

THEME: SEVEN DEADLY PASSIONS – GRIEF

TOPIC: WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF GRIEF?

**TEXT: 1 PETER 5:7; 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4; MATTHEW 5:4; JOHN 14:27;
ISAIAH 53:4-6; PSALM 30:5; 23:4**

INTRODUCTION

Grief is the emotional response to the loss of a loved one or something important. It can also be experienced after a divorce, serious illness, or other significant loss.

It's a natural human response to loss, but it can impact your well-being. Everyone grieves differently, and there is no set pattern. In our final study on Grief today, we will conclude by looking at "what the causes of Grief are and how grieving people handle the situation."

HOW GRIEVING PEOPLE HANDLE THE SITUATION.

When people lose a loved one their approach falls within the following seven steps:

1. DENIAL

A refusal to admit or accept that the person we have loved and grown with is gone, never to be seen and had only left us with memories, their tombstone etc.

It is this denial that leads to intense moments of feelings and the expression of sorrow, expression of sadness

2. ANGER

Culture and mores influence how people grieve over the departure of their dead ones. In certain cultures, as long as the person is of the right age, in their older years – particularly in Third World situations – such death is seen as a celebration because they have lived their years and have left a legacy.

Anger is often expressed once the age of the person who died is tender. The family question why God would take such a loved one and if the situation is what they consider devastating – an incurable disease hitting a young man with a young family, an accident – the family becomes angry at God and the circumstance of death.

The feelings of regret even come in where such death could have been averted, where the departed have asked counsel if he or she should travel and subsequently died after he had been given a clear and green light by his family. The family begins to walk in guilt.

3. BARGAINING

Not long after the departure of the loved one, people begin to see the futility of their anger and begin to look for ways to find solutions to whatever challenges such death has brought.

They look for ways to accept their lot. They huddle together and try to comfort one another.
Thessalonians 5:11

4. DEPRESSION

When the burial is over and all friends and distant relatives have gone back to their homes, it doesn't take long before the enormity of the loss hits the bereaved.

A few days or months later, different things bring back the memories of the loved one and increase the depression of the bereaved: birthdays, anniversaries, special people, places, things they did together.

Unfinished business and matters that are not properly tidied could add to the depression. Certain people pass on without writing a will or tying up their financial and family matters.

This could add pressure and the physical effect will be sometimes weight loss, loss of sleep, appetite, being touchy and irritable.

Some people take a different angle and internalise the feeling they have. They become extremely sad, pull back into their shell, not wanting to relate or talk to anyone. They suffer in silence and internalise the situations they are confronted with. If given the opportunity they will call a pity party and would rather move towards the people who accept their feeling of depression.

A state of depression could make the bereaved come into every contact with an attitude of heaviness thus making people want to pull away because the grieving person brings an atmosphere and spirit of heaviness into every situation. *Philippians. 4:6*

The Bible does not guarantee that you would not have flashbacks neither does it deny you the right to grieve. But for it to wear you down, make you walk in guilt because of matters unsettled by your relation, friend or person over whom you grieve for it to lead into actions that reflect unforgiveness and bitterness means that you have been trapped and the grief is now destructive.

5. ACCEPTANCE

The grieving must accept that, yes it is OK to grieve but not to overdo it. They must build bridges to people, find a way to create reunions with family, friends, work colleagues and leave the past as it was.

There is the need to come to terms with the absence of the person even though that is difficult but to realise that the prolongation of grief does not reverse things. Acceptance is necessary for catharsis.

6. HOPE – Romans 5:5

While faith is now, hope is for tomorrow. Hope assures your heart that there is a future. Hope settles your mind that it is not over yet. There is hope that says, 'It is not over until it is over'.

7. FULFILMENT

This is what I might call – how to break free from grieving – that is finding fulfilment in who you are and what you do, carrying out acts that suggest that you have recaptured, regained and renewed who you are and what you are called to do.

To find fulfilment you might need to go through bereavement counselling. Sitting in front of a counsellor who accepts you without any sense of guilt or judgement and helps you to go through the pain you feel about the loss.

Find comfort in the Word. The purpose of the anointing of God is to bring healing to those who grieve, who have put on sack cloth and have covered their head in ashes, refusing to be consoled. *Isaiah 61:3*

Part of fulfillment or healing might be to also correct what mistake you felt the departed have made. If they never wrote a will, write one for yourself. God does not want us to leave our family without proper arrangements. **2 Kings 20:1**

Finally, find your greatest healing by drawing on the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary. He came that He might replace us and carry our griefs and sorrows so that we need not bear them anymore. **Isaiah 53:4**

CONCLUSION

If you refuse to be comforted you would only expose yourself to the entrance of unclean spirits. **Zechariah 13:2.**

In Psalm 34:18, the text says “the Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” God understands our grief and offers to be with us and comfort us with promises from His Word and with the “peace that passes all understanding.”

Grief and hope can coexist. The hope we have in Christ helps us move forward through grief. The losses endured in this world are real, and they impact us in many ways, but we do not live in bitterness or gloom. We live “in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised” (Titus 1:2).