

PositiveTalk
Good Conversations, Better People.

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH LOSS

WHEN GRIEF FEELS UNFAIR

BOOKLET

A guided journey of remembrance and hope

GRIEF IS NOT A CHECKLIST. YOU ARE ALLOWED YOUR OWN WAY THROUGH.

BOOKLET 02 / THE FIVE GRIEF LENSES

When Grief Feels Unfair

Honoring what hurts without allowing anger to cause harm

A NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

THE FIVE-STAGE MODEL IS A LENS, NOT A TIMELINE. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross originally described common responses among people facing death. The framework was later widely applied to bereavement. Grief does not follow a required order, a fixed schedule, or five mandatory feelings. You can experience several responses together, repeat them, or not recognize any particular stage. These booklets are invitations to reflect, not tests to pass.

You may start with any booklet. None is a level you must pass before opening another. If an exercise feels too intense, skip it, take a break, or do it with a trusted support person. The Scripture references invite reflection rather than promise a schedule for recovery.

READ IN YOUR OWN TIME

Keep a pen nearby. Circle what resonates. Leave blank what does not. You may revisit a page months or years from now and find different words. That does not mean you have returned to the beginning; it means you are a person whose love and circumstances continue to change.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

Psalm 13; Ephesians 4:26; Job 7:11

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

- Read the three brief teachings without rushing.
- Try one gentle exercise, not necessarily every exercise.
- Use the journal pages for your own words.
- Choose one act of care, connection, or remembrance.

ANGER

A Gentle Beginning

Anger can enter grief like a sudden storm. You may resent the timing of a death, the silence of a friend, a medical decision, a sibling who seems unaffected, yourself, or even God. Anger is not proof that you loved poorly. It often signals that something valuable has been taken and that the world no longer feels fair. The work is to make room for anger without letting it become permission to wound yourself or others.

Before the Reading

What brought you to this particular part of the series today? You can answer with a single word, a sentence, a memory, or a blank page. There is no correct amount of sharing.

TEACHING 1 / ANGER

Under anger, look for what mattered

When people say that anger is a problem to eliminate, the person grieving may lose an important clue to their experience. Beneath anger there can be love, disappointment, helplessness, exhaustion, fear, or an unmet need. A missed phone call may sting more because the person you usually called is gone. A careless remark at work may feel unbearable because your emotional reserves are already thin. Anger is real, but it is not always the whole story.

Before reacting, try naming a fuller sentence: “I am angry because I feel left alone with this responsibility,” or “I am angry that I did not get more time.” This does not settle what others owe you. It helps you understand the feeling before deciding what to do with it. You can take responsibility for how you communicate while still telling the truth about what hurts.

Psalm 13 begins with difficult questions addressed to God. Its honesty challenges the idea that faithful people must pretend the world is fair. You can pray about anger, not only after it disappears. Honesty in prayer can coexist with restraint in behavior.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Under anger, look for what mattered, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 2 / ANGER

Anger is a feeling; harm is a choice

Feeling furious is different from threatening someone, driving recklessly, abusing substances, sending a cruel message, or breaking something. You are responsible for your behavior, but you do not need to be ashamed of the emotion itself. When the intensity rises, delay decisions that cannot easily be undone. Move away from an argument, drink water, take a short walk if it is safe, and return later with clearer language.

Consider a simple boundary: “I want to talk about this, but I am too upset to do it well right now. I will return to it tomorrow.” A boundary is not avoidance if you follow through. If anger regularly frightens you or people around you, involve a professional or trusted support person who can help you develop safer patterns. The goal is not to suppress every difficult emotion; it is to respond with integrity.

Ephesians 4:26 distinguishes anger from wrongdoing. Its point is not that all anger is automatically righteous, but that a person can experience anger while taking care not to let it become destructive. Read the whole passage, especially its call to truthful speech and kindness.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Anger is a feeling; harm is a choice, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 3 / ANGER

When anger is directed toward God or another person

Some grief has a clear source of disappointment: someone failed to help, a promise was broken, a healthcare system felt confusing, or a relationship remained unresolved. Other grief has no obvious person to blame. In either case, the mind can search for a target because having a target feels easier than accepting powerlessness. Pause before assigning certainty to a story you cannot verify.

Anger toward God can produce guilt in people taught that every question is rebellion. Yet Job and the Psalms contain blunt speech about suffering. You do not need to manufacture polite words to talk honestly with God. At the same time, avoid turning a temporary spiritual crisis into a reason to isolate yourself. A compassionate faith leader or counselor may be able to listen without offering simplistic explanations.

If someone truly harmed you, healthy grief work does not require excusing the wrongdoing. Accountability, boundaries, and appropriate help can be part of healing. You can reject revenge while still naming injustice and protecting yourself.

Pause and Reflect

After reading When anger is directed toward God or another person, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

A Story from Ordinary Life

Room for a Human Story

After losing a close friend, Tasha became furious whenever people said, “Everything happens for a reason.” She wanted to stop answering calls. Eventually she told one friend, “Please do not explain this to me. Just sit with me.” Her anger had pointed toward a real need: to be heard rather than instructed.

Faith and Honesty

Read Psalm 13; Ephesians 4:26; Job 7:11. These references are invitations to encounter the passages in context. They do not claim that faith makes grief predictable or painless. Consider where compassion, patience, honesty, or hope appears in what you read.

What would you say to someone living this story?

YOUR REFLECTION

Four Questions Worth Sitting With

1. When does anger visit me most often?

2. What loss, fear, or unmet need may be underneath it?

3. What response would protect my integrity when I feel overwhelmed?

4. What boundary or honest conversation might help?

GUIDED EXERCISE

The Anger-to-Need Translation

Finish four sentences: “I am angry about...”; “Under that anger I feel...”; “What I need right now is...”; “A safe action I can take is...” Do not use this page to justify contacting someone unsafe.

PRIVATE LETTER

Words You May Never Need to Send

Write an unsent letter to the unfairness of the loss. Say what was taken, what still matters, and what kind of support would help now.

This page belongs to you. You do not have to share it, finish it, or keep it.

A QUIET PRAYER

An Honest Place to Begin

God, I am angry that this loss exists. Help me tell the truth about my pain without harming others or abandoning myself. Give me wisdom about boundaries, accountability, and the words to ask for what I need. Amen.

Three Possible Next Steps

- Pause one difficult conversation until you can respond thoughtfully.
- Choose one safe physical or creative outlet for anger.
- Tell one trusted person what kind of response you need.

A permission slip

You are allowed to close this book today. You are allowed to laugh, cry, rest, remember, or ask for help. None of these actions erases the love that brought you here.

CARE & SUPPORT

You Do Not Have to Do This Alone

This faith-based educational workbook is not therapy, diagnosis, or crisis care. You may skip prompts that feel overwhelming. Consider a trusted friend, faith leader, licensed grief counselor, or clinician for support. If you feel unable to stay safe or are in immediate danger, call local emergency services. In the U.S. call or text 988 for crisis support.

Getting Support

- Ask for company without advice: “Could you sit with me or take a walk?”
- Tell someone what practical help would be useful, such as a meal, errand, or phone call.
- Consider a grief support group or bereavement counselor, including community or faith-based options that respect your needs.
- If sleep, appetite, functioning, or feelings of hopelessness worry you, speak with a licensed health professional.

Sources and Further Reading

American Psychological Association — Grief: Coping with the Loss of Your Loved One (apa.org/topics/death)

Cruse Bereavement Support — Understanding the Five Stages of Grief (cruse.org.uk)

NHS — Get Help with Grief after Bereavement or Loss (nhs.uk)

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross Foundation — Five Stages of Grief (ekrfoundation.org)

Positive Talk | Good Conversations, Better People.