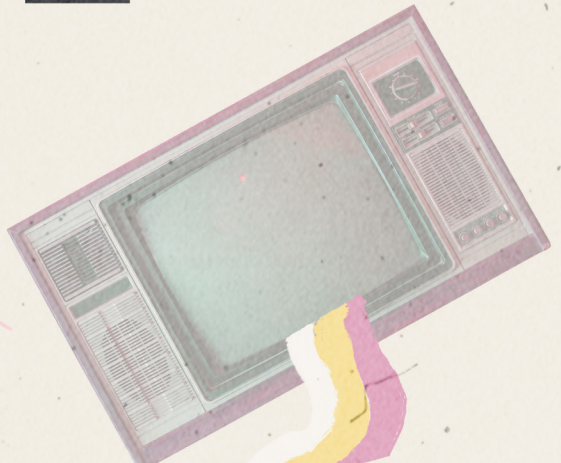


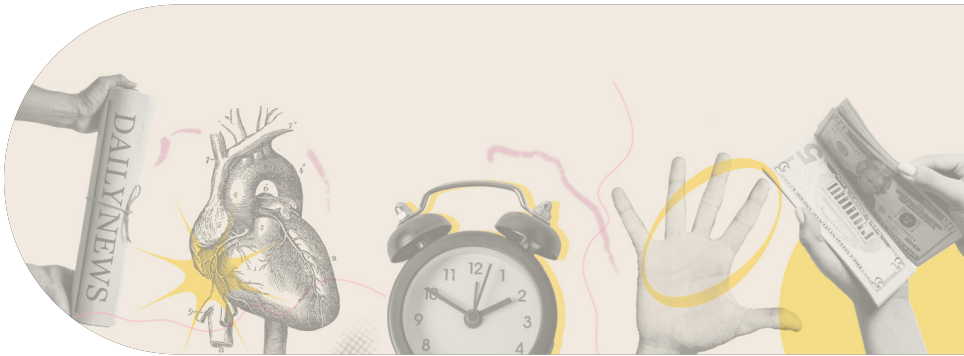


LIES ABOUT LOVE



PBC





HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Sermon Notes

Each Sunday you'll be able to take notes to help recall key ideas as you go further into the study throughout the week.

Midweek Meditation

Set aside 30 minutes during your week to pray, read and reflect.

Dive Deeper

In this section, you'll find additional Scripture references and resources to help you dive deeper.

Small Group Discussion

As you gather with a Community Group, friends or family, consider how the weekly topic is foundational to the way you relate to one another and the church as a whole.

Further Reading

We want to equip you with solid biblical resources that you can dive into and read at your own pace.

WHAT LIES DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT LOVE

In our world, and even in the church, many relationships operate according to feelings, cultural norms and experiences, or even outright LIES. As a result, many of our relationships aren't flourishing, instead they are failing. What if that could change? What if we exposed the lies and countered them with the truth of God's word? What if we reset expectations for relationships according to the God who designed relationships? What if you actually began to experience the joy and purpose God intended in your relationships? This is the goal and prayer for our brand new teaching series, "Lies About Love".



FOLLOW YOUR HEART

1 JOHN 4:7-11

WEEK 1

MIDWEEK MEDITATION

Read: 1 John 3:19-24

Is your heart telling you the same thing today that it did ten years ago? Do you have the same desires and affections as you did then? How about 5 years ago? 1 year ago? Yesterday? For each of us, our heart's longings, motivations, and appreciations are constantly shifting. For those who know Christ, our heart is slowly becoming more like his.

With hearts that always fluctuate, there are times when our hearts will conform to the truths in God's Word and times that they won't. We might feel the strong presence of God or we might not. Regardless of where our heart is at any moment, we still have the same responsibility: believe in Jesus Christ and obey his command to love one another.

With this in mind, it is more important to know who Jesus is, what he commands us to do, and how we are to love one another than it is to know our own hearts. Instead of being true to yourself, perhaps we should be true to the unchanging heart of God.

REFLECT

How can you know if your heart is aligned with God's truths?

FURTHER STUDY

- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Ezekiel 36:25-27
- Hebrews 4:12-13

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. List the ways that love is described in 1 Jn. 4:7-11.
2. Love is a defining trait of a Christian (vs. 7-8), yet there are still unloving Christians and very loving non-Christians. How can this be?
3. Is there something unique about Christian love that non-Christians are simply incapable of replicating?
4. Do you find that your ability to love someone typically corresponds with how “lovable” they are? (i.e. you love lovable people and don’t love unlovable people) What might this tell you about your love?
5. Is God’s love towards us a feeling, an action, or something more?
6. Christ coming to earth to die for us is the ultimate expression of love. But it is more than just a good example. How does his death and resurrection actually cause us to love others?
7. The command to “love others” can be pretty vague. Who do you know that loves others well and how specifically do they show it?
8. What do you do in your day-to-day that could evidence to others that you love God?

FURTHER READING

Don’t Follow Your Heart by Jon Bloom

(Free download available at desiringgod.org/books)

MARRIAGE IS A 50/50 RELATION- SHIP

EPHESIANS 5:22-23

WEEK 2

MIDWEEK MEDITATION

Read: Philippians 4:13

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me," is not a typical Bible verse you would consider when talking about marriage, but it's pivotal we remember it. In the Bible, the wife is asked to submit to her husband, and husband to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Eph 5:22-33). These two commands will seem almost impossible at times when one partner feels like they are giving more than the other, but we were never meant to follow these commands on our own.

As Christians, we have the Holy Spirit who strengthens us to love our spouses unconditionally, when it's hard, when we are tired, when we have done most of the work. In a perfect world, marriages would always be 50/50, but there will be seasons when one partner does more than the other. In those moments, we can remember that God has called us to love as he loved us, with unconditional love, the same way we ought to love our spouse. Whether we're attempting to love our spouse or even a friend, we can remember that we can do all things because HE gives us strength.

REFLECT

How can Philippians 4:13 strengthen us to love, support and encourage our spouse? Who else does this verse strengthen you to love?

FURTHER STUDY

- John 15:12
- Galatians 5:13-15
- Colossians 3:12-15

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read Ephesians 5:22-33. What do you really appreciate in these verses and what do you struggle with or are confused by?
2. In this passage, what commands are unique to the husband/wife relationship and what commands could be true of all Christian relationships (even friends)?
3. What would a marriage centered on Christ look like? How might this be different than the world's view of a successful marriage?
4. What is a way you can approach your spouse to ask them how you can be a more encouraging partner?
5. If you are married, are you and your spouse encouraging other couples in their marriages? How?
6. How can a single person apply Ephesians 5:22-33 in their life? What are things a single person can do to prepare for marriage, if that's God's will?
7. What does God's unconditional love for you look like? What would showing unconditional love to your spouse look like practically?
8. How can being in community help in our marriage or in our singleness? How can this group encourage you in your marriage or in your singleness?

FURTHER READING

The Grace Marriage by Brad and Marilyn Rhoads

WORDS WILL NEVER HURT ME

JAMES 3:36

WEEK 3

MIDWEEK MEDITATION

Read: Ephesians 4:29-32

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” As a child this seemed full of wisdom and comfort. However, soon we realize that words often hurt us much more than sticks and stones; the scars inflicted by careless and hurtful words cut much deeper into our soul. Words spoken in haste and anger permeate our mind long after bruised skin heals. The question is not if words will hurt us but when.

Maybe when this happens, you shut down allowing these hurtful words to be the “truth” that hits you over and over. Maybe you fight back; picking up the stone and hurling it back at the one who hurt you. However, both responses are wrong. God demonstrates another way to respond when we are hurt by words. We must forgive.

In Ephesians 4:31-32 God tells us to get rid of bitterness and anger and forgive those who hurt us just as God forgives us. Forgiving that person doesn’t mean we are never hurt again by the words that were spoken. No, that is why Jesus tells us in Matthew 18:21-22 we must forgive “seventy-seven times.” Therefore, we can now say, “hurtful words will always sting, but I will choose forgiveness.”

REFLECT

How will you respond the next time someone hurts you with their words?

FURTHER STUDY

- John 15:12
- Galatians 5:13-15
- Colossians 3:12-15

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In James 3:5-6, James likens our words to a fire. Why is a fire such a perfect metaphor?
2. This passage also refers to our tongues as a “small thing” yet it’s capable of great destruction. Do we tend to treat our words as “small things” or do we often recognize the gravity they carry?
3. How do you personally respond when someone hurts you with their words? Do you lash out? Do you internalize it?
4. In what circumstances are you more prone to speak in anger? Why?
5. How can we redirect ourselves or communicate with that person when we find ourselves in those circumstances?
6. How does God demonstrate for us how to respond when we are hurt by careless and hurtful words?
7. Where in your life have you experienced the need to forgive “seventy-seven times” as Jesus said in Matthew 18:21-22?
8. Words can be used to hurt others OR to be lifegiving. How have others spoken lifegiving words to you? And how can you specifically this week use your words to be lifegiving?

FURTHER READING

War of Words: getting to the heart of your communication struggles by Paul David Tripp

TIME HEALS ALL WOUNDS

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14

WEEK 4

MIDWEEK MEDITATION

Read: Matthew 18:21-35

Out of all the traits that God calls us throughout scripture to embody (compassion, faithfulness, generosity, meekness, humility, joy, kindness, patience, peace, perseverance, self-control, etc.) Forgiveness might be the most difficult. Perhaps the reason is that, while we may want to become patient, kind, or joyful, many of us often do not even want to forgive.

Christ recognizes our need to be motivated towards forgiveness. So he tells this parable of an unforgiving servant to provide two good reasons for forgiveness.

1. You have experienced the joyful, life-giving freedom of forgiveness from God and it's a gift you're now able to share with others.
2. There are dire consequences to an unforgiving heart. Failing to forgive doesn't damage the other person. It damages you.

The most effective tool we have in healing wounded relationships is the tool of forgiveness. It won't heal them instantly and it might not even heal them fully to where they were before. But forgiveness is the balm in which healing is allowed to take place. Without it, our wounds will only get worse.

REFLECT

When has forgiveness been difficult for you to request, to accept, or to give? When has it been easy?

FURTHER STUDY

- Matthew 6:14-15
- Proverbs 12:15-18
- Ephesians 4:29-32

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read Colossians 3:12-14. Each of these traits must be practiced in relationship with others. In which relationships are these easy to practice and in which relationships are they difficult?
2. Love is described as the underlying motive beneath each of these traits. Would it be possible to practice these traits in an unloving way? If so, how?
3. Relationship conflicts seem to leave the longest-lasting wounds. Have you experienced wounds that lasted a long time in your life?
4. Have you ever experienced healing from a long-term wound? If so, how did it come about?
5. Why is it so easy to conceal our wounds and act like we don't have any? What results from us concealing our wounds?
6. How does Christ's death and resurrection impact our ability/desire for our wounds to be healed?
7. Sometimes wounds are inflicted by others and sometimes we inflict wounds on ourselves through guilt. How can we see our guilt be healed?
8. If there's someone you'd like to forgive or ask for forgiveness, what prayers could the group offer to make that easier for you?

FURTHER READING
The Peacemaker by Ken Sande

I'M BETTER OFF ALONE

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

WEEK 5

MIDWEEK MEDITATION

Read: John 15:12-17

You've heard the saying, "the world would be a much better place if it weren't for all the people in it". In some respects this may actually be true, given the world is full of sinners. But as sinners, this would eliminate even us. The truth is we need one another. At our core, we all fear being alone. God knows this and that's why he frequently tells us in his Word to "fear not, for I am with you".

We long to be with one another but let's face it, relationships are hard work! They take intentionality and we endure suffering as a result. Yet they're also a source of much delight and we're naturally built for them. What do we do with that tension? We look to the only One who aced friendship, our perfect Friend, who died not only for his friends but for his enemies, in order to make them his friends. Jesus is our source of strength to endure the adversities of friendships, to convict and empower us to be the friends we ought to be, and to comfort and empathize with us when our friends aren't the friends they ought to be to us.

REFLECT

Why do you think God created humans to be in relationship in a sinful world? How is Jesus your source of strength and comfort through the hardships of relationships?

FURTHER STUDY

- Proverbs 13:20; 17:17; 18:1, 24; 27:6, 9
- 1 Samuel 18 through 1 Samuel 23
The friendship of David and Jonathan

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Looking at Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, why is isolating unwise? What kind of fruit have you seen in the lives of people who tend towards isolation?
2. According to this passage, does it matter who we are friends with or could it be anyone?
3. Why is it difficult for humans to open up to one another? And why does closing ourselves off often seem like a better option?
4. Having genuine relationships with others is difficult. How does Jesus empower us to step out of our comfort zone to pursue friendships and be the friend he's calling us to be?
5. No person is perfect, yet wisdom calls us to befriend people of good character (see Prov. 13:20). How do we discern what sort of friend will be beneficial to us and which will harm us?
6. Is it easy for you to spend time on your friendships? What gets in the way of making friendships a priority?
7. Inevitably we will make missteps in our friendships. What truths can we speak over our lives in order to combat the shame we experience when we fail in our relationships?
8. What are some ways you can intentionally invest in and strengthen your friendships this week?

FURTHER READING

No Greater Love: A Biblical Vision for Friendship
by Rebecca McLaughlin

SEX IS JUST PHYSICAL

1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-5

WEEK 6

MIDWEEK MEDITATION

Read: Song of Solomon 8:1-7

Song of Solomon is a romantic poem written about two young lovers who are captivated by one another. The phrase “love is as strong as death” (vs. 6) still resonates with us 3,000 years later. Love, like death, has strength because it can transfer us beyond the physical realm. It is “otherworldly” in that it can’t be defined or boxed in by science. It can’t be destroyed by the strongest of physical forces nor can it be purchased (vs. 7). There’s something about love that is outside our control. Sex, as an intimate physical expression of love, has that same strength.

Yet if there’s anything we know about humanity’s fallen nature, it is that we desire to be in control. We desire to control sex and its effects on us as if they were merely physical things to be manipulated. We seek the ability to see it without being controlled by it. We seek to use it without our feelings being affected by it. And we seek to take it without being enslaved to it. But God reminds us that he alone is sovereign, when he places things on Earth that are outside our ability to control.

REFLECT

What are some things God has put in your life that are outside of your control? Is sex one of them? How so?

FURTHER STUDY

- 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
- Proverbs 7
- Matthew 5:21-26

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Is sex something that is talked about openly in your family or with those close to you? Or is it a taboo subject to you? Why is it hard to talk about?
2. How were you trained to think about sex when you were younger (ex. it's gross, it's awesome, it's good, it's bad, etc.)? How has your view changed since then?
3. Everyone knows intuitively that sex is not merely a physical thing. Why are people trying so hard to say that it is?
4. Why is sexual sin more alluring than many other sins?
5. Similarly, why does sexual sin seem to bring so much more shame than other sins?
6. Does the church talk about sexual sin in a way that increases people's shame? How can we be a healing place for those who have been hurt through sexual sin?
7. Is it possible to comfort those who have sinned sexually without compromising our convictions about the sin of sexual immorality? How can we balance grace and truth?
8. The Bible describes sex as good, but it has certain boundaries which make it healthy. Yet, people don't like boundaries. Is a life with boundaries greater than a life without? Why or why not?

FURTHER READING
Meaning of Marriage by Tim Keller

SINGLENES IS SECOND CLASS

1 CORINTHIANS 7:7-8

WEEK 7

MIDWEEK MEDITATION

Read: Genesis 1:1-31

A vivid depiction of God's mighty act of creation opens the pages of the Book of Genesis, setting a tone of reverence for God for all of Scripture.

This culminates in the creation of man and woman, made in God's image, becoming "one flesh".

Unfortunately, this text can mistakenly be reduced to an eleventh commandment, "Thou shalt marry."

Thus, Christian culture often assumes that life is not full and ministry is not effective without a spouse.

The lie seeps in that singleness is second class, undesirable, ineffective, or even disobedient.

But, Paul is clear in 1 Corinthians 7:7. He believes his singleness is a gift. His singleness did not hold him back from planting churches, raising leaders, and encouraging believers. Although he did not have a spouse or kids, his life was filled with meaningful relationships. He calls Timothy his true child in the faith. This trend continues throughout church history. People like Mother Theresa have cared for others and shared the gospel in incredible ways, and singleness aided their efforts. The Bible is clear. Singleness is not a calling to be lesser. For some it is God's plan for them to have a greater impact for his Kingdom.

REFLECT

Do you believe singleness is valuable?
Why or why not?

FURTHER STUDY

- Acts 21:8-9, ministry in singleness
- Romans 12:1-2, obedience to God's purposes in our lives
- Genesis 2:18, community is still part of our creation desires in singleness

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read 1 Corinthians 7:7-8. What stands out to you in this passage as unexpected or different than how you may have been raised?
2. How does Paul's inclusion of the discussion of singleness within a greater context of sexual purity and marriage reflect his understanding of the topic?
3. What might our culture see as the "benefits" of singleness? How does that conflict with Paul's view here?
4. Do we view singleness differently in different seasons of life? How so?
5. How does the church typically view singleness? Do we reflect the truths of this passage? Explain.
6. What are unhelpful things that Christians often tell singles? How could those who are married be an encouragement instead?
7. How can we more effectively include singles in the ministry of the church?
8. How do we better communicate the value and joy of marriage without excluding those who might not experience it?

FURTHER READING

Not Yet Married: the pursuit of joy in singleness and dating by Marshall Segal
(Free download available at desiringgod.org/books)

DATING IS FINDING SOMEONE WHO MAKES YOU HAPPY

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-16

WEEK 8

MIDWEEK MEDITATION

Read: Matthew 7:24-27

When we find ourselves living in a world that is constantly trying to convince us “we do not have all we need” it can be tempting to exchange a meaningful, intentional pursuit of dating for a cheap counterfeit. Dating, with a long view of marriage, is much more than about being happy, having fun, or even getting content for your feed.

As Christians, we are called to a standard of purpose and holiness. Because of this, dating provides the opportunity for us to prayerfully and carefully find someone to be our partner in the journey. Someone with whom we can share a long obedience in the same direction. In the quest to find someone who shares these same values, we are not simply “checking a box”, but rather are finding the ability to walk confidently ahead to what life has in store for us, knowing that in a Christ-centered relationship we will find a firm foundation.

REFLECT

What is the most valuable trait in a partner for your journey of obedience? Why is that trait so important?

FURTHER STUDY

- Proverbs 4:23; 5:3-6
- 1 Corinthians 15:33

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-16. What potential dangers and pitfalls do you see arising out of a relationship that is unequally yoked?
2. Do you think this principle applies to relationships other than romantic relationships of dating/marriage? If so, what relationships? If not, why not?
3. Christians are called to “be in the world, but not of the world”, how do you see this calling played out in dating and close relationships?
4. If your son or daughter came to you asking permission to go on a date with a non-believer how would you encourage them or shepherd them?
5. Does being equally yoked mean merely that you both profess Christ as Savior? Is it possible for two Christians to be unequally yoked? How so?
6. Once you are “yoked” with someone, how do you ensure that the two of you keep Christ at the center of your relationship?
7. How would you encourage a brother or sister in Christ to proceed if they currently find themselves in a relationship that is “unequally yoked”?
8. What qualities should we look for in potential spouses to ensure we share common values and beliefs?

FURTHER READING
Outdated by JP Pokluda

THEY'LL GROW OUT OF IT

PSALM 127:3-5

WEEK 9

MIDWEEK MEDITATION

Read: 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

Buildings aren't constructed accidentally. Visions are cast. Blueprints are drawn. Laborers work hard for weeks and months according to the plans to create something that is beautiful, useful, and sturdy. In the Christian life, it is our aim that we will become mature disciples of Jesus Christ. Yet how many of us have a clear vision of what a disciple looks like? How many of us have a plan for how we will reach that vision of a disciple? And how many of us spend time working hard according to the plan to reach the desired vision?

Whether you're hoping to raise your children as disciples of Jesus or you're fighting to become a disciple yourself, it's critical that you think intentionally about where you're going and how you're going to get there. As Paul states in 1 Cor. 3:12-13, each of us is building our house out of something: wood, hay, straw, gold, silver, or precious stones. Take some time today to consider if you've been intentionally building your house according to the plan and with the right materials or if you've just been passively watching as your house sits unfinished.

REFLECT

Describe what you desire to become as a disciple of Jesus Christ. How will you get there?

FURTHER STUDY

- Ephesians 6:1-4
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- Proverbs 6:20-23

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How did your family influence you growing up? Were they Christian? Non-Christian? Positive? Negative? And what sort of impact does that continue to have on you?
2. Does our culture value children? If so, in what way? If not, why not?
3. Read Psalm 127. This passage describes children as a blessing and a reward. Why does God value children so much?
4. Describe the similarities between children and arrows (vs. 4).
5. Should every couple who is capable try to have children (vs. 5)?
6. What role do parents and the church play in training children? Where do these two institutions overlap? Where are they distinct?
7. For parents: What strategies are you implementing to train your children in Christ? For everyone: What strategies did your parents implement to train you in Christ?
8. How can our group be an encouragement to parents with young children?

FURTHER READING
Parenting by Paul David Tripp

IT'S MY MONEY

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10

WEEK 10

MIDWEEK MEDITATION

Read: Psalm 50:1-15

God doesn't need our gifts. In this psalm, the people are offering God sacrifice after sacrifice. But God says, "The mere act of offering sacrifices to me isn't what pleases me. Am I asking for bulls because I'm hungry?" Yet many of us continue to give God our money as if we're obligated to because God needs us. God already owns all the cattle that the people are giving! (vs. 10) God already owns all the money that we offer him! It's not ours!

Why then does he call us to give? It's because he wants us to be thankful. He wants our hearts to be generous and grateful hearts. Hearts that have a relationship with him where we obey his Word and he saves us (vs. 14-15). We give and he provides. When we recognize that all we have belongs to him already, we free ourselves to be generous and enter into that gracious and grateful relationship.

REFLECT

In what ways are you currently giving to God? What do you think motivates your giving?

FURTHER STUDY

- Ecclesiastes 5:10-12
- Luke 12:13-21
- 1 Timothy 6:17-19

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. When have you seen a Christian be extremely generous with their money because they wanted to bless others?
2. We are called to be good stewards of our money. Is it possible for extreme generosity to become bad stewardship? Why or why not?
3. As the wise saying goes, “Mo’ money. Mo’ problems.” Do you believe that having more money genuinely brings more difficulties? If this is true, why do people continue to desire it?
4. In 1 Timothy 6:8, he says the only two things necessary for contentment are food and clothing. If you’re honest, what things would you have to add to that list to be content? What does this tell us about our standard of living?
5. Perhaps you would never say, “My goal in life is to become super rich!” But in what ways do you see the allure of money influencing your decisions?
6. How does comparing yourself to others impact how you view money?
7. List some things besides money which God asks us to give to him. Which of these are you most reluctant to let go of and why?
8. Describe what a content heart would look like in your life. What do you need to do in order to get there?

FURTHER READING

Money and the Gospel

by John Stott and Chris Wright

**YOU
SHOULD
BE OVER IT
BY NOW**

PSALM 127:3-5

WEEK 11

MIDWEEK MEDITATION

Read: Isaiah 54:10

Ken Haugk in his book, *Finding Hope and Healing*, said, "People often say grief is like a roller coaster ride. It pulls you up, then drops you down. It twists and twirls, leaving your heart in your throat and your mind in a blur. You may feel like you're on a roller coaster. There may be moments when it seems like you're finally moving upward. Then, all of a sudden you experience something that reminds you of your pain and you feel like you're falling back to where you were." When we experience loss in our lives, grief is the natural response to the loss.

The prophet Isaiah recognizes in this passage that there will be moments and circumstances in all of our lives when we will feel shaken, pain, loss and grief. He also encourages us with the truth that God's unfailing love for us will not be shaken during these times nor His commitment to providing peace and compassion for us. Some roller coaster rides of grief are longer than others but we can rest assured that God patiently rides with us and cares for us along the way.

REFLECT

Identify an area in your life where you have been on a roller coaster of grief. How have you experienced God's unshakeable loving, patience and compassionate care in your journey?

FURTHER STUDY

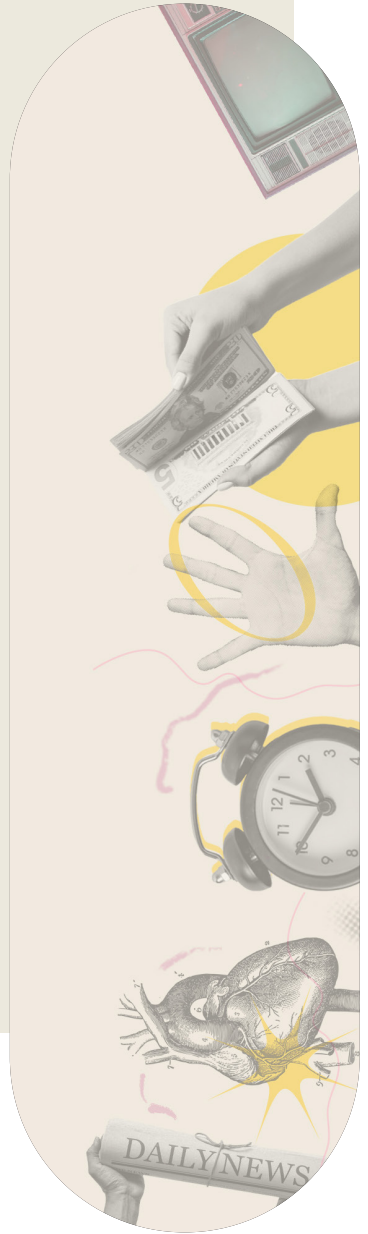
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 31:9-10
- Isaiah 43:1-4

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Death is one obvious event that leads to grief, but what are some other things that might cause someone “to go to the house of mourning” (Ecc.7:2).
2. Does mourning help us see the world with clarity or does it make things more clouded?
3. God is patient with us as we grieve. Why is it frustrating when others are not?
4. Respond to this statement, “When people ask me, “How long does grief last?” I often answer, “As long as it takes”
5. Why might it be difficult to share with others the depth of our grief?
6. Sharing our grief with others can be part of our healing process. How might comparing our grief with others be detrimental?
7. Read Isaiah 43:1-2, What does this passage say about how God sees us in our grief?
8. Do these verses only offer comfort for the future or do they offer comfort for those grieving right now?

FURTHER READING
**Walking with God through Pain
and Suffering** by Tim Keller

Special thanks to Lindsay Infranco, Laurie Campbell, Cherie Brown, Aris Starr, Phoenix Lopez, and Michelle Tedhams for their contributions to this series study guide.





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