

A Guide to Grieving with Hope

Monday, 3/8/10 – Read Psalm 42:1-2

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Psalm 42 is a magnificent guide to grieving with hope. So, we're going to spend this week walking, slowly, through this one psalm. We'll take a short passage each day, think it through, and see how it applies to our lives. ... Start with the first two verses. Read them over a couple times, slowly. And think about the longings and yearnings in your life. Deeper than wants and desires, what do you most deeply long for? What is the yearning of your life? ... Is there within you a longing to know God and to know that God knows you? ... Take some moments in prayer today. Talk with God about the deep yearnings of your life.

Tuesday, 3/9/10 – Read Psalm 42:3

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Deep yearnings can evaporate quickly when our lives are in distress ... when there is some suffering ... when there is some big problem that threatens to unravel our lives ... when there is some loss and we are grieving. At such times, we often ask ourselves, "Where is God now?" ... Have you ever felt that? Have you ever said those words? ... It may seem really hard, but take courage, and talk with God today. Tell God how you really, really feel. And if you sometimes wonder if God's really there, tell God about that.

Wednesday, 3/10/10 – Read Psalm 42:4

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Grieving (and other struggles in life) are sometimes so powerful and strong -- the feelings are so intense -- that we can feel out of control. It seems like the grieving is

driving us. Sometimes we simply need to let the grieving flow and let it have its way. We can, though, begin to regain our equilibrium by exercising some mental discipline. Psalm 42:4 focuses us on our capacity to remember times of high celebration. What have been the great moments of grand celebration in your life? Make a list of some of them. ... In the midst of our distress, it can seem like grief is all that's left. It can help to remember times of beauty, grandeur, and fulfillment. ... Pick one such moment in your life and remember it throughout your day today.

Thursday, 3/11/10 – Read Psalm 42:5a *(just the first part of 42:5)*

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Grieving comes in waves. Maybe we've been going along ok for a while, and seemingly out of nowhere the grief rises up and washes over us again. We also may be troubled by questions like: "Why am I not getting over this?" "Why do these feelings keep coming back?" ... Remember that grieving usually takes longer than any of us expects; and for awhile it may feel like you're on a roller coaster with lots of ups and downs. ... For today, simply bring your questions into your prayer. Tell God about the questions and the confusions that rise within you.

Friday, 3/12/10 – Read Psalm 42:5-6

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: These are important verses in Psalm 42, and the suggestions here can help us live well through our grieving. (1) Be honest with yourself and with God. The psalm says, "My soul **IS** cast down." It's important not to pretend that we don't feel the way we do! (2) But our painful distress is not the totality of our lives. We need to choose to remember God's faithfulness in the past. (3) Realize that this distress will not last forever. We have to go through it, but God will bring us through it. As the psalm says, "Hope in God; for I shall again

praise him.” ... Confidence and hope in the midst of grieving comes as we are honest with ourselves, as we remember God’s past faithfulness, and as we keep reminding ourselves that this painful part of our grieving doesn’t last forever.

Saturday, 3/13/10 – Read Psalm 42:7-10

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Grieving is not a straight line progression. It may not feel like we’re “getting better” day by day. It may seem like we’re having more “good days,” and then we get knocked backwards again. Verses 8 and 9 capture this experience. One moment it seems that God’s love is showering us and our hearts are full of song (like in verse 8), and then a short time later it feels like God is absent (verse 9). Is this your experience with grieving?

Sunday, 3/14/10 – Read Psalm 42:11

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Verse 11 concludes the psalm by reviewing the insights we have thought about this week. Which of these seems most important to you right now: (1) Being honest with yourself and with God about how you really are feeling? (2) Bringing to God the questions that arise, like “Why is this happening?” “Why am I not getting over this?” (3) Remembering God’s faithfulness and goodness to us in the past? (4) Realizing that God will see us through this time, and it won’t last forever? (5) Affirming God’s presence and God’s help -- even when we’re not feeling it? ... In your prayer today, talk with God honestly and directly about where you are today and which of these insights is most important to you.

My Faith Journal, March 7, 2010
Good Grief #3
Forced Learning

What do I hear God saying to me today?

What action do I intend to take this week?

Each day this week, take a few minutes. Begin with PRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage indicated on the inside of this guide. WRITE down your own thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.