are hurting beyond belief. Then there are those who stop eating or eat everything they can find. My dear friends if you turn to anyone or anything but God, then you are turning to the wrong one to bring healing. Christ is the only One who can bring inner peace, and bring true healing to the deep wounds of this life.

Twenty-two years ago, I had just begun pastoring my very first church. I could not have been more than 6 months there. I was green and totally unprepared to handle 35-40 funerals in the first 18 months of being a pastor there. I was reading everything I could find to

be able to encourage the dear people I was entrusted to care for. They were enduring the horrible preaching that I was doing because they knew I cared for them. I really should apologize to them for the very bad preaching. One lady came to me and after two very significant deaths in 6 months of each other, both were her brothers who raised her from a little girl. Their parents had died early in her life. She was more than distraught. She told me the doctor wanted her to take anxiety medicine, but she did not want to and was very strongly against taking it. She knew she was a basket case, a bundle of raw nerves that had the skin ripped off exposing them.

She came to me and asked me to recommend something to help her from the Bible. I knew she was a follower of Christ from an early age, but she told me in no uncertain terms, "I believe in Christ's power to help me, and that His Word is powerful enough to help me through this. I may need medicine, but I really don't want to if I don't have to, and I need to know what to do." I silently prayed, "Lord help me, I am over my head and have no clue

what to do!" It was then that I was reminded of a story I had just read in an old out of print book. The pastor told a story about a person in his congregation who was struggling with extreme anxiety like she was, and he recommended a Rx prescription for his anxiety. So, I gave her the same prescription.

## Rx for Anxiety

- Take Psalms 23 like medicine.
- Take it 5 times a day, 5 minutes each time, for the next 7 days.
- Spend each of those 5 minutes reflecting upon how Christ is your Shepherd and how He cares for you.
- Spend that time praying these things to Christ and acknowledging His role in your life and how He is doing this for you too.
- Look at where you are mentioned in the passage. You are mentioned 12 times (I, me, my).
- You will memorize it, but read it, write it down, and keep your eyes on a copy of it.

She took the Rx to heart! She hunted me down a week later and said, “Pastor! Something happened on the fourth day! When I was reading, ‘He restores my soul’ on the fourth day, something lifted off of me that I can’t explain and I have a peace now that I have never felt before. God used Psalm 23 to heal my soul!” I was taken aback – I did not expect that

level of deep experience that she had with God. But she was different from then on. She was stronger and had a greater sense of inner peace about her than I had ever seen in her life. Her family said the same thing. Christ is the Answer. He does not just have an answer or the answer, but He Himself is The Answer to everything we are facing. Christ restored her soul. Now, I am not against medicine at all, but I am like her in this. Too many people try it before they genuinely try Christ.

The Word of God is very powerful! It is described as a healing ointment to our soul, a crushing hammer to destroy wrong habits and bad thought patterns, and a purging fire to cleanse our soul of guilt and shame. It is unlike any other book on the planet. It is the bestselling book every year for a reason.

**We need the Shepherd to guide us on this path to healing our soul.**

*He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.*

Is God taking a cheap shot at us by likening us to sheep? We have family that has sheep... and they make cattle look like geniuses. Sheep are dumb. They get distracted nibbling and proceed to nibble themselves far away from the flock and the shepherd. They are notorious for becoming lost. Jesus told a story of a shepherd who left his 99 sheep in a safe location, so he could go hunt and find the one that was lost. When he found it, he came back rejoicing! Why? Because everyone is valuable – even the ones that get on the wrong path.

We need help getting and staying on the right path, “the paths of righteousness.” One bad attitude can lead to one wrong decision, which leads to more and more wrong decisions. We have all done things we regret. I want you to know if you are far from where you need to be, Christ loves you! You are not expendable! He cares for you deeply!

*Jesus said, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” “I am the good shepherd. The good*

*shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” John 10:10-11*

We are all like that lost sheep at times. The Bible describes Christ as our Good Shepherd, but also the Lamb of God who takes away our sins. Jesus became the sacrifice for our sins, like lambs were sacrificed in Bible times to atone for their sins. But an animal sacrifice could not bring peace between God and people, so God Himself stepped out of Heaven, became a man, taught us of God’s ways, and then became the sacrifice to bring each of us peace with God. Christ took the punishment for all our sins upon Himself.

*“All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.” Isaiah 53:6 (NLT)*

When we are left to our own decisions, we fail. Bookstores have thousands of self-help books so we can try to improve upon ourselves and not make bad decisions again. Christ Jesus is the only One who has ever lived a perfect life – a life without regrets. He knows how to live it, came and demonstrated it, taught it, and even



demonstrated how we need to exit this life. He wants to lead you in the path to the good life. His forgiveness is available for everyone, because He is Love! Real living is found in following Christ!

### **Help in the Valley: Stages of Grief**

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4*

The grief process is like a valley. A valley that is dark, dangerous, despairing, and depressing. The place where you dread the most. A place where you surely don't want to get stuck there, but unfortunately so many do and never make it through the valley. You see on the other side of this dark valley is a place of light, new normal, a new beginning, and a place of renewal. You never forget the one who you lost, and you don't want to. Is the pain ever gone? The pain lessens as you follow Christ through the valley. This journey leads to you to a new place, a place where you deeply miss

your loved one, but your life is not ordered around them anymore. There is a new order to their life. You have made it through the valley. The darkness of the valley does not overshadow your life like it once did.

*“Part of every misery is, so to speak, the misery’s shadow or reflection: the fact that you don’t merely suffer but have to keep on thinking about the fact that you suffer. I not only live each endless day in grief, but live each day thinking about living each day in grief.”*

*C.S. Lewis, A Grief Observed*

Psychologists tell us there are five stages of grief. They are very accurate to what a person goes through, and they can be likened to going through a very long dangerous valley.

### *Five Stages to the Valley of Grief*

- 1. Shock/Denial – “I can’t believe this is happening,” Numbness settles in. Some refuse to face the reality that their loved one has passed and they never get out of this stage. For months or even years, they

walk around and talk about their loved one as if they are still here, and still coming home. There is this seemingly total refusal to face reality. Please don't stay in this place. Christ wants to take you by the hand, and lead you through this hard place.

- 2. Anger: You will be angry at someone. It could be yourself, your loved one, doctors, other family members, the guy minding his own business walking down the street, and many times we are even angry at God. It is important to know that anger is normal, but it is not an excuse for wrong actions. Don't stay in the anger stage, or you will become bitter and healing will never take place. Too many dig into being bitter and unforgiving toward someone, mainly God. It is ok to be angry at God and tell Him how angry you are with Him, just don't let go of Him. He understands and loves you. What happened to your loved one is not His fault and He did not do this to you. This is a broken world and

He wants to help you navigate the brokenness we are faced with every turn of the day. We are in a broken world (see Genesis 3), but that is why Christ came to be our Savior!

- 3. Depression: Sadness that will hit you like a wave and knock you down unexpectedly. Expect it but don't stay in it. Know that this is just a stage and tell yourself that. Hang on to Christ! Get out and go do some things with your friends. Good friends can help you through these deeply sad times. Stay away from friends who will enable you in your hard days and encourage you to do things that are not healthy for a person going through this valley. They may be well-meaning, but they are not really helping. Many wrong choices can keep you in this place of darkness when you are meant to make it through it!! You are passing THROUGH the valley, hang on to Christ who is the source of our strength and hope! Let Him lead you through it!

You will feel at times like C.S. Lewis did in the loss of his wife.

*“Her absence is like the sky, spread over everything.”*

C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*

*For in grief nothing ‘stays put.’ One keeps on emerging from a phase, but it always recurs. Round and round. Everything repeats. Am I going in circles, or dare I hope I am on a spiral?  
C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed**

- 4. Bargaining: God, I will do \_\_\_\_\_ (*whatever*) if you don't let me experience this kind of pain again. Trust God and let him have your anxieties. So many times people make desperate deals with God. God loves you so much and wants to carry you through this – not to the place where you can say, “I made a deal with God,” but “God Himself carried me through the hardest days and helped me every step of the way.” He wants you to know His presence during

this time, so you can rest in him and not be controlled by worry, fear, and anxiety.

- 5. Acceptance: You made it through the valley. You have allowed the Lord to carry you through the valley of the shadow of death, to the other side where there is a new beginning. On the other side of this valley, there are sunshiny days, green meadows, and streams of running water - a beautiful place of healing and new beginnings. No, you will never forget your loved one. You should not forget them. This is a not a place of forgetting, but of a reordered life with a level of spiritual and emotional healing in your life.

If you get stuck in the valley and don't really deal with your grief, you will be miserable. And when someone else dies not as close, but near you, it may open up all the repressed feelings you have. It can flood all over you. There is nothing wrong with letting it out. But please take time for yourself and allow yourself to heal emotionally and spiritually.

*Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape.*

*C.S. Lewis, A Grief Observed*

Weep and mourn the life you had in mind, but continually give it to God trusting Him to work in and through your life. Remember, you are passing through the valley! The valley is not your destiny. The place of healing on the other side of the valley is where Christ is leading you! Find your hope and help in the Shepherd as He leads you through this dark place.

**There is a blessing on the other side of the valley.**

*“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.” Psalm 23:5*

A table? Not a real table, but a lush green flat easy-to-walk-on plateau far above the dark valley below. The place of safety and blessing for the sheep, farm above all the enemies that tried to destroy them in the valley. There is a

new beginning once you make it through the valley. A new day has come. A new normal has come. The deepest pain is gone. You don't hurt like you do now. Let Jesus carry you through the valley, He will help you; He will heal you; He won't give you a life of regrets but of healing & blessing.

### **The Promise of Being with Christ Jesus Forever.**

Your forever home is Heaven! God is leading you through this valley and this life to get you to your real home, Heaven!

*“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.” Psalm 23:6*

*Those who follow Christ have the promise of being with Him forever. It is the place called Heaven, the House of the Lord, the dwelling place of God. Jesus said it this way, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” (John 10:27)*





## PART 3

# IS SUICIDE THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?

There are many myths that are perpetuated about the unpardonable sin. Myths that harm so many people and keep them from knowing and receiving the help of Christ through the grieving process. Myths that cause people to give up hope on ever seeing their loved one in eternity. There is an unpardonable sin, but it is not what most people think. Some believe atheism and Satanism are unpardonable sins. That is not the case either.

### **Myth! Suicide is the Unpardonable Sin.**

The biggest myth perpetuated is that suicide is the unpardonable sin. Let me start by saying, unequivocally, No! Suicide is not the unpardonable sin. There are some religious groups that believe suicide cannot be forgiven, but they misunderstand the Bible completely. The Bible draws a hard line on this. Your religion may have taught this for years, but it goes totally against Scripture.

Why do some religious groups believe this? They believe that this person could not confess their sin before he killed himself, and it was a mortal sin leading to spiritual death. The problem with this, is that the Bible teaches something different.

God's Word teaches that suicide is self-murder. It is an intentional and deliberate act of taking one's own life. All sins are mortal sins that bring eternal condemnation in a place called hell, which is an eternal place of separation from God and all that is good. This is the reason God stepped out of Heaven! This is the reason Christ Jesus came to earth! Everyone was on a collision course for eternity without Him, so God intervened Himself.

Suicide is not what determines whether a person gets into God's Heaven or not. If you could keep the Ten Commandments perfectly, you could go to Heaven on your own. You would be counted worthy, but no one can do that. This is one of the lessons of the Ten Commandments, God is Holy (totally pure

and other than us) and we are not at all. The other lesson is that we cannot do enough good or become a good enough person to be counted worthy to enter God's Heaven on our own.

God's Word says, *"For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws."* James 2:10 (NLT). All you need to do to become guilty of eternal separation from God is break one of the Ten Commandments. Why? This points out our delusional ideas of our own personal goodness. You see, God's Word says, *"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."* Romans 3:23 (NLT). We all need the grace of God - equally. Some don't need more grace than others, we all need the mercy and grace of God.

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."*  
Romans 6:23 (NLT)

Notice God's Word in Romans 6:23. Sin is singular, not plural. What we earn because of our sin is death. The Bible teaches that death is eternal separation from God in a place called

hell. But the passage doesn't stop there, it says the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord! God offers freely forgiveness, love, peace, joy, and Heaven – Eternal Life! It is not something earned.

When you place your faith in Christ and allow Him to become the Lord (leader/boss) of your life, you are forgiven instantly of all of your sins – past, present, and future. Christ declares you His own, pardons all of your sins, and actually justifies you. He declares you a pure and righteous person – as if you have never sinned.

A follower of Christ who commits self-murder (suicide) is still forgiven and is still ushered into the presence of Christ Himself, not to be condemned. His/her reward is not what it could be because they rejected fully doing life Christ's way. But the person who is not a Christ follower, and dies in any other kind of way, commits the unpardonable sin. Why? Because they rejected Christ. Once you die there is no more chances to become a follower of Christ and receive eternal life. There are no deals at

the gates of Heaven. The person who dies without becoming a follower of Christ, rejecting Christ to the very end, commits the sin that cannot be forgiven. God's mercy and grace is extended to your last breath.

You might be saying, you don't know what kind of evil things I have done. God knows everything you have done. Christ voluntarily shedding his blood was the perfect sacrifice for God the Father to say! "That is good enough!" You see, when you place your faith in Christ's death on the cross for you, a spiritual action happens. Your sins are spiritually washed away, not by water or by any of your good works, but by the blood of Jesus!

**Christ died for us so we could be forgiven.**

*"He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins." Ephesians 1:7 (NLT)*

**Christ's sacrifice can cleanse a person's soul and remove the condemnation hanging over them.**

*"Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Hebrews 9:13–14 (NLT)*

When a person places their faith in Christ and allows Him to be the Lord (Leader, Boss) of their life, then immediately their lives are changed. A spiritual event happens in their life that cannot be undone. The spiritual event of Christ washing a person's sins away by His blood, immediately forgiving that person and declaring them acceptable to God. God then adopts that person into His family and they are His forever! He will never cast them out. Acceptance into Heaven is based on God's grace and not our actions. If it was based upon our works and actions, no one would make it.

## SUICIDE IS NEVER A GOOD OPTION

- Suicide is a sin, the sin of self-murder. There are many reasons: Self-hate, irrational choices that happens when they are under the influence of drugs/alcohol, depression, mental illness, hopeless feelings, and others. The reasons are plentiful, but it still is self-murder.
- Suicide is a sin because it is not believing what God says about you! God says your life is of great value! God says you are of amazing worth, amazing value, so much so that He sacrificed His Son, King Jesus, for you – to help you and give you an amazing awesome forgiven and eternal quality of life!
- Sin because it is a lack of faith in God's ability to deliver you. The person who commits suicide quits, when God wants to deliver them. God wants to help you through their pain and hardships.
- Suicide is a terrible act of a broken person



who cannot see past their pain. Nor can they see the pain they will inflict upon others.

- Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

Yes, even Christians can get so depressed they do wrong things, and even to the point of suicide. This is not an excuse. The Bible tells about John the Baptist who pointed people to Jesus as the Savior, the Messiah. He saw Heaven open and the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus like a dove and heard the voice of God declaring Jesus as the Messiah (Savior). He got thrown in prison and was in such a lonely situation that He began questioning his faith and whether Jesus was really the Savior sent from God. Jesus affirmed him, loved him, and said that there was not a greater man born among men than John the Baptist. There were others in the Bible who were in covenant with God and they committed suicide, but they are

never considered any kind of a good example to follow. But, we still see this theme, that God's love of us is not dependent upon our performance. God's love for us is based upon His character – He is a loving God and salvation is a gift that cannot be earned no matter how good a person is or the good things they do. This salvation, this gift of eternal life, is offered to us by the grace of God. Grace is God's undeserved loving affection toward us. It is activated in our life when we believe in Christ and follow Him.

*"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."*  
*Ephesians 2:8–9 (NLT)*

**God brings us into His family and will never cast us out.**

Those who follow Christ have the promise of being with Him forever. It is the place called Heaven, the House of the Lord, and the

dwelling place of God. Jesus said it this way, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." (John 10:27) You cannot even take your own self out of the hands of God!

**The pain of a suicidal person is real and must be taken seriously.**

*"The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!"*" Lamentations 3:19–24 (NLT)

**If someone you loved committed suicide, you are struggling with a level of grief that few can comprehend.**

You are struggling with hard questions like: What could I have done different? Why didn't I \_\_\_\_\_? Why didn't we \_\_\_\_\_? How is this going to affect the rest of the family for generations? Let me first encourage you, if you feel you did not do all you could do, confess that to God and ask Him to forgive you, and then walk in knowing He has forgiven you.

Above all else, make sure you do whatever you can to get you and your family counseling so that everyone's grief is addressed. The last thing you want is for this to become a pattern in your family. I recommend counseling from a Christian counselor who has a worldview like described in this booklet. But please friend, find a good counselor who is a Christian, and you and your family spend the next year visiting with them. Christ is able to help you and He uses others to help us too.

## PART 4

# THE GRAVES ARE GOING TO BURST OPEN!

*"And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope.*

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

I was in my late 20's and had been to many funerals by this time. One of my acquaintances' father-in-law died and I went to show him my support at the funeral, but I didn't expect to see what I did. His wife and her sisters were weeping and wailing over the death of their dad, saying... we will never see daddy again! It was the most hopeless sound I had ever heard in my life. Genuinely, they did not have any hope, at all. But as followers of Christ, we are giving precious promises and an internal hope that nothing and no one can take away.

Jesus wept too at the funeral of a friend, Lazarus. But he did not weep out of

hopelessness. He wept over the deep personal pain that death had brought into this world. He grieved because people he loved were grieving and hurting. He saw into the emotional heart of people and knew the deep grief and hopelessness they were feeling. He really felt and fully understood their pain, as he does your pain too.

Christ gives us in his Word, the Bible, a tremendous passage about his return that is full of great and precious promises that calms our nerves, encourages our soul, and enables us to grieve differently than those who do not know Christ.

### **You need to grieve, but grieve with hope!**

Hope helps us overcome the deepest pain that accompanies death. The people this was written to had been misled to believe they missed Christ's return and would never see their loved ones again. They were grieving without any hope.

But notice this, you need to grieve. Grieving is natural, normal, and needed for your healing. Unless you allow yourself to express your grief and feel the emotions, you will not heal. The length of time in your grieving does not describe how spiritual or unspiritual a person really is. However, too many love their grief, nurture it, and cherish it like a pet they can't put down. The mourning process is just that, a process that an individual has to walk through. Each person is different as to how long they walk through the grieving process. But you need to walk through it, and grieve. Although you will never stop missing your loved one, if you move through the grief process fully, you'll be able to go on with life in a healthy way.

*"I thought I could describe a state; make a map of sorrow. Sorrow, however, turns out to be not a state but a process."*

*C.S. Lewis*

### **Unhealthy forms of grieving**

Too many times people try to handle their grief in a way that is unhealthy. Some have called

these abnormal, but unfortunately, they occur more often than grief that is handled healthily.

**Absent grief:** They act as if it never occurred and try to avoid the pain. Whether your flavor is John Wayne or Spock, neither have a healthy attitude and way of handling grief. Stoicism is basically believing emotions are a sign of weakness and should not be expressed. It is unhealthy and not realistic. These emotions will come out some kind of way, unhealthy ways if you are not careful.

**Inhibited grief:** They block it and “suck it up” and only show a little. They fear what other people will say if they actually show how they really feel.

**Delayed grief:** They stuff it and hope to work through it later. Sometimes this person is the leader in the family and must handle all of the arrangements. Circumstances dictate that they have to lead and handle things. Many times, this is the firstborn or one that has first born characteristics. They stuff it, and when the funeral actually comes, they are numb and it



doesn't really hit until later. Or they have stuffed it so long, that a year or so later at someone else's funeral they just break and flood with emotions. Why? They never properly grieved the death of their loved one.

**Chronic grief:** This way keeps the loss alive, like the person mentioned before who would nurse and nurture their grief like it was a pet they are unwilling to put down. They hold on to it continually and refuses to head to a place of closure. They are really stuck at some stage in the grief process.

**Displaced grief:** Basically, they take their feelings and their grief out on others, become bitter toward life, and destroy their relationships with their displaced/misplaced grief.

You can find a list of dozens of other unhealthy ways to grieve like cumulative grief, exaggerated grief, traumatic grief, and prolonged grief. However, there is one right way to grieve and that is grieving with hope in Christ!

*"Grief ... gives life a permanently provisional feeling. It doesn't seem worth starting anything. I can't settle down. I yawn, I fidget, I smoke too much. Up till this I always had too little time. Now there is nothing but time. Almost pure time, empty successiveness."*

*C.S. Lewis, A Grief Observed*

## **The Christian view of death**

Christ gives a picture of death as sleep, so for the Christian death, is no more than a sleep. The person who died their spirit is not asleep, it is with Christ. The picture is that when a person is asleep, there is no tragedy, no hopelessness, and they are going to wake up in a little while refreshed, renewed, and ready to go!

The Bible teaches that when a follower of Christ dies, their spirit/soul is immediately ushered into the presence of Christ. They are with God in Heaven immediately! *"Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with*

*the Lord.*" 2 Corinthians 5:8 (NLT) The body is left behind, to be placed in the ground, but the person you loved dearly is with Jesus in Heaven.

Jesus was walking down the street one day with a huge crowd around him and a dad name Jairus came to him to see if he would heal his twelve-year-old daughter. As he was speaking to Jesus, someone from his house came and said, don't bother Jesus, your daughter is already dead. Jesus saw it and heard it, and put his arm around him and said, only believe, and walk with him all the way to his house. There was a large crowd of paid mourners at his house. Yes, people would actually pay to have people mourn at their house when someone died. This was a sign of respect and the more people mourning, the more influential that person was in the community.

But Jesus told them, the little girl is only asleep, she is not dead, and they laughed at him. He walked in and said to the little girl, "Little girl, I say to you, arise!" and she came to life! Jesus

described death as sleep in several places. Sleep is a figurative word in the Bible describing the actual death of the body, but the spirit/soul of a person is with God in Heaven!

## **The Christ Follower's Hope is Built on a Strong Foundation**

*"For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. 1 Thessalonians 4:14*

### **Foundation of Faith in Jesus Christ!**

True followers of Christ believe that Jesus was fully God and fully human, that he died, was buried and was raised to life on the third day. This is a deep-seated personal faith that changed the person into a follower of Christ. It is not just an intellectual assent to a set of doctrinal beliefs, but they had a life-changing encounter with Christ.

Jesus is returning one day because he made the promise on multiple occasions and is the focus

of much Bible prophecy. He is returning to gather together the rest of all his followers who are alive on planet earth. No everyone won't see death, there is a terminal generation, the last generation where the followers of Christ will not see death.

### **Notice what will happen.**

*"And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. <sup>15</sup> We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. <sup>17</sup> Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will*

*be with the Lord forever.* <sup>18</sup> *So encourage each other with these words.” 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 (NLT)*

### **The Lord Jesus Christ is returning.**

- Yes, our Redeemer, the one with nail-pierced hands, who died on the cross for our sins! Jesus Christ is coming down from heaven in the air. He is not stepping foot on the earth currently. It is going to be a loud shouting, trumpet sounding occasion! The realization of the Christian’s faith. Your faith will become sight! He will return personally to receive his children to himself.

### **The Resurrection of the Dead in Christ**

- He is bringing with him the spirit/soul of all the Christ followers who had died. The believers who have died will rise from their graves. But aren’t they with Christ? Yes, their spirit/souls are with Christ, but their bodies are in the grave. Followers of Christ will be given a new body, a resurrected body, like Christ’s resurrected body after he arose from the dead. A body that will never die and

never see sickness ever again, a perfect body. The Lord Jesus will recreate their body into a new resurrected body and unite it with their spirit/soul in the air.

- *"It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed." 1 Corinthians 15:52 (NLT)*
- *"Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure." 1 John 3:2–3 (NLT)*

### **Christ Followers will be Gathered Up!**

- Then those Christ-followers who are alive on planet earth at that time will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. This terminal generation will not see death but will be changed in a

moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and they will be given a new resurrected body instantly. This is called the Rapture by many.

### **A Wonderful Reunion Day**

- It is going to be a great reunion day!!! You will see your Christ-following friends and family members again! Their flaws will be gone and yours will be too! We will all meet the Lord Jesus in the air.

### **A Day of Rejoicing!**

- *“Then we will be with the Lord forever.”* All believers will forever be with their Lord and Savior, King Jesus! It will be a time of great rejoicing! You will be face to face with Jesus, the one who loves you so much that he died on the cross, so you might have life!

*“Joy is the serious business of Heaven.”*

*C.S. Lewis*

**So! Encourage one another with these words!**



Dear friends, I hope you receive the encouragement that is in this passage. It is also translated as *“Therefore comfort one another with these words.”* Jesus understands your pain and sorrow. He suffered like no other person.

*“He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!”* Isaiah 53:3–4 (NLT)

## **What if I don't think my loved one had a relationship with Christ?**

Yes, some of our friends and family reject Christ completely. We are responsible to share the message of Christ, but no one can make anyone follow Christ. Christ doesn't even do that to us. Christ will remove the pain of this life by His presence. Heaven is going to be so good and being with Christ is going to be so great, that you will never remember the way life was before. None of us knows the decision a person makes in his mind/heart in the moments preceding death.

*"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." " Revelation 21:4-5 (NKJV)*

Is it possible someone had a deathbed conversion while they were in a coma or before they departed? I want to say yes, because

God's Spirit is so much more powerful than we can imagine, and His grace is so much greater than we can imagine, and we simply don't fully know what is happening inside someone's mind while they are in a state of unresponsiveness to us. It doesn't mean they are not responsive to God.

A friend of mine who is a pastor tells a story about how a man was in a coma from a car wreck. The family asked the pastor to share the message of Christ with the man in a coma. The pastor said, he had never done anything like that before but went anyway. He read the Scripture verses and explained it to the man in the coma. No one knew if he would come out, but weeks later he came out of the coma, and all he remembered hearing was the pastor reading the Scripture, explaining the passages, and praying for him! He became a follower of Christ! God is bigger than we can imagine and He is much more gracious and patient with people than we are. He doesn't give up on people easily. We see that in the cross of His Only Son! He will go to extreme lengths to

reach us! So have hope, my dear friend! Have hope!

You say, there is no way I can have hope that I will see my loved one in Heaven. They were just that rebellious against God. Then have hope in the character of God. Have hope that God is going to take this bad situation and use it to bring people to know Him and follow Him. We can have hope because God can bring good out of any situation! Have hope that He will help you walk through this. Have hope that He is going to wipe your tears away.

*"And we know that God causes everything to work together  
for the good  
of those who love God  
and are called according to his purpose for them."  
Romans 8:28 (NLT)*

## **What about babies and little children who die?**

### **Will they be in Heaven?**

What about babies and little children who die? What about the mentally handicapped and those incapable of understanding the Gospel of Jesus? These are innocents.

When one of these terribly unfortunate situations happens and there is the earthly loss of a child, they are welcomed into Heaven immediately. Jesus loves the children! They are not babies any longer either. They are who God made them to be but in their Heavenly body. There is great comfort in this! Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." *Matthew 19:14 (ESV)* God is a just and loving God.

Will they look like babies or children? They will not look like babies or little children, but they will look like themselves at their "perfect

age." There is no age or aging in Heaven, but those who die as babies and little children will become the perfect age for them. Ultimately, we all will all be changed to have a body like Jesus.

The great Apostle John said it this way "*Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*" 1 John 3:2 (ESV)

Jesus "*will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own.*"  
Philippians 3:21 (NLT)

**There is great hope in Christ!**

## PART 5

# WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

### **1. Remember Grief is a process and not an event.**

- The valley is deeper than you think and longer than you wish. This process is not something that you just choose to go through one evening, week, or month. The grief process takes time.
- **Let Jesus walk you through this valley.**

*“I thought I could describe a state; make a map of sorrow. Sorrow, however, turns out to be not a state, but a process. It needs not a map, but a history, and if I don’t stop writing that history at some quite arbitrary point, there’s no reason why I should ever stop.”*

*C.S. Lewis, A Grief Observed*

### **2. Grieve with Hope.**

- There is sorrow with hope and sorrow that is hopeless. Christians have a sorrow/grief that is with hope because

they will see their believing loved ones again one day. This kind of hope is not like the modern definition of hope but a hope that is solid and secure because of the One who made the promise.

### **3. Talk about your loved one to your family.**

- Don't stop saying their name. There is nothing wrong remembering them. Throughout the Bible, ancestors were remembered by name. Over and over again, we hear them talking about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

### **4. Remember the good things.**

- Write them down and make a special memorial book or DVD.
- Copy the pictures, letters, and stories. Make copies of these for all the family.
- There are some grandkids who will really treasure this one day.
- Learn from his/her mistakes and let go of anything unresolved.
- We know there is only one perfect person, the Lord Jesus Christ.



- The rest of us are sinners in need of the Savior. We are all sinners and fall terribly short of God's Holy Standard, the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **5. Remember Special Days.**

- Holidays, Birthdays, Anniversaries. Some will be extremely difficult for years to come.
- If he especially liked a certain dish on Christmas (or any other day) then make that dish in honor of him.
- If you did certain things, honor and remember those things you did.

## **6. Let Christ heal your soul.**

- Your soul has been injured and needs to be healed. A broken bone can heal properly or improperly. If it heals properly it is a blessing, but if that broken bone heals the wrong way, it will always be a source of pain and grief. Your soul can heal the right way, or it can heal the wrong way and be a constant source of pain. Only the Lord Jesus knows the

depth of the injury and the extent of the healing that is needed.

### **7. Rest in the God of your salvation.**

- When you believed in your heart that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and you turned from your sins, God saved you. His salvation means that you have been forgiven, you have eternal life, and that you have a new life. You have been adopted by God. Because you have been saved, you have hope that when death comes your way, you will be with Jesus.

### **8. Reconcile**

Life is too short to go through life with resentment, bitterness, and unforgiveness. We tend to wear our feelings on our shirt-sleeves, to get our feelings hurt too easily. Aren't relationships more important than a single event? If there are any strained or broken relationships – make it right. Get on the right path of coming together. We are only here for a little while.

*Life is as a vapor that is here for a minute and then vanishes away. James 4:14*

## **9. Regroup as a family**

- It is time to come together.
- Encourage each other in their faith.
- Pull together.
- Family – you are going to need each other.
- Everything is shook-up – what is normal is not normal anymore.
- Come together and let Christ bring healing to yourself, family and friends. He wants you to come to a new place of wholeness and only He can carry you to that place.

*Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*

*Matthew 11:28-30 (NKJV)*

## **A Prayer to receive Eternal Life from Christ**

**Lord Jesus**

**I am so hurting, and I need your help. Only you can really help me and heal my wounded heart.**

**I believe you died on the cross for my sins and I trust in your sacrifice as payment for my sins. You proved this by being raised from the dead on the third day.**

**I want to follow you and I want you to lead me. I surrender to you as Lord, leader, and boss of my life.**

**Please forgive me of my sins and give me eternal life.**

**Thank you for changing my life and bringing me into your family, and giving me eternal life!**

**Amen**

Now what?

- Let us know if you prayed this prayer and Christ came into your life!
- Find a good Bible believing church that feels like family.

"Jesus told her,  
"I am the resurrection and the life.  
Anyone who believes in me will live,  
even after dying."  
John 11:25 (NLT)

## Planning Your Funeral?

When my dad passed away, he had already taken care of most of the important things and it took a great deal of stress off of my mother and my sister and I. Now dad was particular and some of the things he did were funny. I laughed when the bug and rust proof burial vault came out because he had done all of the research on bug proof vaults! LOL!

### **Here are some thoughts and suggestions:**

1. Make sure you have made peace with God through Jesus and that your family knows without a shadow of a doubt that you have a personal relationship with Jesus. Why? There is great peace in knowing that your family will be comforted by your positive relationship with God through Jesus and that you are in Heaven with Him because you followed Jesus.
2. Keep your life insurance policies up to date. You can even prepay your funeral expenses and/or keep a policy that will pay for those expenses if that will be an issue. Remember company provided insurance is typically not your own policy. I have personally seen two different younger men die of cancer who were working for large companies and had nice company insurance policies. Their families did NOT receive any monies because when they became sick, they were not able to work and their inactive status

nullified their company provided insurance policies. So they died without having their own insurance policies that was theirs not matter what happened to their health or the company they worked for.

3. Keep a Legacy Folder/Drawer/Box. Place all of your instructions, accounts, passwords, pictures, folders, insurance documents, journals to pass down, copy of your will, social security card, birth certificate, etc. in this Legacy Box. This will help your family have all of your important documents in one place so they won't have to look through hundreds of places to find this info that could cause them extraordinary grief in the process.

4. Determine and/or buy the casket, burial vault, urn, burial plot, headstone and whatever else that you don't want your family struggling through.

5. Write it down specifically what you want done and share it with your spouse/children, etc.

6. Pick out the pastor(s) and trusted friends you want to speak at your funeral service or memorial. My dad had 4 pastors speak which made it a little longer than anticipated. I didn't ask, but I am sure he put in a stipend for each of the pastors as well because it is customary but also that is how he rolled. I don't recommend the service being very long because is not for the departed, but for those surviving. I have done

close to 150 funerals for families in 25+ years of ministry. Short is preferred by everyone.

7. Make sure your will is up to date. Talk to a lawyer and don't write on it once you have it finished. File it away and keep a copy in the Legacy Box but also with trusted family member/friend.

8. Write down some of your personal story to be used in the memorial service.

9. Other questions to answer:

- Who is going to be speakers?
- Who is going to be singing? Or what songs do you want played?
- Who is going to be pallbearers?
- Where is it going to be? Church, graveside, etc?
- Are you a veteran?
- Will there be a military guard to honor your service?
- Will there be a wake or pre-service family visitation time?

Of course, if you search the internet "How do I plan a funeral service?" there will be a great deal of other questions that will be asked.

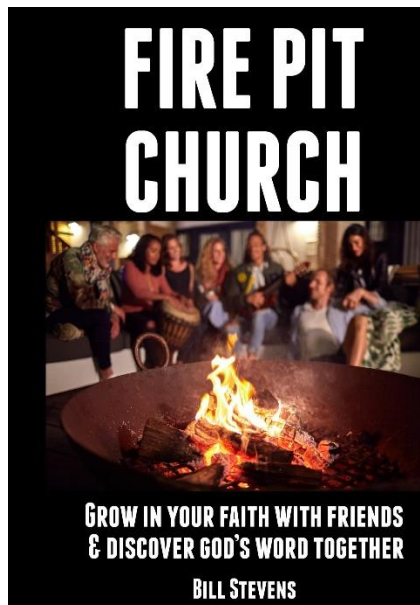
10. Don't forget the "Bug Proof" Vault! Laugh a little along the way. Jesus takes the fear of death away from us and gives us the promise of a Heavenly Home! There is joy in knowing and following Jesus!



**The Well  
PO Box 145  
Loveland, CO 80539**

**TheWellLoveland.com**

**Don't forget to check out other  
faith enriching resources!**



Death is a troubler, but Jesus came and defeated death and the grave! He said to His followers on the night before He was to be crucified,

*"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."* John 14:1-3

Jesus is the only One who has passed through the door of death and by His own power, was resurrected to live for eternity! His death proves He is God and His words are true and trustworthy! He is worthy of listening to, following, and is able to heal your pain and carry you through the trouble of death!



Bill has been a pastor for the past 26 years and has helped hundreds of families through the grief process and funerals. He leads The Well Ministries International in northern Colorado, whose mission is to bring the hope of Jesus to our hurting world.



*[TheWellLoveland.com](http://TheWellLoveland.com)*