

# Understanding Grief:



*And helping those  
experiencing it*  
by

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## Introduction

Two young children were trying to know how to cope with the death of their grandma. In the midst of the turmoil, the parents were trying to know how to care for their children. On the day of the funeral the whole family stood in front of the casket. Many preparations had been made with the children. Knowing they would be curious, the parents instructed them that they could touch her hands if they wanted, but grandma's skin would be cold. The children's mother was transported to another time when her mom cared for skinned knees, dinner preparations and broken hearts. Interrupting the memories, the four year old whispered, "Is she breathing?" The parents hadn't anticipated this question. It certainly required more than a simple "No." This business of explaining death became very difficult. Finally the mother said, "Well. . ." and nothing more would come. The oldest child then turned from his study of the casket and faced his sibling, "No, she's not breathing. Remember? The breathin' part's in heaven."<sup>1</sup>

This is a beautiful illustration of 1 Thessalonians 4:13, *Brothers, we do not want you . . . to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.* The oldest child grasped the truth of hope. As Christians, we do not grieve like others. Notice the Scripture does not say "do not grieve." Grieving is an important healing function which needs to be walked through. But, grief is not a single point of passage, it is a process which takes months and even years. Unfortunately, grief does not begin with a horrible phone call and end with the conclusion of a funeral. Grief extends much longer than this. The process of grief is important to understand. The following information is an attempt to help one understand grief and how to minister to those who are grieving.

**Why deal with grief?** Because it is prevalent and inevitable. Grieving people are everywhere. One may contend, "Not everyone is carrying a box of tissues." But the reality is that when one calculates the "little griefs"—such as the loss of a coworker or loss of physical health—along with the "big griefs" of divorce and dying, it does not seem like many people are left out. And what about the inevitability of grief? Even the Scripture guarantees loss, ". . . man is destined to die once. . ." (Hebrews 9:27). Barring the rapture,<sup>2</sup> our loved ones will die. Billy Graham writes grief is a certainty, and goes further by saying, "When death separates us from someone we love there is a time when we think no one has suffered as we have. But grief is universal."<sup>3</sup> Westberg concludes, "we can say that grief is as natural to every person as breathing. It is inevitable! You cannot live without experiencing it in a thousand different ways."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A true account written by Sandra Picklesimer Aldrich in an article called "The Breathin' Part."

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly the passage on "not grieving as those who have no hope" is packaged along with instruction about the rapture of the Church. Paul's final instruction regarding death and rapture of the saints is "to comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

<sup>3</sup> Billy Graham, *Facing Death and the Life After*. (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), p. 164 cited in Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide; Revised*. (Dallas: Word, 1988), p. 344-345.

<sup>4</sup> Granger E. Westberg, *Good Grief*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 11.

### *Definition of Grief*

With this outlook in mind, how should grief be defined? Defining grief is not an easy task. We often think of grief as the response to the earlier mentioned “big griefs,” like death or divorce. When one begins to include the “little griefs” of life, grief needs to be reduced to its lowest common denominator for a definition. In this authors estimation, the simplest definition is that *grief is the response to a loss*. Others have amplified this. For example, Gary Collins states, “grief is the normal response to the loss of any significant person, object or opportunity.”<sup>5</sup> The loss could be anything: retirement, amputation, the departure of a child to college, departure of a pastor to another church, moving from a friendly neighborhood (or watching a good neighbor move), selling one’s car, losing a home or valued possession, the death of a pet or plant, loss of a contest or athletic game, health failures,<sup>6</sup> and the list could go on and on.

### *Stages of Grief*

When considering the prevalence and inevitability of grief, the next question should be~ what does grief look like in real life? The answer is that grief is a journey. It is the difficult process of moving from the hurt and pain of loss to the point of readjustment. Many have studied this process and noted there are ten stages in which those who grieve pass through. “The ten stages of grief must be understood to be the *normal* process through which most people must go as they face up to their loss. In other words, we shall be talking about the road the majority of humans must travel in order to get back into the mainstream of life.”<sup>7</sup> The following discussion will briefly touch on the main aspects of each stage.<sup>8</sup>

#### **1. Shock and Denial**

This stage~almost better called “counter-shock”~ may last from a few minutes to a few hours to a few days. It is a temporary anesthetizing of the situation. This stage is a temporary escape from reality, and as long as it remains temporary, it is good. A lengthy shock period is often called denial. Extended denial is normally unhealthy.

#### **2. Emotional release**

The emotional release comes at about the time it begins to dawn on us how dreadful this loss is. Sometimes without warning, the well of emotion pours itself out almost

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<sup>5</sup> Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide; Revised*. (Dallas: Word, 1988), p. 345.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Westberg, *Good Grief*. p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> The material in this section is condensed from Granger E. Westberg’s classic work *Good Grief*. For an expanded and smoother discussion of the stages consult Westberg.

uncontrollably. That is perfectly O.K. and normal in this stage.

### **3. Depression and Loneliness**

Eventually there comes a feeling of utter depression and isolation. During these days, the person is sure that he/she is the only one who has ever felt that way. It is as if God is no longer in heaven and He doesn't even care. Often, this stage brings out thoughts like the one previously stated, which have never been thought before. The key is to remember that one day it will pass. The cloud is heavy and thick, but this too, shall pass.

### **4. Pain and Physical Symptoms**

There seems to be an intense relationship between illness and the way a person handles a great loss. Although it may never occur to the person grieving, the physical pain and physiological changes the person is sensing are associated to dealing with the loss.

### **5. Panic**

One typically finds himself being panicky because he can think of nothing but the loss. This often shows itself through an inability to concentrate. Sometimes people will increase their panic because they believe what they are experiencing is abnormal, when in reality it is very normal.

### **6. Guilt**

There are obviously two kinds of guilt. One is a normal, healthy level of conviction for doing something or not doing something which was expected. There is a false guilt which runs out of proportion to the involvement of a person in the situation. It is important to face both kinds of guilt in this stage. Both will be present, but continued work will surface the false guilt for what it truly is—false.

### **7. Anger**

Gradually moving out of the depression allows one to express anger and resentment which was previously buried or hidden. This is not to justify anyone for mishandling anger, but merely a warning that anger works its way to the surface. When we have something precious taken away from us we inevitably go through a stage when we are very critical of everyone and everything connected to the loss.

### **8. Resisting Returning**

Although things are being dealt with well, a sticking point comes when something inside us resists returning to normal. The sense is that everyone has forgotten and someone has to keep the memory alive. The question grievers ask is "How can things possibly go back to normal?"

## 9. Healing and Hope

Every once in awhile a ray of light will break through. This could be just a few months or many months after the loss. A notion of healing and hope begin to appear. Life can go on and I can step back onto the spinning world.

## 10. Readjustment

The final step is affirming reality. It is not “returning to one’s old self.” The grief process brings about significant change in one’s life. Reality is not the same as it was prior to the loss, but it is real today. The changes that occur in the grief process can make one stronger or make one weaker.

### *Common Expressions of Grief*

The following page the table<sup>9</sup> lists some common expressions of those going through the process of grieving. These are not mandatory statements nor are they typically in such an precise order. They are merely listed to give one an idea or an example of what to expect in dealing with a grieving person in a particular stage.

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Gilbert, “Loss and Grief Seminar Notes,” January 11-12, 1994, p. 3.

### *Common Expressions Throughout the Grief Journey*

- |     |                            |   |
|-----|----------------------------|---|
| 1.  | Shock and Denial           | "I just don't believe it"                                   |
| 2.  | Emotional release          | "I can't stop crying"                                       |
| 3.  | Depression and Loneliness  | "Without _____ I might as well be dead"                     |
| 4.  | Pain and Physical Symptoms | "I just can't bear it"                                      |
| 5.  | Panic                      | "What am I going to do?"                                    |
| 6.  | Guilt                      | "I should have done more for _____"                         |
| 7.  | Anger                      | "Oh, God. . . why me?"                                      |
| 8.  | Resisting Returning        | "Will life ever be worth living again?"                     |
| 9.  | Healing                    | "I now realize the meaning of friends"                      |
| 10. | Readjustment               | "Knowing I'm adjusting to life again would please<br>_____" |

*Symptoms of Grief*

The following table<sup>10</sup> is included to give a counselor some idea of what a griever will be experiencing. On many occasions the counselor will need to probe to find the cause of grief. The client normally does not associate losses with grief unless it entails a death. These symptoms are listed to aid the counselor in considering grief in making a diagnosis of a client.

<i>Possible Symptoms of Grief</i>	
➤ Sense of disbelief, shock, numbness.	➤ Poor concentration or forgetfulness.
➤ Change in appetite/weight.	➤ Wide-ranging mood swings.
➤ Gastrointestinal distress.	➤ Irritability.
➤ Change in spiritual values.	➤ Angry and/or guilty feelings.
➤ Difficulties with sleep or fatigue.	➤ Emotional outbursts.
➤ Dreams of the deceased.	➤ Sensing the deceased presence.
➤ Restlessness.	➤ Change in sex drive

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

## *How to Care for Those Experiencing Grief*

One of the most enlightening looks at grieving comes from the book of Job. Once a pastor scoured Job's words searching for what Job himself desired in the way of comfort during his distress. The pastor came upon several passages that indicated "Job's Six Cries for Comfort."<sup>11</sup> The listing of these six are practical steps to aid anyone in being a comfort to the grieving.

### **1. The Cry for Company~Just be there**

13 "He has alienated my brothers from me; my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. 14 My kinsmen have gone away; my friends have forgotten me. 15 My guests and my maidservants count me a stranger; they look upon me as an alien. 16 I summon my servant, but he does not answer, though I beg him with my own mouth. 17 My breath is offensive to my wife; I am loathsome to my own brothers. 18 Even the little boys scorn me; when I appear, they ridicule me. 19 All my intimate friends detest me; those I love have turned against me. Job 19:13-19

### **2. The Cry for a Listening Ear~Listen**

13 "Keep silent and let me speak; then let come to me what may.  
5 If only you would be altogether silent! For you, that would be wisdom.  
4 You, however, smear me with lies; you are worthless physicians, all of you! Job 13:13, 5, 4

How long will you torment me and crush me with words? Job 19:2

### **3. The Cry for Attentive Ears~Listen intently**

Listen carefully to my words; let your ears take in what I say. Job 13:17

Listen carefully to my words; let this be the consolation you give me. Job 21:2

### **4. The Cry for Compassion or Pity~Empathize do not sympathize**

Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me. Job 19:21

### **5. The Cry for Prayer~Do the work of Prayer**

My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; Job 16:20

If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both. Job 9:33

### **6. The Cry for Kindness~Do something for the person**

A despairing man should have the devotion of his friends, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty. Job 6:14

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<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey A. Thornley, "Job's Six Cries for Comfort." Sermon from 2/11/90 at the Grace Brethren Church of Waldorf (Maryland).



Also see the *Appendix* for some more Scriptures that deal with comfort for those who are going through grief and on the truths about death, dying and heaven.

This last table will be included to give some practical do's and don'ts.<sup>12</sup>

Care Giving for Those Experiencing Grief	
<i>Do's</i>	<i>Don'ts</i>
<p>Acknowledge the loss. Don't avoid reality.  Tell the truth!  listen. . .LISTEN . . .LISTEN!!!  Encourage the sharing of feelings through your openness.  Maintain the person's sense of being needed and purposeful.  Accept all feelings shared, even the tough ones.  Maintain human contact, touch, presence.  Monitor your own feelings.  Let the person retell the story again and again and again.  Be informed about grief, do your homework.  Listen without judgement.</p>	<p>Don't tell them you know how they feel.  Avoid meaningless and hurtful statements.  Don't cut off their feelings.  Don't block their tears, hurts or rages.  Don't shut out the children.  Don't exclude the patient from decision-making processes.  Don't be judgmental or rejecting.</p>

<sup>12</sup> Gilbert, "Loss and Grief Seminar Notes," p. 5.

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## *Appendix*

The following work was done as preparation for those who are grieving, particularly those who have lost a loved one. This is a compilation of Scriptures because of their value in practical use for those who believe in God and the Scriptures. Unless otherwise noted these are direct quotes from the *New International Version (NIV)*.

### **My Redeemer Lives (Job 19:25)**

Job 19:25 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

### **The Good Shepherd (Psalm 23)**

Psalm 23:1 A psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 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. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

### **God is near the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18)**

Psalm 34:18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

### **Life is a breath, Hope is in the LORD (Psalm 39:4-7)**

Psalm 39:4 "Show me, O LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. 5 You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Selah 6 Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it. 7 "But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.

### **God is our refuge and strength (Psalm 46:1-7)**

Psalm 46:1 For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamothe. A song. God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear,

though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. 5 God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. 6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. 7 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

### **Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46:1-11)**

Psalm 46:1 For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamothe. A song. God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. 5 God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. 6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. 7 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah 8 Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. 10 **"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."** 11 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

### **Where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD. . . (Psalm 121)**

Psalm 121:1 A song of ascents. I lift up my eyes to the hills-- where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot slip-- he who watches over you will not slumber; 4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD watches over you-- the LORD is your shade at your right hand; 6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD will keep you from all harm-- he will watch over your life; 8 the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

### **Precious in the Lord's sight is the death of His saints (Psalm 116:15)**

Psalm 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

### **Psalm 139**

Psalm 139:1 For the director of music. Of David. A psalm. O LORD, you have searched me

and you know me. 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4 Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. 5 You hem me in-- behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. 7 **Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?** 8 **If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.** 9 **If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.** 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," 12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. 13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, 16 your eyes saw my unformed body. **All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.** 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you. 19 If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men! 20 They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. 21 **Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD, and abhor those who rise up against you?** 22 I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

### **Time to be born and a time to die (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2)**

Ecclesiastes 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: 2 a time to be born and a time to die, . . .

### **God will swallow up death, remove tears (Isaiah 25:8)**

Isaiah 25:8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

### **God's gentle, shepherding care (Isaiah 40:11)**

Isaiah 40:11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

**God will bind up the brokenhearted and grieving to be oaks of righteousness (Isaiah 61:1-3)**

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion-- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

**Blessed are those who mourn, they shall be comforted (Matthew 5:4)**

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

**Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life--living even though we die (John 11:25-26)**

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

**Father's House, many mansions--Jesus is the only Way (John 14:1-7)**

John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

**Death couldn't hold Jesus (Acts 2:24)**

Acts 2:24 But God raised him [Jesus] from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

**Death can't separate us from the Love of God (Romans 8:38-39)**

Romans 8:38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Mourn with those who mourn (Romans 12:15)

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

### Whether we live or die we belong to the Lord (Romans 14:8)

Romans 14:8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

### The Importance of Resurrection, esp. Jesus' (I Cor 15), Mortal bodies and immortal bodies, Where is death's sting?

1 Corinthians 15:1 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: **that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5** and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-- yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11 Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed. 12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 **If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15** More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 **And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. 20** But Christ has indeed been raised from the

dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.** **22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.** **23** But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. **24** Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. **25** For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.** **27 For he "has put everything under his feet."** Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. **28** When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. **29** Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? **30** And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? **31** I die every day-- I mean that, brothers-- just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. **32** If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? **If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."** **33** Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." **34** Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God-- I say this to your shame. **35** But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" **36** How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. **37** When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. **38** But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. **39** All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. **40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.** **41** The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. **42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.** **45** So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. **46** The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. **47** The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. **48** As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. **49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.** **50** I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **51** Listen, I tell you a mystery: **We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54** When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: **"Death has been swallowed up in victory."** **55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. **57** But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory



**through our Lord Jesus Christ.** 58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

### **God of all comfort, comforts us (2 Cor. 1:3-5)**

2 Corinthians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

### **Jesus revealed in our persecuted death (2 Cor 4:11)**

2 Corinthians 4:11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

### **Light and temporary affliction—looking for eternal things (2 Cor 4:17-5:1)**

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 5:1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

### **To encourage the saints who are longing for the heavenly tent (2 Corinthians 5:1-21), Being at home in the body is absence from the Lord, We all must appear before the judgment seat**

NAB 2 Corinthians 5:1 **For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.** 2 **For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,** 3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. 4 **For indeed while we are in this *tent*, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed,** so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. 5 **Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.** 6 **Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord – 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight – 8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.** 9 **Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.** 10 **For we must all appear**

before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. 12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but *are* giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have *an answer* for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, **that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.** 16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer. 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

### To share the gospel (Ephesians 2:1-13)

Ephesians 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. 11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)-- 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

### **To die is gain (Phil 1:21)**

Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

### **We do not grieve as those who have no hope (1 Thess 4:13)**

1 Thessalonians 4:13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

### **Those left alive after the rapture (1 Thess 4:17-18)**

1 Thessalonians 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.  
18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

### **Jesus abolished death and brought life through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:9-10)**

2 Timothy 1:9 . . . This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

### **Man destined to die once (Hebrews 9:27-28)**

Hebrews 9:27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

### **The Suddenness of death (James 4:13-14)**

James 4:13 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

### **Believers have passed from death into life (I John 3:14)**

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.

### **How to get eternal life and its assurance (I John 5:11-15)**

I John 5:11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us-- whatever we ask-- we know that we have what we asked of him.

### **Christ reigns over death (Rev 1:18)**

Revelation 1:18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

### **Great White Throne, Book of Life (Rev 20:11-15)**

Revelation 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

### **Holy City, no tears, death, mourning, or pain (Rev 21:1-4)**

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 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."