



Discovering Life in Loss

When Grief Invades the Holidays

Session 1 Individual Study

Remembering within community

Scripture: Psalm 27

Watch the introductory video found at ["Grief in the Holidays, part 1"](#)

What in the video felt "real" to you? What did you see that is your own experience?

This is your space to write what you may not be able to voice out loud to anyone else.

Spend time here.

Do you try to protect other people from your grief so their holiday isn't "ruined"?

Whom do you try and protect the most? Why?

How does this protecting of others impact your own relationship with the grief?

Do you have anyone that you can be honest with about the struggles you are experiencing?

If you do, how do you share with them?

If you don't, what would it take to be honest with someone?

What would you want to tell this person? What do you want them to know?

Think through how that conversation might go. (While doing this, recognize that we often imagine the worst case scenario)

Take a few moments to read through the infographic.

If you feel up to it, write down thoughts which come to mind.

Holiday Grief & Traditions

What do we do when they're painful to keep?

Don't compare

You are not the same person you were

You have been broken, and you don't have to pretend that you aren't.

Others haven't experienced the same grief you have.

Family dynamics and networks have likely changed.



Burden of Expectations

Others are not likely as disappointed as you think

This isn't the way it's always going to be.

You are not a "grinch" if you can't "do all the things."



When Disagreements Happen

Try to understand each other.

Talk and learn why the tradition is important to the other person.

Can you agree to disagree and make space for what you both need?



Changing Traditions

Don't try and make the decisions on your own.

Decide about small, meaningful rituals you can keep (recipes, a certain movie or book).

Remember that you are not reaching for perfection

Changes you make are to get you through the now.

Traditions are sticky. If they are important, they won't just disappear forever.



LAMENTING WITH THE PSALMS

It is important to remember that we are not on the grief journey alone.

Read Psalm 27

Read the psalm, paying attention for words, phrases, images that speak of God's presence with God's people in times of loss and grief.

Reflect:

Sometimes in the midst of grief, it can be hard to believe that God is as close to us as the psalmist says. When/if you have struggled with this, what do you do with scripture like this?

The psalmist talks about meditating and hiding out in God's Temple. This is a space where we not only encounter God, but other followers of Christ.

What would be an expectation the psalmist, and we, have of being in that space?

From God?

From others in that same space?

The psalm speaks about hardships and pain. But in between those are words of hope and trust. How do both of these speak to your experiences?

What would it mean to allow space to see the good in the midst of our grief?

This may be difficult, but where have you seen good, and even joy, in these days?

CLOSE in prayer

Sit quietly for a few minutes.

Where do you need God to be present? Speak honestly with God about this.

Where do you need God to give you courage and strength? Ask God for this.

Where do you need people to come and surround you? Ask God to bring people.

Sit and be still with God. And know that God is near.

Resources

Devine, Megan. *How to carry what can't be fixed: a journal for grief*.

Haley, Eleanor. "8 Tips for Remaining Present at the Holidays (While Grieving)." *What's Your Grief*. Dec. 19, 2019.

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/8-tips-for-remaining-present-at-the-holidays-whilegrieving/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=54941777-415f-4f1c-99e2-183c0a42e25e>

Lewis. C.S. *A Grief Observed*.

Psalms of Lament

Individual psalms – Psalm 13, Psalms 16-18, Psalm 23, Psalm 25, Psalm 31, Psalms 42-43, Psalm 51, Psalm 77, Psalm 86, Psalm 88

Communal psalms – Psalm 12, Psalm 44, Psalm 74, Psalm 79, Psalm 80, Psalm 85, Psalm 90

Stang, Heather. "Grief-Sensitive Winter Holiday Planner." Mindfulness & Grief Institute. Nov. 17, 2023.

Instructional article: <https://mindfulnessandgrief.com/holiday-planner/>

Planner:

<https://mindfulnessandgrief.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Grief-sensitive-Winter-Holiday-Planner.pdf>