

Life After Loss

**Words of Encouragement
from the Trenches
of Grief**



**Booklet #2 of a Four-Part Deacon
Project called "Tell It Like It Is,"
Highlighting the Wisdom of
WPC Members & Friends**

Having journeyed through a season of grief, what words of encouragement would you give someone currently living through a season of grief?

What practical advice would you give someone to aid them in their journey of grief?

How might you answer those questions?

How did others answer those same questions?

Step into the heart of Westminster Presbyterian Church's shared wisdom with our new booklet. Picture this: a collection of honest reflections from folks just like you and me. We asked two simple questions that dig deep into life's struggles with loss: What encouraging words do you have for someone going through a tough time? And, what practical advice would you give to help them through it? No frills, no fancy jargon—just real talk from our community. It's like a friendly chat over coffee, where everyone chips in their two cents. Let's navigate life's ups and downs together with the down-to-earth insights packed into these pages.

The Deacons of
Westminster Presbyterian Church

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Having journeyed through a season of grief, what words of encouragement would you give someone currently living through a season of grief?

Facing grief is tough, but remember, laughter is a great healer. Find joy in the silly moments and let humor be your unexpected companion on this wild journey.

Grief is tough, and it comes and goes. Let your faith be like a friend that sticks with you, helping you through the ups and downs.

Don't go through this alone. Share your feelings with others who care, and let the love and support from your faith community be a source of comfort.

Read the words of the Book of Psalms. They might offer you some wisdom and encouragement when you need it most.

Music can be a powerful healer. Listen to songs that bring you peace and connect you to your faith during moments of sadness.

It's okay to feel sad, and it's okay to take your time to heal. Your faith can be a steady presence, helping you through the process.

Find comfort in the shared experiences of your faith community. Pray together, and let the stories from your beliefs bring you a sense of peace.

During hard times, hold onto the traditions that bring you comfort. Your faith practices can be like a warm blanket, providing a sense of security.

It's okay to take your time to heal. Everyone's journey is unique, so trust your own process and take each day as it comes.

Believe that over time, the intensity of the pain may lessen. Give yourself the space to heal and find your way forward.

When I was really sad, trusting in God's love helped me a lot. Your faith can be like a strong friend during tough times.

Those whom we love and lose are no longer where they were before. They are now wherever we are.

It has been 3 years since I lost my spouse. Even as I still grieve their death, I can't help but think, "How did I get so lucky to know them?" After their death, I have had more time to appreciate who they were. All who knew them have beautiful memories of the time spent with them. Now, every day of the week is an opportunity for me to give thanks to God for the person I married.

Singing hymns in church can be really soothing. Music has a way of making us feel closer to God and giving us hope.

Years ago, after losing my spouse, I came to accept that we are mortal creatures, that we are going to die. We have no guarantees as to how long we'll live. Being human means we're going to die. My faith has played a huge part in eliminating the fear of sickness and death. Because of Jesus Christ, the worst thing is not the last thing. My faith in him changed everything on this front. Because of his death and resurrection, I am not in any hurry to die, but I'm also not afraid of death, either.

Talk to your church family about how you're feeling. We're here to help and support each other through tough times.

Remember the wise words from sermons. They're like a source of good advice that can help you, especially during tough times.

Prayers don't have to be big – even small prayers matter. Share your heart with God, and know that your feelings are heard.

As an older Christian, I've seen the ebb and flow of life. Grief may seem insurmountable now, but trust in the promise that joy comes in the morning.

Grieve authentically, for honesty is a form of prayer.

The older I get, the more I appreciate the importance of community. Let the church be your refuge, where shared prayers and understanding hearts provide sanctuary.

Grief is a process, not a destination. Take your time.

Our family's lives changed dramatically when our young adult child died by suicide. How could they do this! They were a committed Christian and a college student. It was only by God's grace that we lived through this experience. While I would not have chosen this terrible experience, I am grateful it has helped me to comfort others who have lost a child. I am also grateful to have found great comfort in the following Scripture verses: (1) The Lord is close to the broken hearted and rescues those who are perishing (Psalm 34:18), and (2) Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths (Proverbs 3:5-6).

I believe God's promises are true. I believe heaven is real.

I believe nothing can separate me from God's love.

I believe God has work for me to do. I believe God will see me through and carry me when I can't walk.

Don't give up. Pray always. Focus on Christ

Divert your grief by helping others

Take comfort in the following: Death takes the body, God takes the soul, our mind holds the memories, our hearts keep the love, and our faith tells us that we will meet again.

My wife had several experiences during her life that made her sad. Now that she is in Heaven, she is no longer sad and has been forgiven for anything that made her sad.

After the loss of a loved one, remember that their memory lives on forever in your heart.

What practical advice would you give someone to aid them in their journey of grief?

Taking things "One Day at a Time" is true. Simply making it from sunrise to sunset can be a victory.

Surround yourself with people you trust. Some days you will be overwhelmed by decisions you need to make. In those moments, if you want or need their advice, ask for it. If they give you advice and it's not helpful, ignore it.

Start a journal. When someone first suggested it to me, I thought it was a stupid idea. It might be the last thing you'd ever think to do, but it really helps. Write how you are feeling (mad, sad, numb, sick, tired, etc.). Stick to it. Then, months later you can reread your journal entries and surprise yourself by how much you are healing and growing.

Talk to your loved one all the time. It's not crazy. It's not weird. (I kept my spouse's voice as our answering machine message, so anytime I wanted to hear them I called the home phone.)

Keep busy but don't overdo it. The summertime seemed easier to deal with the grief, because the sun was shining, and I could go outside. Accept the fact that dark, cold winter evenings are going to be long and hard. I did lots of puzzles, read lots of books, and watched lots of television to keep my mind busy after the sun went down.

*Pray a lot. I talk to God.
I stay out of public situations that I know will make me very sad.
It took me a long time to revisit the places we use to visit together. When I eventually returned to church, I changed my seat.*

Talk about your deceased loved one with other people who knew them well.

Life will never be the same, but you will be okay.

Take it one day at a time. Some days will be harder than others, but gradually, you'll find a new normal.

*Create a routine. Having structure in your day can provide a sense of stability during tough times.
Find healthy outlets for your emotions, whether it's journaling, exercising, or joining a support group. Expressing yourself is crucial.*

Seek professional help if needed. Therapy or counseling can provide valuable tools to navigate through grief.

Don't rush the healing process. Everyone heals at their own pace, so be patient with yourself.

Connect with others who have experienced similar losses. Shared experiences can provide understanding and support.

Channel your grief into something positive. Volunteering or supporting a cause in memory of your loved one can be healing.

Embrace the power of comfort food. Whether it's grandma's recipe or a guilty pleasure, food can be a comforting companion during grief.

Create a 'comfort box' filled with things that bring solace—whether it's a favorite book, a cozy blanket, or a playlist of uplifting tunes.

Take breaks from grief. Sometimes a good laugh or a funny movie can be a much-needed break from the heavy stuff.

Delegate tasks when overwhelmed. It's okay to let others lend a hand with daily responsibilities during tough times.

Learn to say “no.” Protect your emotional energy by setting boundaries and focusing on what matters most to your healing. Invest in self-care. A hot bath, a cup of tea, or a nap can work wonders for your mental well-being.

Keep the essentials within arm's reach. Having tissues, chocolate, and a funny movie nearby can be a practical grief survival kit.

Gather your family and celebrate holidays as you have in the past before losing a family member.

When thinking of the loss of a loved one, accept that they are resting in Heaven with angels.

After the loss of a loved one, do not grieve and feed on your loneliness. Live on and do all things the same. Fill each waking hour in useful ways. Remember all the good times and laughter you had with a gallant smile.

Remember to keep your faith and you will meet your loved one in Heaven again.

If you've lost someone very near to you, whether suddenly or after a long illness, get ready for a serious emotional rollercoaster ride. One day you'll spend crying nearly a dozen different times. The next day, you'll get to lunch time and think, "Wow. I haven't cried today." Then BAM you feel guilty for not being totally sad. The best advice I can share is..."Oh, that's normal". Spend as much time as you need in the comfort of your own home and grieve. (Sometimes I just get tear-y, other times I just decide to go ahead and have a good, hard cry. It helps.) On the other hand, go find others who have been going through the same thing. If you're not sure who? Ask the Pastor. If you find that's not enough and you need some professional help, just go! If someone comes up to you and says, "How are you DOing?", nod if you just can't talk, but be thankful that somebody remembers and cares about how you're feeling.

Take good care of yourself. Your loved one would have wanted that. Also ask God to give you peace of mind.

Be with supportive people.

Do activities you enjoy

Purchase and/or rescue a pet if possible – so good to have another heartbeat in the home.

See Pastor Adam and he will share words of comfort and scripture to help you with the loss of a spouse of loved one.

In My Heart Forever

It has been three years
The grass grows thick at your feet
The wild brush stretched its arms across your head
Branches shade you from sun and rain
Falling leaves will soon be upon your chest
With winter blowing them aside
Making way for glittering ice
The cold seems to last forever.

The sun pulls closer warming your body
There at your fingertip is a tiny delicate blossom
Another cycle of life is complete
And you my daddy are still not here
As I read your name I feel nothing
I can't remember you
I am empty

As I drive away you join me
We go home together sharing memories
At day's end I close my eyes and see your smile
I hear your voice and feel your touch
It has been three years yet you have never left me
You are in my heart forever

My Jesus Walks With Me

My Jesus walks with me
He leads me to eternity
Whenever I'm distressed
He offers tenderness
Throughout my life
I will agree

My Jesus walks with me
He leads me to eternity

Temptations coming my way
Causing me to disobey
I reach out helplessly
My Jesus comforts me
Throughout my life
I will agree

My Jesus walks with me
He leads me to eternity

As walls I come upon
Feeling lost and all alone
A door appears to me
His hands I plainly see
Throughout my life
I will agree

My Jesus walks with me
He leads me to eternity

When life is so unfair
And no one seems to care
A voice within me cries
I'll be there by your side
Throughout my life
I will agree

My Jesus walks with me
He leads me to eternity

Each day I say a prayer
Thanking God for being there
Life's full of happiness
Great joy and thoughtfulness
Throughout my life
I will agree

My Jesus walks with me
He leads me to eternity

Quotes About Grief

*Ne'er pull your hat upon your brows.
Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak
whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break.*
William Shakespeare, Macbeth

*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

*God, you changed my mourning into dancing. You
took off my funeral clothes and dressed me up in
joy so that my whole being might sing praises to
you and never stop. Lord, my God, I will give thanks
to you forever.*
Psalm 30:11-12

*Those who live-no-more echo still within our
thoughts and words and what they did is part of
what we become.*
Author unknown

*You will lose someone you can't live without and
your heart will be badly broken. The bad news is
that you never completely get over the loss of your
beloved. But this is also the good news. They live
forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal up.
And you come through. It's like having a broken leg
that never heals perfectly—that still hurts when the
weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the
limp.*
Anne Lamott