

DISCIPLE BLUEPRINT

# Grief to Grace

A 5-Day Devotional for the Grieving Heart

*Written from scar tissue. Anchored in Scripture.*

*“Grief is not the absence of faith.  
It is the cost of loving deeply.”*

— Raymond Smith

**Raymond Smith**

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## A Word Before You Begin

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### A PASTORAL NOTE

This devotional is a biblical and spiritual resource, not a substitute for professional care. God has called and equipped Christian counselors, therapists, and doctors to do work that a book cannot do. Reaching out is not a sign of failure — it is a sign of wisdom. Proverbs 11:14.

On April 2, 2024, I lost my wife Wendy. We had been married 33 years. She died of pancreatic cancer, and I watched her go.

I am not writing this from a textbook. I am writing it from the other side of the worst year of my life — and from the middle of grief that still shows up without warning on a quiet Tuesday morning.

Six months after Wendy died, I launched Disciple Blueprint. She had always pushed me to write. I finally did. And in the process of writing about grief, I discovered that Scripture has more to say about sorrow than most of us have been told.

This five-day devotional draws from four articles I wrote on grief — what it is, what it does to your mind, how God uses it, and how to hold on to faith while it is happening. Each day takes one truth and puts it in your hands. Read it slowly. Answer the question honestly. Say the declaration out loud even if it does not feel true yet.

You are not losing your faith. You are grieving.

Those two things can live in the same heart.

### Raymond Smith

*Smethport, Pennsylvania*

## How to Use This Devotional

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Five days. One truth per day. You can work through it in a week or stretch it out longer — grief does not follow a schedule.

### EACH DAY INCLUDES:

A short teaching drawn from Scripture  
A key verse (NLT)  
A reflection question — answer it honestly  
Writing lines to capture what God stirs  
A declaration to say out loud

The declaration at the end of each day is not a magic formula. It is a way of putting truth in your mouth before your feelings catch up. Say it anyway.

If you have Raymond's book *The Greater the Love, the Deeper the Grief*, this devotional pairs naturally with it. Both draw from the same loss, the same Scripture, and the same belief that God does not waste grief. You can get the book at [www.discipleblueprintpress.com](http://www.discipleblueprintpress.com).

### WANT TO GO DEEPER?

The full Grief to Grace Bundle includes an extended teaching guide, a 21-day journal, declaration cards, a prayer guide, and a 30-day reading plan — all built around the same grief and the same Scripture in this devotional. Get it now for \$5.99 at <https://buy.stripe.com/3cl4gz0DDdJMdaFeY52880k>

## DAY 1

**Tears Are Not Weakness****THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF GRIEF****Jesus Wept — And So Can You**

Grief is not tidy. It does not move in straight lines and it does not respond to timelines. It shows up in quiet kitchens. In empty chairs. In the silence that feels louder than noise.

In John 11, Jesus walks toward the tomb of Lazarus knowing resurrection is minutes away. He knows death will not have the final word. And yet, when He sees the tears of Mary and Martha, He does not rush to theology. He does not correct their emotions. He weeps.

**JOHN 11:35 (NLT)**

*Jesus wept.*

The shortest verse in the Bible. And one of the most important for anyone who has ever felt guilty for grieving.

Jesus stood at a graveside knowing the resurrection was coming — and still cried. That tells you something specific: tears are not the absence of faith. They are love expressing itself through loss. Grief is not weakness. It is the price of having loved someone deeply.

Many believers quietly assume that strong faith means emotional control. Scripture never teaches that. Both Mary and Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here...' There is pain in that sentence. There is disappointment. The sting of 'this should not have happened.' Jesus did not rebuke them. He moved closer.

**TRUTH**

Grief is not the absence of faith. It is the cost of loving deeply.

**TODAY'S QUESTION**

*Where have you been carrying guilt about your grief — as if feeling this deeply is a sign that your faith is failing?*

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**SAY THIS OUT LOUD**

*“My tears are not a sign of weak faith. Jesus wept. I am allowed to grieve. God is not disappointed in my sorrow — He meets me in it.”*

## DAY 2

**Your Mind Is Not Broken****HOW GRIEF AFFECTS THE MIND****Fog, Fatigue, and What the Psalms Already Knew**

Grief does not just break your heart. It affects your mind. It clouds your thinking. It drains your strength. It ambushes you without warning.

If you have ever wondered why you cannot think clearly, why you walk into a room and forget why you went there, why you can sit with people and still feel completely alone — you are not losing your faith. You are grieving.

**PSALM 6:6-7 (NLT)**

*I am worn out from sobbing. All night I flood my bed with weeping, drenching it with my tears. My vision is blurred by grief; my eyes are worn out because of all my enemies.*

Blurred vision. Exhaustion. Sleeplessness. That sounds less like poetry and more like a medical chart.

The psalmist was not being dramatic. He was being honest. And God preserved those words in Scripture — which means God considers your exhaustion worth addressing, not dismissing.

Psalm 31 says the same thing a different way: 'My strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.' Grief is not just emotional — it is physical. If your shoulders ache, if your chest feels heavy, if sleep does not restore you the way it used to — that is grief doing what grief does. It is not a sign that something is spiritually wrong with you.

Understanding this matters because when you know what is happening, you can stop interpreting your exhaustion as evidence that God has abandoned you. He has not. He is the God who does not sleep or slumber — and He is watching over you even in the fog.

**TRUTH**

Grief is not a spiritual problem to be solved. It is a weight to be carried — and God already knew how heavy it would be.

**TODAY'S QUESTION**

*What has grief done to your mind and body that you have been interpreting as spiritual failure rather than normal grief?*

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**SAY THIS OUT LOUD**

*“My mind is not broken. My body is carrying real grief. God sees my exhaustion and He is not disappointed. He is present.”*

## DAY 3

**God Has Not Wasted This****FINDING PURPOSE IN PAIN****Romans 8:28 Is Not a Platitude**

When I lost Wendy, someone handed me Romans 8:28 like a bandage. And my first reaction was honest: how can this be working together for good? She is gone. This is not good.

I sat with that reaction for a long time. And then I read the rest of the verse.

**ROMANS 8:28 (NLT)**

*And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

The verse does not say God causes everything to feel good. It does not say your loss was not real or that your pain is overblown. It says God is working it — actively, purposefully — toward something you cannot see from inside the grief.

Wendy lived out her purpose fully. She touched lives, showed extraordinary faith, and glorified God every day she was here. Her story is not cut short — it is complete. But mine is not done yet. And in the months after I lost her, I began to see why I am still here. God's purpose for me did not end when hers did.

Disciple Blueprint exists because Wendy always pushed me to write. I never did — until I had nothing left to lose by trying. The grief cracked me open. And through that opening, God built something I could not have built any other way.

I am not saying your loss was worth it. I am saying God is not wasting it.

**PAUSE & REFLECT**

Where has grief cracked something open in you — a new compassion, a new purpose, a new willingness to reach people you never could before?

**TODAY'S QUESTION**

*Can you identify even one thing — however small — that your grief has produced in you that would not have grown any other way?*

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**SAY THIS OUT LOUD**

*“God is not wasting my grief. He is working it — actively, purposefully — toward something I cannot fully see yet. My loss is not the end of the story.”*

## DAY 4

**Faith and Sorrow Together****GRIEVING WITHOUT LOSING FAITH****You Are Allowed to Grieve and Believe at the Same Time**

Grieving without losing faith does not mean you stop crying. It means you cry — while holding on to what you know is true.

Some mornings the tears come before the coffee. Some nights the silence feels louder than the memories. Faith does not eliminate those moments. It anchors you through them.

**1 THESSALONIANS 4:13 (NLT)**

*And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope.*

Paul does not say: do not grieve. He says: grieve differently. The difference between Christian grief and grief without God is not that we feel less. It is that we know something others do not know.

We know that death is not the last word. We know that reunion is coming. We know that the same resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead is the promise that stands over every grave we have ever stood beside.

That does not make the grief less real. Revelation 21:4 says God will wipe every tear from our eyes — which means the tears are real enough to wipe. He is not dismissing your sorrow. He is promising to personally address it.

Hold both. The ache is real. The hope is real. You do not have to choose.

**TRUTH**

Christian grief is not grief without pain. It is grief with a promise.

**TODAY'S QUESTION**

*What specific promise from Scripture has steadied you in grief — even on days when it barely felt true?*

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**SAY THIS OUT LOUD**

*“I am allowed to grieve and believe at the same time. My sorrow is real. God's promise is also real. I do not have to choose between them.”*

## DAY 5

**The Reunion Is Coming****COMFORT NOW — REUNION LATER****Heaven Is Not a Cliché — It Is a Promise**

When you are grieving, people say things that are meant to help. 'They are in a better place.' 'At least they are not suffering.' Those things may be true — but in the middle of grief, true is not always enough. You need something more than a sentence. You need a promise with weight behind it.

What steadied me was not a phrase — it was a passage. Not a sentiment — a promise.

**REVELATION 21:4 (NLT)**

*He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.*

Not reduced. Not managed. Gone. Forever.

That verse does not tell you to stop crying now. It tells you why the crying will not last. God Himself will wipe every tear. That is a personal, hands-on promise from the God who made your face and knows exactly what those tears cost you.

And then there is the reunion. 1 Thessalonians 4 describes the moment when Christ returns and brings with Him every believer who has died. The word Paul uses for the reunion — meeting — was used in the ancient world for citizens going out of the city to escort a dignitary home. It is a triumphal return, not a quiet passing.

Wendy is not lost. She is ahead of me. The grief is real, and the distance is real, and the silence in my house is real. But so is the reunion. One day I will see her again. Not in a dream and not in a memory. In person.

That is not a cliché. That is a promise from the God who does not lie.

**TRUTH**

You are not grieving toward nothing. You are grieving toward a reunion.

**TODAY'S QUESTION**

*What would it change about how you carry your grief today if you truly believed — in your bones — that the reunion is coming?*

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**SAY THIS OUT LOUD**

*“I am not grieving toward nothing. The person I love is with Jesus, and I will see them again. The reunion is real. I can grieve and still hold on to that.”*

## What Comes Next

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You have spent five days sitting with some of the hardest truths Scripture has to offer — and some of the most hopeful. Grief is real. Faith is real. God is working in both.

This devotional is a starting point. If these five days stirred something in you — if you want to go deeper into what Scripture says about grief, identity, and living on the other side of loss — there is more waiting for you.

### THE GRIEF TO GRACE BUNDLE — \$5.99

The full bundle includes an extended teaching guide (15+ pages), a 21-day journal, declaration cards to post where you will see them, a six-prayer prayer guide for the hardest moments, and a 30-day Scripture reading plan. Get it now for \$5.99 at <https://buy.stripe.com/3cl4gz0DDdJMdaFeY52880k>

### RAYMOND'S BOOK

The Greater the Love, the Deeper the Grief tells the story of Wendy's life, her death, and what God did in the months that followed. Available at [www.discipleblueprintpress.com](http://www.discipleblueprintpress.com) and Amazon.

### THE PODCAST

The Disciple Blueprint Podcast goes deeper on grief, faith, and discipleship. Find it on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, YouTube, and iHeartRadio — or visit [discipleblueprint.com/podcast](http://discipleblueprint.com/podcast).

If this devotional helped you, share it with someone who is grieving. You may be the only person in their life who knows where to send them.

### Raymond Smith

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