

**GOOD**

**GRIEF**

THE GOSPEL

AND

OUR GRIEF

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## WHAT IS GRIEF?

I think in many ways we look at grief as the reaction to a loss, which can be manifested physically, emotionally, spiritually, affect the ways we think and affect the ways we behave, so grief is a reaction to a loss.

-Kenneth Doka

## WHAT IS MOURNING?

Mourning has traditionally been used in two ways: One, as an internal process, as an intrapsychic process, where one sort of begins to cope with and adapt to one's loss. I prefer the term "grieving" there. The other way it's been used is to describe the rituals and customs around death, and I think that's a nice differentiation.

-Kenneth Doka

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## WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” 1 Cor. 15:3-4

## THE NATURE OF GRIEF

“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?

But if a spiral, am I going up or down it?

How often – will it be for always? – how often will the vast emptiness astonish me

like a complete novelty and make me say, “I never realized my loss till this moment”?  
The same leg is cut off time after time.”

■ C. S. Lewis, “A Grief Observed”

## SOME THEORIES ON GRIEF/MOURNING (RANDO’S 6 R’S)

1. Recognize the loss
2. React to the separation
3. Recollect and re-experience
4. Relinquish old attachments
5. Readjust
6. Reinvest

## WOLFELT’S RECONCILIATION NEEDS

Need 1. Acknowledging the reality of the death.

Need 2. Embracing the pain of the loss.

Need 3. Remembering the person who died.

Need 4. Developing a new self-identity

Need 5. Searching for meaning

Need 6. Receiving ongoing support from others.

## Robert Kellemen's Biblical Approach

Stage 1 – Candor  
(Psalms 42 & 88:1-4)

Some interventions/reflections

Reflect on your external losses and inward suffering. How have your losses impacted you (emotionally, physically, & spiritually)?

How can Jesus' candor influence you?  
(Matt. 27:45-46, Luke 22:39-45)

Write your own Psalm of Candor

Stage 2 – Complaint

Job 3:23-26 (cf. Jer. 20:7-18, Matt. 26:36-46)

Some interventions/reflections

What are you doing with Christ in your suffering? (Psalm 62:8b)

If you were to write your own Psalm 88 what would it say?

Stage 3 – Cry (this is where I humbly ask God for help based upon my admission that I can't survive without Him)

Psalm 34:17-18 (cf. Psalm 147:3, Isa. 61:1)

Where are the places in your grief that you find yourself attempting to be self-reliant?

Reach out to someone you trust. Admit to them you cannot bear this grief alone and allow them to “fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).

Recall a time when you reached the end of yourself and reached out to God. How did you get to that place?

Stage 4 – Comfort (...experience the presence of God in the presence of suffering...)

Encouragement  
Co-fortitude

Interventions/Reflection

How does being in Christ comfort you?

What has this suffering taught you about God's power made perfect in your weakness?

Stage 5 – Waiting

Psalm 46:10

(cf. Rom. 5, Heb. 11, & James 1)

What are you experiencing as you wait on God?

How would you apply the examples given in Heb. 11 to your own situation?

What future glory are you focusing on (Rom. 8:18-19)?

Stage 6 – Wailing

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Rom. 8:21-25

2 Cor. 5:1-5

## Stage 7 – Weaving

“Entrusting myself to God’s larger purposes, good plans and eternal perspective.”

1 Peter 2:20

James 1:2-4

Gen. 50:20

## Spiritual Life Map

Drawing your spiritual journey (path, road, etc)

Typically chronological but not necessarily chronological

Use of religious symbols and other symbols to denote significant events

Highlighting various trials and what has been discovered in enduring these trials.

## Stage 8 – Worshiping

“Wanting God more than wanting relief.  
Finding God when you don’t find answers.”

1 Peter 1:3-8  
(cf. Phil. 3:8-10)

### **PRACTICAL TIPS FOR MINISTERING TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY:**

What to say to someone who is grieving? There is no hard and fast set of “should” when it comes to being there for someone who is grieving—just as there isn’t for grief itself—but many grief experts say the most important thing you can do for a grieving person is to be a “caring presence,” and there are some things you can say to be that caring presence.

Understanding what a person needs will go along way towards finding the appropriate words to say. Grief is unique to each person, and some of the best things you can say to a grieving person recognize that uniqueness by simply “being present,” and not trying to fit the situation. So it’s good to affirm their feelings by asking them how they are doing, that it’s OK to cry or get mad or show whatever they are feeling—or just by saying, “I’m so sorry.”

You can say things like “I’ve been thinking of you” or “If you feel like talking, I’m here to listen.” Grief does not follow a timetable, thus you can say it’s alright for them to take all the time they need and to grieve in their own way.

It's less helpful to say things that tell a grieving person how to feel or not feel. First of all, it's good to avoid things like, "I know how you feel." The reality is that you don't know how they feel. Though you want to be supportive and share another's pain, statements like that make "you" the focus, not them. Also try to avoid saying things like, "It's God's will" or "It was for the best."