



STUDY GUIDE – May 3, 2020

Message Title: **OVERCOMER** - Grief

Teaching Pastor: **Jeremy Ford**

This study guide has been designed for Small Groups in mind, and can be used by individuals as well.

Warm-up/Icebreaker:

One-word mood descriptor - Describe your current mood in one word. You can have people explain their one-word mood descriptor if you want to add more depth to your icebreaker activities, but you can also just go with the flow and enjoy how cryptic some of the answers can be.

Pray:

Dear Lord, help us to authentically bring all of what we are feeling to you today, even the hard or conflicting emotions. Thank You that you meet us exactly where we are, in your steadfast faithfulness and mercy. We are so grateful, Father, for your presence with us.

Get Started:

We need to give ourselves permission to grieve. To “lament” is to feel intense sorrow, sadness, or grief, even to cry or wail. Even Jesus lamented to the Father, when Lazarus died, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross. Lamenting to God is a good and holy way to grieve.

- Besides the pandemic-related grieving, in what ways have you grieved this past year?
- Have you given yourself time to grieve those things?
- Have you been able to grieve change that has occurred over the last 8 weeks?

Read Lamentations 3:19-27

The writer has *two realities* he can hold on to: the reality of *grief* and the reality of *God's steadfast love*. The book jumps back and forth between the two and actually ends with more questions. The lamentation will lead us to hope, but before the hope and healing comes the grief and the lament.

- Can you relate to the tension of two realities, either now or in the past? What beliefs did you develop out of this struggle about yourself and about God?

Watch and Discuss video:

Anticipatory grief shows that there is a wider range of events that can trigger grief than typically thought of, as follows:

- Divorce or relationship breakup
- Loss of health
- Losing a job
- Loss of financial stability
- A miscarriage
- Retirement
- Death of a pet
- Loss of a cherished dream
- A loved one's serious illness
- Loss of a friendship
- Loss of safety after a trauma
- Selling the family home
- CHANGE OF ANY KIND even if it's a good thing

- How can the awareness of anticipatory grief strengthen our approach of trials through our foundation of faith?

Take your cues from the way Jesus grieved: Stay with your friends while they grieve. Watch and pray and weep. Jesus grieved with Mary and Martha over Lazarus, brought his disciples to the Garden, and was always crying out to God in his grieving even at the cross.

Reflect and Commit:

Grief purifies our desires. The fierce illumination that death brings to our lives shows us what really matters. In light of death, what do I want to invest in?

Grief aids discernment because it reminds us that we too will die someday. As Ecclesiastes says, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, because death is the end of all mankind ... the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning" (Ecclesiastes 7:2,4 ESV).

- Briefly explain what this means to you.

Read Psalm 56:8

Many people are comforted by the Psalms, as they were often written during turbulent times or trials. Jesus even quoted them.

- Do you have a Psalm or Bible verse that has been meaningful to you in a time of grief?

Pray:

Dear God, we thank You that You meet us where we are, even if that means that we are holding two realities in tension as we move through our grief. Thank you, Father, that we can cry out to You honestly and have hope and expectation in You at the same time. We are so grateful that You are always with us and we trust in You to bring healing.

"Change will continue to happen, and when it does, remember to lament." Ryan Leak