

GRIEF AND LOSS IN A RELATIONSHIP (When People Go Away)



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Grief and Loss in a Relationship

- Relationships form a bond and breaking up (pulling apart) comes with pain.
- If you are married, be working on blending together (commitment and intimacy) rather than trying to get out of it or being indifferent toward the marriage?
- Purpose of this lesson is about surviving when the relationship is ended in death, by divorce, pending by separation or when home has become a war zone.

Grief and Loss in a Relationship

Marriage –

- Marriage - Much is said about marriage beginning in the garden of Eden (Gen.) The design of marriage is one man for one woman for lifetime (Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39; 1 Cor. 7:13-15).
- Standard Marriage Vow – Taken In the presence of God (a covenant where God joins the two) and these witnesses... “I take you to be my lawfully wedded wife/husband. I promise to love, honor, and cherish you all the days of my life and forsaking all others to keep myself for you and you alone in sickness, in health, for better or for worse until death shall part us. “I do” or “I will”.
- Significant of a vow Eccl. 5:4- 6; Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Numbers 30:1-16, esp. v.2; James 5:12; Matthew 5:37, 34-37

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That which is nourished, grows.



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A word about “Intimacy”.



Two lovers walking down the street...she trips, he whispers, “careful sweet” ...now wed and on the self-same street ...she trips, he mutters, “pick up your feet”. What happened? To take a couple to these extremes?

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- Marriage is intended to be for a lifetime. “Leaving and cleaving” (Gen. 2:4; Matt. 19:5) - “cleave” - “to adhere, to stick to, or join with” look to ways each may please the other (1 Cor. 7:33,34).
- Leaving and cleaving does not mean quit when things are not going right. It includes talking things out, praying things through, being patient as you trust God to work in both of your hearts, being willing to admit when you are wrong, asking forgiveness, and seeking God’s counsel regularly in His Word.

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- When either/both neglect leaving and cleaving, the result is lack of intimacy. Cleaving is key in building a marriage that will endure hard times and become the beautiful relationship that God intends it to be. Cleaving in Deut. 13:4 meant Israel was to leave all other gods and join alone to God...commitment and trust. This is God's design for marriage. When we follow God's plan, we are never disappointed.
- Marriage is a 3-way covenant: Spiritual and Civil – A man, a woman and their Creator make the covenant together. It is a contract with God and your spouse. God joins these two together in this ceremony (Matthew 19: 6ff “What God has joined together, let not man put asunder”)

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Courtship - Most examples of courtship in the scriptures are about arranged marriages, perhaps with the exception of Song of Solomon. In Biblical marriages, the persons “learned to love” each other.



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- **Getting out of a marriage commitment:** 3 options: Death, Separation, Divorce. Consider marriage to an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:13-15).
- **Death** - Death severs the marriage bond (Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor 7:39). Makes one single again.
- **Divorce**- “God hates divorce” (Mal. 2:16) – Dealing “treacherously” (Mal 2:14 suggests actions that are inconsistent with faithfulness to the covenant vow before God. Something God hates worse than divorce—cheating – why? because He allows divorce for cheating (Matt. 5:31-32; 19) AND God Himself divorced (Jer.3:8ff)
- Looking to the ways of each other (1 Cor. 7:33-34)

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Surviving a Break Up Or Death

Regrouping when the marriage is ended/ending:

Spiritually

1. Keep your eyes centered on God – He is your anchor in this
2. Explore possibilities for new horizons
3. Draw near to Christ and your values
4. Accept that it is okay right now not to have all the answers
5. Understand that you are grieving as you move forward
6. Honor God's laws related to your situation

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Self-Care

6. What are your fears? Get help with them.
7. Tune into your body...your stress, sleep
8. Develop a plan to face your loneliness
9. Be careful about self-medication
10. Realize you are likely very vulnerable. Find a way to process what you are going through. Some suggestions.
11. Connect with a support network



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Financial

12. Avoid making any radical decisions for at least a year.
13. Adjust your financial plan. Create a new budget.
14. If children, then re-adjust their care (custody plan)



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Social

1. Be careful in whom you confide – including family
2. Don't isolate yourself - Connect with friends
3. Let someone know if you are panicking or just feeling numb
4. Your social landscape is going to change
5. Open your eyes to new adventures and opportunities
6. Remember opening to love others means loving yourself and the Lord first



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God can take broken lives and make new things possible. We can call divorce a failure of relationships, a failure to fully meet God's ideal, but still see that God offers complete forgiveness and the possibility of a new life, a new beginning. That's how God relates to us: Total honesty. Total healing. Total forgiveness. New conditions.

Dealing with Death

- Grief is a process, not an event
- Allow time to revisit old memories
- Unfinished business
- Trust in God's faithfulness and that He will do all things right.
- Focus on living and adjusting

An Ending is not the end of your life.

- When one chapter ends, it is time to begin a new chapter.
- Life scripts will need to be re-written.
- We can grieve ourselves into an early grave...
- OR, “leaving the things that are behind, we can press on...” and achieve our goals using our talents one day at a time.