

# Healing Through Grief

An Active Devotional  
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In Memory:

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## Prologue

### Why Occupational Therapy is Needed in Spirituality

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Occupational therapy uses a client-centered approach that works alongside people to find meaningful tasks to help them achieve their goals. Occupational therapists look at their clients with a holistic lens in order to meet their physical, emotional, and mental needs. One of those needs that occupational therapists can address is spirituality. As an occupational therapist, we need to meet our clients where they are and for some clients, that may mean meeting their spiritual needs. This devotional was created in order to help clients move through the grieving process while continuing to care for themselves. The devotion and Bible passages are meant to nourish the clients' spiritual needs, while the activities were created to nourish physical and emotional needs.

Pain

## Lost in Pain

*John 11:4 – “Jesus said, ‘This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.’” (NIV)*

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The story of Lazarus is one that many are able to connect with on a personal level. In this story, Lazarus is sick, and his sisters Mary and Martha send word to Jesus, to which Jesus responds, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” I believe that many people are continuously shocked by Jesus’ response to this situation because He does not go immediately to Lazarus. We know that Jesus has the capability to save Lazarus from dying, but instead of rescuing him from death, Jesus waits. He goes to Bethany four days after Lazarus was buried in a tomb, and Mary and Martha greet Him with the news. Jesus asks to go to the tomb, to which Mary and Martha give a disclaimer of the odor that Jesus will experience if he goes in - as though Jesus has no idea of the situation. Jesus goes to the tomb and as they roll away the stone, He calls out “Lazarus, come out!”

When we experience the pain and hurt from the process of dying, we often call out to God with pleas of fixing the situation. We cry out to God to heal our brokenness, like Mary and Martha did, and there are times that God will respond in ways similar to this story. God doesn’t always fix our brokenness and hurts in the ways that we want Him to, but that doesn’t mean that He isn’t our provider. Death was not in the original plans for our life, but due to sin it has become a part of everyone’s life.

Death is not the end for us because Jesus came to take our place on the cross. He takes our pain and suffering so that we may enter Heaven to be with our Father. He calls out to us to come with Him. I believe that often with death we are hurt by God’s response to our pain because we pray that He may heal the situation, but this isn’t God’s intent to wound us. God is good, even when our circumstances cause us pain, and He answers our prayers in the way that will help us. Now, His way may not be in the same way that we would like, but it is the way we need.

### Activity: Prayer

Allow yourself to be vulnerable with God. Cry out to Him with your hurt and pain. Give your feelings of helplessness up to Him. Ask Him to begin healing you through this process. Ask Him for help and comfort during this time.

## Brokenhearted

*Psalm 34:18 – “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (NIV)*

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When we experience a death, we are deeply wounded by the pain that it causes. Whether you've lost several loved ones or you've only lost one, it all hurts. We cry out in anguish as we attempt to cope with the pain of loss. You may feel alone in your pain, but please know that you are not alone.

God is near to those that are mourning. He is near to those that are in pain. He wants to help comfort us in the midst of our brokenness. We are not alone, and we are not the only ones that have experienced pain.

Jesus came down from Heaven so that He could live amongst us. Even though He could have stopped the pain that was inflicted on Him, He didn't. He experienced pain the same way that we do. In the story of Lazarus's death, it tells how Jesus wept. Death is not natural, and even Jesus is hurt by losing someone close to him. He feels our pain, because He has experienced our pain.

Through our pain, we can turn to God for comfort. He saves us from death because He sent His own son, Jesus, to die for us. He took our place on the cross that we deserve. He takes up our pain and carries it on His shoulders.

We are not alone in our pain and our brokenness. We can have hope in God that extends past death.

### Activity: Write a Letter

When we experience pain from death, we often want to reach out to the person we lost and talk to them one last time. For this activity you are going to write them a letter.

Tell them about your pain. Explain how you are feeling. Talk to them about how you miss them. Write about your own personal experience of their death and how it affected you. Also tell them about the good things in your life. Share your life with them. Be open to whatever comes and allow yourself to be vulnerable.

## Why

*Job 42:5-6 – “My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.” (NIV)*

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In the book of Job, Job continues to ask God questions about why he is facing the circumstances that he is in. He wants to know why this has happened to him, much like how we want answers as to why we lost the person that we love. It is common to ask these questions, but we will never truly know the answers, nor would we really understand them.

Knowing why something happened won't fix our pain. It won't heal the hurt that we are feeling. So in Job when he continues to ask God why, God answers him by asking him questions such as, “Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it?” (Job 38:12-15 NIV). Job doesn't know the answers, and as God asks him questions, he finds that he doesn't need to know the answers.

God knows all things, and there are times that we won't know the answer to our “why” questions. When we are hurting, we may want to know why, much like Job, and like him we may ask God why. We need to understand that God is all knowing and that we need to trust in Him. At the end of the book of Job, Job answers God by telling him that “my ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.” We need to trust in God through our pain and understand that sometimes answering our “why” questions won't heal our hearts.

### Activity: Me Talking to Me

Get a piece of paper and two different colored writing utensils. Then think of some of the thoughts or questions that you have. Write one thought or question at the top of the page with your dominant hand.

Now using your non-dominant hand and the other color, write the first thing that comes to mind to answer your thought or question. Continue this pattern and allow yourself to be open. When you are done, read the dialogue out loud to yourself. When you write with both hands, you are using both hemispheres of the brain, which allows you to have new insight into topics.

Songs to listen to: *Hard to Get* – Rich Mullins



## Distress

*Psalm 120:1 – “In my distress I called to the Lord, and He answered me.” (ESV)*

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In our pain and anguish we can call out to God, and He will be there to listen. He wants to comfort us in our pain. He knows our needs and our desires, and He knows our hurts and sorrows. God knows everything, even when we are unable to voice our needs to Him.

When we experience a death, we cry out to God in desperation for help. We want something to help ease the pain that we are in. We want to know that we are not alone. In life, we will unfortunately experience heartbreak and suffering; but with God, we don't have to walk this journey alone.

When we cry out to Jesus in distress, He hears our pleas, and He understands our pain. He wants to stand beside us as we walk through this difficult journey, and He will be there when it becomes too difficult to bear. He can help to carry the burden of the pain that we feel.

Pain brings about feelings of distress and anxiety. We can feel lost, as if we don't know how to carry on, but know that God is with you to help guide you if you are willing to take the time to listen. Be open to listening to what God has to say in the face of pain.

### Activity: Prayer and Listening

For this activity, take a moment to clear your mind and go to a space where you feel comfortable. Take a deep breath.

Pray to God and cry out to Him for help through your sorrow. Lift up your pain and anguish to Him. Allow yourself to be open and share what you are feeling with Him.

Now, take time to listen. Sit in the quiet and allow God to speak into your life. Be patient with this process. If you feel your mind starting to drift, take a deep breath and refocus yourself on the present moment.

When you feel ready, go on with the rest of the day.

Songs to listen to: *Oceans* – Hillsong United

Anger

## Trouble

*Job 3:23-26 – “Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, who God has hedged in? For my sighing comes instead of my bread, and my groaning’s are poured out like water. For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, but trouble comes.” (ESV)*

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In Job chapter 3, he curses his birth and his life, because everything he once had is gone. He wishes that he could die rather than endure the pain that he is currently in. Although he cries out to God in his anger, he never curses God.

Job was angry, and this is a feeling that we will feel at some point when we lose someone. This can be anger that is directed at the person we lost, ourselves, our friends, our family, the situation, or sometimes at God. Feelings of pain and loss often bring up feelings of fear and anger, and when we don’t know whom or what to blame death on, we may turn to God. God never intended us to experience death, but with the sinful nature of our hearts, it has become a reality.

Anger is considered the second step in the five stages of grief. Anger is not always a bad thing, because it can make us feel more deeply than we have experienced. Anger becomes dangerous when we don’t deal with it in a healthy manner. If we avoid dealing with our anger, it can spiral out of control and it can grab hold of our hearts and turn us toward bitterness. In the face of death, we need to channel our anger in healthy ways that will allow us to work through the pain that we are experiencing.

### Activity: Washing Away

Take out markers, a white piece of paper, tape, napkins, and a cup of water (it is best to do this outside). On this paper, write down the things about death that make you angry. This can be related to the situation that you are in, the feelings that your experiencing, etc. Once you have finished writing, tape your paper to a wall. Take a napkin and dip it into the water. Now, ball up that napkin and throw it at your anger page. Continue this process several times.

You will begin to see that your anger fades away as the water hits it, much like how God can begin to wash away your anger when you allow Him to move through you.

Songs to listen to: *Bound to Come Some Trouble* – Rich Mullins

## Cry Out to Jesus

*Psalm 22:1-2 – “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.” (ESV)*

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This verse mirrors what Jesus says when He is on the cross. Jesus cries out in Matthew 27:46 the same words, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” When we face death, we often feel as though God has abandoned us. We feel like He left us during our most difficult time, and so we cry out to Him in anguish.

There are times in life that it may feel like God is nowhere near us, and it may feel like He isn’t listening, which can cause us to be angry. Fortunately for us, this is not true. God is always with us and He is always listening. This doesn’t mean that we will always get what we want, and often people think when they aren’t getting their way that God has left them.

It is hard to be patient and wait for God’s plan to be unveiled, but it is worth it. He has amazing plans for our lives, even in the midst of death. He can work through our hurt and pain in order to bring healing.

Throughout the Psalms, people cry out to God. Sometimes He answers in the ways that they want, and other times He doesn’t. This doesn’t mean that He isn’t a good God; it just means that sometimes His plan for us has yet to be revealed and we have to trust in Him.

### Activity: Write a Letter

Go to a quiet space where you feel that you connect with God. Take a few deep breaths to calm yourself. Get out a piece of paper and a writing utensil.

Write a letter to yourself from God. Write the truths that you know about God. Write about how He loves you. Be open and vulnerable. Allow yourself to take time and process through your emotions.

Once you are done writing, read your letter out loud to yourself. Finish with a few deep breaths.

Songs to listen to: *Cry Out to Jesus* – Third Day

Fear

## When I Am Afraid

*Psalm 56:3-4 – “When I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me.” (ESV)*

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Often when we face death, we experience anger because we are afraid. We are afraid of new situations in which circumstances are unknown. Losing someone is all new territory, and you have to take each day as it comes.

This verse has helped me throughout my life because it has helped me to see that being afraid is okay; but that with God, we don't need to be afraid. In the face of death, I often am afraid of what comes next, and so this passage helped me to see that He is with us through all things and He won't forsake us.

When we experience death, we are afraid of what comes next. We are afraid that we will begin to forget the person that we lost. Often anger stems out of feelings of fear. So when we don't know how to show that we are afraid, we often come off as being angry, because that is an easier emotion to show.

We need to give our fears up to God, so that He can continue to work through our fear and pain in order to help restore us. God can do all things, even in the face of fear.

### Activity: Fear Writing

For this activity you will need a paper, writing utensils, and a *Bible*.

On your paper, write out a fear that you have in big, bold letters. Under it, explain why you are afraid. You can give certain circumstances or you can give vague explanations.

Then, search through *The Bible* and find different truths about God and His promises. Write the verses and references below your fear in a different color.

Allow God to show you His promises during this time. Finish with a prayer about your fears and ask God to help move you through them during this journey.

Songs to listen to: *Hold Me Jesus* – Rich Mullins

## Where Does My Help Come From

*Psalms 121:1-2 – “I lift up my eyes to the mountains, where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.” (NIV)*

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In this chapter, it is a song of ascent, because the people of Israel were traveling to Jerusalem. As the people traveled in large groups, they had to pass through the mountains, and they would often sing songs of celebration as they went. But as they are traveling up the mountain it wasn't always a safe travel. They were afraid. They didn't know what they might face while traveling in the mountains.

This is often how we feel when we experience death. We are afraid of what will come around the bend. We can't see far ahead of where we are, so we fear the future. In the midst of death we are afraid of the next step without our loved one.

This is when we need to look up to God and cry out to Him. He gives us the help we need to make it through painful and difficult situations. He will provide for us. Sometimes this isn't in the way that we think we need, but God does provide for us. He protects us in our time of need, and He is with us always.

As we look up to the mountains in fear to cry out to God, we are also looking up to the heavens. God made both the heavens and the earth, which contain the mountains that we fear. He is with us through those moments of fear, and He is with us when we cry out to Him.

Our help comes from the Lord, and even in the wake of death, He is with us and He will bring us the help that we need.

### Activity: Observing

Go out in nature. Walk around if you are able to do so and look up towards the sky. What do you see? If you can't walk around, what can you see from your chair? Look all around you at the earth that God has created for us.

Now, think about how the Israelites climbed up the mountain to get to Jerusalem. Imagine the hike that they encountered, and how they might have felt. Think about the fear that they felt. How does that relate to the fear you feel? Lift up your fears in prayer.

Songs to listen to: *Praise You in This Storm* – Casting Crowns

Hope



## Take Heart

*John 16:33 – “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (NIV)*

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Pain and hurt are not natural. These are not feelings that God intended for us to know. God wants us to feel hope, joy, and happiness. He wants us to feel content in our lives, but through sin, we unfortunately experience pain, especially when we experience death.

This verse brings hope to those around us, because God will overcome those feelings of pain, and He will overcome death. Jesus came so that we may be saved from our life of sin and He saves us from death. God has already won the battle that we are in the midst of fighting. Death will not hold us because we have an eternal hope within God.

When we feel like we are fighting the hurt alone, we aren't. God is always there alongside us, and He wants to help us overcome our troubles. In our struggle, we need to trust God; not that He will always do exactly what we want, but because He will be with us. God will continue to fight for us, even when we feel lost.

### Activity: Peace

Take a few moments out of your day to sit in silence. Clear your mind of all distractions and focus on God's triumph. Picture what life on Earth will be like when Jesus returns. Experience God's love in a new way by imagining His promises coming true.

“They say that time in Heaven is compared to the “blink of an eye” for us here on this earth ... That by the time they turn around to see if I'm behind them ... I will be.” This quote brings me peace in thinking that while they are up in Heaven, they won't even realize that those of us left behind are gone, because we will soon join them. It may not be soon if you consider time on earth, but when you think of time in heaven, it may be.

Songs to listen to: *Death Where is Your Sting* – Cory Asbury

## God is My Strength

*Psalm 73:26 – “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” (NIV)*

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In this life, death has become something that is natural for all living objects. People, animals, plants, and so on will die at some point. All of these living things will eventually come to an end, although this was not in God’s original plans.

Since sin entered into this world death has become an aspect that is unavoidable. In this verse, God is letting us know that even though our bodies will fail us, He never will. He will always be with us. He will give us strength when we are weak.

People often say, “God will never give you more than you can handle” and I believe that people often say this in hopes that it will give others comfort. To some, though, it can make the situation worse. They may think, “Why is God giving me so many things to handle?” “Why can’t He step in?” Sometimes people feel like they are in situations that they can’t handle, such as losing a loved one. They may feel alone, and they may feel like God has left them. If you have ever felt this way, you aren’t alone. Just because people may say that God won’t give you things you can’t handle doesn’t mean that your situation is somehow less difficult to manage. Death hurts, and it will change you. You need to allow space and time for yourself, but know that even when it feels unbearable that God is with you. He will give you strength when you feel as though you can’t move on.

### Activity: Go for a Walk

For this activity, get out in nature and go for a walk. See the beautiful views around you that God created. Look at things in a new light, and allow God to sink into your life at this moment.

Talk to God as you walk. Tell Him your hurts. Give up your pain to God. You don’t have to carry the burden alone, because He will help you carry it.

Also, tell God about the joy in your life. Even when it feels like everything is bad; there is always something you can be joyful about, so share that with God.

## Mourn With Hope

*1 Thessalonians 4:13 – “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.” (ESV)*

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What does it mean to mourn with hope? As Christians, we are able to do this because we know that death is not the end for us. We know that Jesus will come again and that we will be reunited in heaven with those that we lost. We are able to hope for a better future in heaven because God calls us back to a life of perfect healing.

We often mourn because we are afraid of the unknown, and we fear what we cannot see. Without God’s promise, there is nothing to save us from death, but because of His love, he rescues us. With this promise, we can have hope for the future.

This doesn’t mean that you won’t grieve the loss of your loved one, because grief is healthy when it is done in the right ways. This just shows us that we should not grieve them in fear. We need to grieve them in hopeful ways and with expectations that we will see them again one day.

Jesus is coming back some day to save us all from death, but until then dying will remain a part of life. We can look forward to the day that God saves us from a death that we deserve, because He will extend grace among us and He will welcome us into our Heavenly home.

So don’t mourn without hope, because with God we can live.

### Activity: Journaling

Go to a quiet space where you feel comfortable. Have your journal and a writing utensil close by. Start by taking a deep breath, and allow God to be with you.

Now, draw a line down the middle of the page. On one half of the page, write down your fears related death; on the other side of the page write down your hopes related to death.

Finish with prayer. Lift your fears and hopes up to God, and allow Him to work through your mourning.

## God of Hope

*Romans 15:13 – “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.” (NIV)*

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As Christians, we are called to trust in God. He has a plan for our lives, and sometimes those plans don't line up with what we would like. Sometimes, we are hurt by the outcomes of our life, such as when a death occurs. We may cry out to God in pain asking Him how this could happen.

God doesn't want this for us. He wants us to be filled with His hope and His joy. In this world, these feelings will be fleeting, but with Him they will be everlasting. Even in the face of death we can have hope that God will bring these feelings back to us through redemption.

With God, the Holy Spirit fills us, which is with us at all times. We are never alone, and knowing that can bring us hope and peace. Death is not the end for us, so we need to trust in God and the promises that He has made to us.

### Activity: Breathing with God

Create a calm, soothing environment for yourself – you can dim the lights, light a candle, get comfortable. If it is calming to close your eyes, you may do so, or you can leave your eyes open if you prefer.

Begin by taking a deep breath in for four counts, holding it for four counts, and then letting it out slowly for eight counts. Take a few deep breaths in order to clear your mind.

Now, take a deep breath, and hold it, but this time on the exhale think to yourself the truths about God and His love. This could be “God is good” “Thank you, God” “God, you are my provider” “I love you” or any other thoughts that enter your mind.

This time creates an open space between you and God. Allow God to move through you during this time, and be open to what comes. You can follow through these steps as many times as needed.

Songs to listen to: *O Come to the Altar* – Elevation Worship

Peace

## Finding Rest

*Matthew 11:28-30 – “Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (NIV)*

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When we are burdened by the pains of grief, we often begin to feel tired, because our bodies have been put through an experience that takes a toll on our physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. We stop taking care of ourselves, because it may feel as though it is too much to handle on top of the pain we feel. This verse is there to remind us that God is there for us. He wants to take on our pain, so we don't have to fight it alone.

In God we can find rest, and He can fulfill our needs. In order to do this, we must surrender ourselves to Him. God is our provider, even when we are hurting. He wants to bring us peace in the midst of our pain. God can provide for our physical, emotional, and spiritual needs if we allow Him to. So during this time of pain, will you allow God to move through you?

### Activity: “I need”

Get out a blank piece of paper and a writing utensil. Clear your mind.

For three minutes, you are going to write down everything that you need, this could be physical, emotional, spiritual, or anything else that comes to your mind during this minute. Start each sentence with “I need” and then finish it with your idea. Continue writing until the time is complete. Allow yourself to be open without overthinking or being judgmental of yourself.

Now, pick a different colored writing utensil and circle the three most important items on the list. Once you have picked them reflect on why those items are important to you. Think about how you can accomplish those needs.

Songs to listen to: *The Table* – Christ Tomlin

*I Need Thee Every Hour* – Annie Hawks & Robert Lowry

## Through the Valley

*Psalm 23:4 – “Even 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.” (ESV)*

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Psalm chapter 23 is often quoted at funerals because, in my opinion, it brings peace to those hurting. Death creates fear within people, because we don't know what to expect. We are fearful of the unknown, but when we are believers, we can have faith that God will be with us through it all.

This verse shows us that God will be with us always. He won't leave us when we are at our worst, and He won't leave us at the end of ours, or our loved one's lives, either. God will be with us to comfort us.

God brings peace into our lives, even when we are afraid. He is our shepherd, and He leads us down the right paths. He has prepared a place for us in heaven, which will be our eternal home.

Hopefully, knowing these truths about God and His promise to comfort us and to be by our side through this final stage of life will help when you lose someone close to you. It hurts to lose someone in your life, but knowing that they are with God in heaven can help to bring peace into your life when you are surrounded by feelings of hurt and fear.

### Activity: Comfort

For this activity, seek out things that are comfortable to you. Do your favorite activity that you used to do with the person you lost. Watch a movie that reminds you of them. Eat a meal that reminds you of them. Look through old pictures that remind you of happy memories.

Take time to allow yourself to go through the memories. Find comfort in your memories, and allow God to restore your pain. Know that God is with you through it all.

Songs to listen to: *Always Here With Me* – Rich Mullins  
*You Never Let Go* – Jeremy Camp

## Things Not Seen

*Hebrews 11:1 – “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” (NIV)*

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We are told to walk by faith, not by sight. As Christians, we must have faith in God. Although we cannot see Him, we know that He is with us. When we experience death, we must keep the faith. There is no way to know for certain what comes next, but this is why having faith in God is crucial. Having faith in God is life giving. He promises us an eternal life full of goodness and joy. We must have faith that God’s promise is true, because we will not get to experience heaven until we get there. We must have faith in order to trust that the promise of our eternal home is true.

Having faith can be difficult when we are faced with death, because we are hurt by our circumstances. We are unable to see past the current situation, and so it is difficult to have faith in what is to come. Knowing that something better is coming can give us peace, because we know that the suffering will end and we will be welcomed into a perfect place in Heaven.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 17:20, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing is impossible for you.” He is telling us that God is able to work through any circumstance in order to bring good, even when we only have a small portion of faith. Even in the midst of pain and hurt through death, we can still have faith that God is with us, and through this we can have peace.

### Activity: Nature

Go out in nature. You can go for a walk or just sit outside, whatever you are more comfortable with doing. Allow the beauty of God’s world to soak in. Take deep breaths to help calm your mind.

Pay attention to all of your senses – touch, smell, sight, taste, and sound. Think about the wind brushing by you. You can’t see it, but you can feel it - that is similar to how we feel God. We can’t physically see Him, but we can feel His presence.



## Unimaginable

*1 Corinthians 2:9 – “What no eye has seen, no ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him.” (ESV)*

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There are stories about what heaven is like. There are people that have accounts of heaven when they experienced death and were brought back to life. Every account of heaven shows us a glimpse of what our eternal home will be like. Knowing what heaven will be like can give us peace in knowing that the best is yet to come.

When we lose a loved one, it creates unimaginable pain, but knowing where they are can help to ease some of the hurt. People will often say, “they’re in a better place” and while yes this is extremely true, that statement still hurts when we hear it. They often say this out of genuine care, but in my experience, it hurts those that are facing the death. We may logically know that they are in a better place, but it still hurts knowing they won’t be with us anymore.

Heaven will be incredible when we get there, and even with the few descriptions that we have we still have no true idea about what heaven will be like. We can only imagine what it will be like to stand in heaven and experience everything that God has made for us.

### Activity: Paying it Forward

For this activity, something that can bring peace into your life is giving. Go out and pay it forward to someone else. This can be in a drive through window, buying someone’s meal at a restaurant, paying for someone’s gas, etc.

This doesn’t have to be big - if you can only afford to do a couple dollars that is fine, whatever you feel is best will work.

Giving to others without expecting anything in return can help to bring freedom and peace into your life.

Be joyful in giving.

Songs to listen to: *I Can Only Imagine* – Mercy Me

Acceptance

## No More Mourning

*Revelation 21:4 – “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (NIV)*

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Death was not originally something that God intended for us. He created the Garden of Eden so that we could all live together, but due to sin, death entered the world. Although this changed God’s plan, he still loved us enough to send his own son, Jesus, to die for our sins (John 3:16). His death covered our sins, He died a blameless death and He rose again.

Jesus told his disciples that he would return again one day and when that happened, He would bring heaven to earth for all of us to live together for eternity. Even though we brought sin into this world, God loves us enough to continue fighting for us. He wants to bring us into a world where there is no more pain and suffering, and no more death.

When we experience death, we go through “stages” of grief, according to Kubler-Ross. There are five stages, with the final stage being acceptance. When we finally reach this stage, it doesn’t mean that we won’t miss our loved one anymore or that we won’t feel pain anymore. It means that we have finally reached a place in which we can continue to live our lives in the way that God intended us to. On earth, we can reach acceptance by acknowledging our circumstances and dealing with it, but in heaven we will reach acceptance by knowing that there will be no more pain and no more tears.

### Activity: Visualization

Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Imagine yourself sitting with God in your favorite place – this could be in the mountains, by a river, on a beach, etc.

Now, have a conversation with God about the pain you are feeling. Share some of your favorite memories with Him. Once you have talked to Him, allow Him to talk back to you. Listen.

When you feel at peace, go on with your day, but remember that God is always with you, even when you feel alone.

Songs to listen to: *Not for A Moment* – Meredith Andrew  
*The Love of God* – Rich Mullins

## I Have Fought

*2 Timothy 4:7-8 – “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” (ESV)*

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Acceptance is the final stage of grief. It is when someone is aware of what happened and moves through the steps in order to process through the situation in a healthy manner. When someone is dying, they move through these stages at their own pace. Some will move through the steps in chronological order, others will skip around. They will all end in the final stage though of acceptance.

This verse speaks into acceptance because they know their life is coming to an end, and they are not worried about death. They look forward to when they will be in the presence of God. This verse is encouraging to people that are experiencing death, because it gives them hope for what comes next, and it can help them to reach acceptance about their situation.

God doesn't want us to be afraid of what the next step is. He wants to celebrate with us for living our lives for Him. He looks forward to the day that each of His children returns to Him. Although death hurts those of us left on earth to grieve the loss of our loved ones, it means that they are able to sit alongside God in their heavenly home for all of eternity.

### Activity: Reminisce

Go through old pictures of your loved one. Talk about your memories that you have with them. You can do this with other loved ones or by yourself; whatever is more comfortable for you.

Go through every kind of memory – good, bad, funny, crazy, etc. Think about the person through different stages in their life.

Lift these memories up to God. Allow your mind to focus on your loved one, and clear away all other thoughts. Think about how they are at peace in Heaven. Picture them sitting alongside God and other heroes from the Bible that you have always dreamed about meeting.

Thank God for the joy that they brought. Choose joy in your sadness.

## Glory Revealed

*Romans 8:18 – “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” (NIV)*

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As we come to the final stage of grief, which is acceptance, we are learning to live life a new way, without our loved one. This doesn't mean that we are happy about our circumstances when we reach this stage, but it means that we are able to continue living life accepting that they are gone. We will still hurt from losing them, but we can have peace in knowing that they are in Heaven.

In life, we will be presented with hard times, but we know that in the end God has a place for us in Heaven, and it will be greater than we could ever imagine. We can look forward to the day that we will be reunited with those that we lost, because we will all be together in Heaven one day. We don't know what will come from day to day, but we can look forward to the day that His glory is revealed to us.

When Jesus comes back again, we will all get to experience the perfect plan that God has for us. We can experience what His original plan for our lives was, which was living amongst each other in perfect peace and harmony. We will be free of pain and hurt, and we will get to experience life in a new light. But for now, as we grieve the loss of loved ones, we must be hopeful for the future and come to the stage of acceptance in order to create a new normal for our lives.

### Activity: Write a Letter

You have already written a letter to the person that you lost, now write a letter from the perspective of that person to you.

Be open to whatever comes. Take your time and allow yourself to be vulnerable. Write whatever comes to mind. Allow yourself to grieve while writing the letter, because this can be an emotional time.

Once you have finished the letter, read it out loud to yourself. When you are done take a moment to pray thanking God for the time that you had with your loved one.

Songs to listen to: *Elijah* – Rich Mullins

## Creed

*1 Thessalonians 4:14 – “For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.” (NIV)*

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When we believe in Jesus, we know that we will raise again to be a part of Heaven. Jesus has already defeated death, and therefore we get to partake in His victory. When we reach the final stage of grief, we come to acceptance, and I believe that knowing this promise can help us reach this step.

Jesus rose from the grave and defeated sin. Throughout the Bible, there are promises of this prophecy coming true, that God will send his son and He will die to save us. The prophecy doesn't stop there, it stated that He would raise on the third day. Jesus died a death, just like every human will experience, but He was able to raise to life again, and He will do the same for all of us.

Since Jesus came to take the place of our sin we are able to go straight to God with prayers now, and we can partake in the Lord's Supper, to remember His death, burial and resurrection. We are able to take the bread that represents His body broken for us, and drink the juice that represents His blood poured out for us. He is life giving, and through Him we can have eternal life.

Death isn't our end, because Jesus fought for us and died for us. He sacrificed himself so that we may live. In Him, we can have acceptance in our future, and the future of those that we have lost.

### Activity: Communion

Get a loaf of bread and a cup of grape juice. Take a moment to quiet your mind and focus on God.

When you are ready, break off a piece of bread and dip it into the juice and take it in remembrance of Him. Think about how His body was broken on the cross for us. Think about how Jesus gave Himself so that we may live. Think about how He died, not only for you, but also for the person that you lost.

Thank God for His unending love for you.

Songs to listen to: *Creed* – Rich Mullins  
*This I believe* – Hillsong Worship

## Onto Completion

*Philippians 1:6 – “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (ESV)*

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When we lose someone that is close to us, we are broken by the pain that we feel. We feel lost, but as Christians, we can have hope for the future. When we experience death, we feel the pain of loss, and it is the same pain that Jesus experienced.

He has scars from the nails that they placed in His hands and the spear that pierced His side. He has scars, just like we have scars. He feels our pain. Our God understands that pain that we feel.

When we are wounded by death, God understands because he felt that same pain. When we feel alone, we can look to Him, to see that He also experienced the same pain.

Jesus has been through this pain of death. He has been healed, and He rose again. He can help to heal us, and He can move through the pain that we feel in the midst of death.

Death hurts, but God is our good father, and He brings healing into our lives.

This verse is something that my family has clung to over the past five years. It has become our family motto, and it has brought hope and peace to us. I hope that this can also help to bring healing into your lives as well.

### Activity: Scars and Healing

Get out a piece of paper and a writing utensil. Turn it long ways, landscape, and draw a line horizontally across the page.

Then, below the line write down painful memories, scars. Next, above the line write out joyful memories, healing.

Look at your timeline of scars and healing. Pray that God can continue to work through your scars to bring healing.

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Mary Shipley: February 15, 1932 – March 29, 2018  
Phyllis Cornett, daughter and caregiver to her mother Mary

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