



A 30-Day Bible Reading Plan to Fight **GRIEF**

How This Plan Works

During the six week Adrift series we explored Spiritual Apathy and the six main roots. In this 30 day Bible reading plan we'll bring our grief to God instead of carrying it alone. It's structured as the same rhythm that you learned in the Adrift study: 1 anchor passage a week, read every day, with a second passage alongside it on most of the days. You'll need a Bible, a pen, and about 10 minutes a day. Grief is what love feels like after a loss, and Scripture gives it plenty of room. The danger comes when grief goes numb or gets buried, and it quietly pulls you away from the God who stays near the brokenhearted. This plan won't rush you. God doesn't either.

Day 1: Drop Anchor

Read the background, then read the anchor passage twice, once silently, once out loud. Write down the word or phrase that catches you. That's the whole assignment.

Day 2: Anchor Out

Read the anchor again, then a related passage. How do the 2 passages explain each other?

Day 3: Anchor Out

Read the anchor again, then a passage that gets personal. Where does this name something true about you right now?

Day 4: Anchor Out

Read the anchor again, then a passage built for prayer. Turn both texts into prayer, line by line.

Day 5: Return To Anchor

Read the anchor one last time in 2 different translations. What do you hear now that you didn't on Day 1? Then look back at your weekly challenge.

Weekly Challenges

Each week opens with 2 challenges. Pick 1 and carry it all week. They start close to shore and push further out every week, so by Week 6 it should feel like a real stretch. Some will look familiar from the study guide, and that's on purpose, since a good practice is worth repeating. Tell your triad or a friend which one you chose so somebody asks.

Read It In Context

Each week day 1 opens with a few lines of background: who wrote the passage, to whom, and what was going on. Read that first, and when a second passage gives you a range of verses, read the whole range. The setting keeps us from making the Bible say whatever we'd like it to say.

WEEK 1: Near to the Brokenhearted

ANCHOR TEXT: Psalm 34:15-18

¹⁵The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry. ¹⁶The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. ¹⁷When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. ¹⁸The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK:

Before Day 1, pick 1 of these 2 challenges and keep it in view all week; this reading is meant to fuel it, not replace it.

- ☐ **Name the Current:** Spend 10 quiet minutes with God, then ask yourself, "What grief has been pulling me off course?" Write a sentence (or a few) naming it. You don't have to do anything else with it yet.
- ☐ **Make Room to Grieve:** Set aside 20 minutes this week to grieve 1 loss you've been outrunning. Sit somewhere quiet, tell God about it, and let whatever comes, come.

DAY 1: Drop Anchor

The heading of this psalm ties it to one of the lowest moments of David's life: on the run from King Saul, he pretended to be insane in front of a Philistine king just to escape alive (1 Samuel 21:10-15). Out of that humiliation, he writes a song of thanks, and in the middle of it is a promise: "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted." Nearness is the promise, so start there.

Read Psalm 34:15-18 twice, once silently, once out loud.

What word or phrase catches you? Write it down. Resist the urge to apply it yet. Today you're just noticing.

Journal: The word that caught me was...

DAY 2: Read Isaiah 53:1-6

Read Psalm 34:15-18 again. Then read Isaiah 53:1-6.

Isaiah describes a Servant who suffers for the sins of others, and the New Testament says again and again that this Servant is Jesus. He is "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and "he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." How do these 2 passages explain each other? The God who draws near to the brokenhearted came near enough to carry what broke them.

Journal: Knowing Jesus is acquainted with grief changes...

DAY 3: Read Psalm 56

Read Psalm 34:15-18 again first. Then read all of Psalm 56.

David wrote this one while the Philistines held him in Gath, the same season as Psalm 34. Afraid and alone, he tells God, "You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle."

Where does this name something true about you right now? Name the loss, or the losses, on paper. God keeps count of every one of those tears, so you can name them too.

Journal: The loss I'm carrying is...

DAY 4: Read Psalm 6

Read Psalm 34:15-18 again, slowly. Then read all of Psalm 6.

David is worn out, "weary with my moaning," flooding his bed with tears, and by verse 8 he can say "the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping." Now turn both texts into prayer, line by line. Pray honestly enough that verse 8 could be said of you.

Journal: What I said to God today that I hadn't said yet...

DAY 5: Return to Anchor

Read Psalm 34:15-18 one last time, and today read it in 2 different translations. Watch what "crushed in spirit" becomes in each. What do you hear now that you didn't on Day 1? You've read this passage multiple times this week. That's the whole point. Careful attention is the opposite of drift, and you just practiced it for 5 days.

Journal: As you look back over the past week, where did God meet you, in his Word or in the challenge you took on?

WEEK 2: Jesus at the Tomb

ANCHOR TEXT: John 11:32-36

³²Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. ³⁴And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵Jesus wept. ³⁶So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK:

Before Day 1, pick 1 of these 2 challenges and keep it in view all week; this reading is meant to fuel it, not replace it.

- ☐ **Tell 1 Safe Person:** Tell 1 safe person the loss you named last week, in person or by phone. You don't need them to fix anything. Grief gets lighter when it's carried by 2.
 - ☐ **Go Where It Lives:** Visit, write to, or pray at the place your loss lives this week: a grave, a room, a photo, a voicemail. Let yourself weep if the tears come. Jesus did.
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DAY 1: Drop Anchor

Jesus' friend Lazarus has been dead 4 days when Jesus arrives in Bethany. Martha meets him first, and Jesus tells her, "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25). Then Mary comes and falls at his feet, and Jesus, minutes from raising Lazarus, is "deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled," and he weeps. He knows how the story ends, and he grieves anyway.

Read John 11:17-44 once for the whole story. Then read verses 32-36 twice, once silently, once out loud.

What word or phrase catches you? Write it down. Resist the urge to apply it yet. Today you're just noticing.

Journal: The word that caught me was...

DAY 2: Read Hebrews 4:14-16

Read John 11:32-36 again. Then read Hebrews 4:14-16.

Hebrews was written to believers under pressure, and it tells them Jesus is a high priest who can "sympathize with our weaknesses," so they can "draw near to the throne of grace" with confidence. How do these 2 passages explain each other? The tears at Lazarus' tomb are your proof that the sympathy is real.

Journal: Approaching him with confidence in my grief would look like...

DAY 3: Read Ruth 1:1-5, 19-21

Read John 11:32-36 again first. Then read Ruth 1:1-5 and 19-21.

Naomi has buried her husband and both sons in a foreign country, and when she comes home she renames herself: “call me Mara,” which means bitter. She’s honest that she believes God’s hand is behind her loss. Martha and Mary each greet Jesus with the same sentence: “Lord, if you had been here.”

Where does this name something true about you right now? What’s your “if only,” and what has grief been renaming you?

Journal: My “if only” is... Grief has been calling me...

DAY 4: Read Psalm 143:1-8

Read John 11:32-36 again, slowly. Then read Psalm 143:1-8.

David is hunted and worn down: “my spirit faints within me.” And he still asks for the next morning: “Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love.” Now turn both texts into prayer, line by line, and ask for exactly that tomorrow morning.

Journal: The line I most needed to pray was...

DAY 5: Return to Anchor

Read John 11:32-36 one last time, and today read it in 2 different translations. Then reread verse 25: Jesus says “I am the resurrection and the life” to a grieving woman before he does anything about the grave. What do you hear now that you didn’t on Day 1? You’ve read this passage multiple times this week. That’s the whole point. Careful attention is the opposite of drift, and you just practiced it for 5 days.

Journal: As you look back over the past week, where did God meet you, in his Word or in the challenge you took on?

WEEK 3: The Psalm With No Sunrise

ANCHOR TEXT: Psalm 88

¹O LORD, God of my salvation, I cry out day and night before you. ²Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry! ³For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. ⁴I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am a man who has no strength, ⁵like one set loose among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand. ⁶You have put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep. ⁷Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves. Selah ⁸You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a horror to them. I am shut in so that I cannot escape; ⁹my eye grows dim through sorrow. Every day I call upon you, O LORD; I spread out my hands to you. ¹⁰Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the departed rise up to praise you? Selah ¹¹Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in Abaddon? ¹²Are your wonders known in the darkness, or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? ¹³But I, O LORD, cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you. ¹⁴O LORD, why do you cast my soul away? Why do you hide your face from me? ¹⁵Afflicted and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am helpless. ¹⁶Your wrath has swept over me; your dreadful assaults destroy me. ¹⁷They surround me like a flood all day long; they close in on me together. ¹⁸You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me; my companions have become darkness.

CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK:

Before Day 1, pick 1 of these 2 challenges and keep it in view all week; this reading is meant to fuel it, not replace it.

- ☐ **Ask for Presence:** Ask 1 person to simply sit with you this week: coffee, a walk, a couch. Tell them you don't need advice, just company. Presence, on purpose.
- ☐ **Send Up a Flare:** Write your own psalm of lament, on paper, just you and God. Use 3 prompts: "How long, O LORD?" (name the loss), "My soul is troubled by..." (tell God what it feels like), and "Yet I will trust..." (1 statement of faith, even a fragile one). If all you can write is the question, that's still a prayer.

DAY 1: Drop Anchor

Psalm 88 is the darkest prayer in the Bible. Heman, a worship leader, has suffered since his youth, his friends have left, and the psalm ends in darkness. God kept it in the book anyway. That's permission. And notice the first line: he still calls God "God of my salvation."

Read Psalm 88 twice, once silently, once out loud.

What word or phrase catches you? Write it down. Resist the urge to apply it yet. Today you're just noticing.

Journal: The word that caught me was...

DAY 2: Read Job 2:7-13

Read Psalm 88 again. Then read Job 2:7-13.

Job has lost his children, his wealth, and his health. His 3 friends sit with him on the ground 7 days without a word. Later their talking makes it worse, and God rebukes them (42:7). Their silent week was the best thing they did. How do these 2 passages explain each other? Some seasons need presence more than answers.

Journal: The presence I need right now is...

DAY 3: Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

Read Psalm 88 again first. Then read Ecclesiastes 3:1-11.

The Preacher is wrestling with how little of life we control, and he lists a time to weep and a time to mourn right next to the times to laugh and dance. Then verse 11: God “has made everything beautiful in its time,” even when we can’t see the whole picture.

Where does this name something true about you right now? Which season are you actually in, and have you been letting yourself be in it, or performing a different one?

Journal: The season I’m actually in is...

DAY 4: Read Romans 8:18-27

Read Psalm 88 again, slowly. Then read Romans 8:18-27.

Paul says all of creation groans while it waits to be made new, and so do we. Then comes the relief: when we run out of words, “the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” Now turn both texts into prayer. Pray as far as language takes you today, then sit in silence and let him carry the rest.

Journal: Where my words ran out today...

DAY 5: Return to Anchor

Read Psalm 88 one last time, and today read it in 2 different translations. Notice verse 1 in both: the prayer itself is the thread of hope. What do you hear now that you didn’t on Day 1? You’ve read this passage multiple times this week. That’s the whole point. Careful attention is the opposite of drift, and you just practiced it for 5 days.

Journal: As you look back over the past week, where did God meet you, in his Word or in the challenge you took on?

WEEK 4: Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

ANCHOR TEXT: Matthew 5:1-4

¹Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK:

Before Day 1, pick 1 of these 2 challenges and keep it in view all week; this reading is meant to fuel it, not replace it.

- ☐ **Pass the Comfort:** Write down 1 comfort you've received this month, then pass a version of it to 1 other hurting person. It could be a text, a meal, or something else entirely.
- ☐ **Get Real Company:** If your loss is still fresh, sign up for the next GriefShare group at church (obcc.church/grief-groups). If it's not fresh, invite 1 grieving friend to go with you to church or small group.

DAY 1: Drop Anchor

This is the opening of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus sits down on a hillside, and the first words of his most famous sermon are blessings on people the world overlooks: the poor in spirit and the mourners. The mourning here is wide. It includes grief over our own sin and over a world that isn't the way it should be, and it includes the losses we carry. Jesus is describing the people of his kingdom, and to them he promises that those who mourn "shall be comforted."

Read Matthew 5:1-4 twice, once silently, once out loud.

What word or phrase catches you? Write it down. Resist the urge to apply it yet. Today you're just noticing.

Journal: The word that caught me was...

DAY 2: Read John 16:16-22

Read Matthew 5:1-4 again. Then read John 16:16-22.

On the night before the cross, Jesus prepares his disciples for a specific grief, his death, and a specific joy, seeing him risen: "your sorrow will turn into joy." That promise reaches you the same way it reached them, through the resurrection. How do these 2 passages explain each other? The mourners' blessing on the mountain runs on Easter.

Journal: The joy I'm waiting on is...

DAY 3: Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Read Matthew 5:1-4 again first. Then read 2 Corinthians 1:3-11.

Paul writes after a season in Asia so crushing that he “despaired of life itself.” He calls God “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,” and says that comfort travels: it reaches you so it can reach through you.

Where does this name something true about you right now? Where has comfort actually found you these 3 weeks: in a person, a verse, a moment?

Journal: Comfort has reached me through...

DAY 4: Read Psalm 30

Read Matthew 5:1-4 again, slowly. Then read all of Psalm 30.

David looks back on a time God rescued him, and he remembers both sides: “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.” Now turn both texts into prayer, line by line. “You have turned for me my mourning into dancing” may be a prayer of memory or a prayer of hope, depending on the day. Pray it in whichever tense is honest.

Journal: Today I prayed the mourning-into-dancing line in the ____ tense because...

DAY 5: Return to Anchor

Read Matthew 5:1-4 one last time, and today read it in 2 different translations. Watch what “blessed” becomes in each. What do you hear now that you didn’t on Day 1? You’ve read this passage multiple times this week. That’s the whole point. Careful attention is the opposite of drift, and you just practiced it for 5 days.

Journal: As you look back over the past week, where did God meet you, in his Word or in the challenge you took on?

WEEK 5: Grief With Hope

ANCHOR TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK:

Before Day 1, pick 1 of these 2 challenges and keep it in view all week; this reading is meant to fuel it, not replace it.

- ☐ **Share a Verse:** Share 1 verse from this week with someone else who's grieving, along with 1 sentence about why it held you. Paul says to "encourage one another with these words," so do it with his words.
 - ☐ **Throw Them a Lifeline:** Think of 1 person carrying a loss right now and go to them this week. Ask, "How are you, really?" and then listen without rushing them to hope. Let them be sad. Then show up again in 3 weeks, when most people have stopped asking.
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DAY 1: Drop Anchor

Paul started the church in Thessalonica and had to leave quickly under threat. Since then, some of the believers there have died, and the church is worried about what happens to them when Jesus returns. Paul expects them to grieve. He simply won't let them grieve "as others do who have no hope," and he grounds that hope in Jesus' resurrection and return.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 twice, once silently, once out loud.

What word or phrase catches you? Write it down. Resist the urge to apply it yet. Today you're just noticing.

Journal: The word that caught me was...

DAY 2: Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 50-57

Read the anchor again. Then read 1 Corinthians 15:20-26 and 50-57.

Some in Corinth were saying there is no resurrection of the dead, and Paul answers with the longest chapter on resurrection in the Bible. Christ is "the firstfruits," the first of the harvest, and death is the last enemy to be destroyed: "O death, where is your victory?" How do these 2

passages explain each other? The hope in Thessalonians has a foundation, an empty tomb and a defeated last enemy.

Journal: Resurrection changes my grief by...

DAY 3: Read Revelation 21:1-5

Read the anchor again first. Then read Revelation 21:1-5.

John was given this vision while exiled on Patmos, written to churches under pressure. At the end of the whole story, God makes his home with his people, and “he will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Where does this name something true about you right now? Which tear do you most need him to wipe, and what does it mean that he does it himself?

Journal: The tear I most need him to wipe is...

DAY 4: Read Psalm 116:1-9, 15

Read the anchor again, slowly. Then read Psalm 116:1-9 and 15.

The psalmist was close to death, “the snares of death encompassed me,” and God heard him. Then verse 15: “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.” It’s a hard line and a healing one. Now turn both texts into prayer, line by line. If your loss is a believer who died in the Lord, say their name inside that verse today.

Journal: Praying that verse with a name in it...

DAY 5: Return to Anchor

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 one last time, and today read it in 2 different translations. Notice that verse 18 is a command: “encourage one another with these words.” What do you hear now that you didn’t on Day 1? You’ve read this passage multiple times this week. That’s the whole point. Careful attention is the opposite of drift, and you just practiced it for 5 days.

Journal: As you look back over the past week, where did God meet you, in his Word or in the challenge you took on?

WEEK 6: The Oil of Gladness

ANCHOR TEXT: Isaiah 61:1-3

¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK:

Before Day 1, pick 1 of these 2 challenges and keep it in view all week; this reading is meant to fuel it, not replace it.

- ☐ **Remember Out Loud:** Do 1 tangible act of remembrance this week: a letter to or about who or what you lost, a photo framed, a tree planted, a gift given in their honor. Tell 1 person why you did it.
 - ☐ **Step Back In:** Take 1 step back into a part of life grief pulled you out of: your group, a serving role, a friendship you've let go quiet. Ask your triad to cheer you on and check in.
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DAY 1: Drop Anchor

Isaiah speaks to God's people in a season of ruin and exile, and he describes someone anointed by God's Spirit to bring good news to the brokenhearted. God trades ashes for a beautiful headdress and mourning for "the oil of gladness," and he plants the mourners like oaks. Centuries later, Jesus will read this passage aloud and claim it.

Read Isaiah 61:1-3 twice, once silently, once out loud.

What word or phrase catches you? Write it down. Resist the urge to apply it yet. Today you're just noticing.

Journal: The word that caught me was...

DAY 2: Read Luke 4:16-21

Read Isaiah 61:1-3 again. Then read Luke 4:16-21.

Jesus stands up in his hometown synagogue in Nazareth, reads the opening of this passage, stops in the middle of verse 2, sits down, and says, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." How do these 2 passages explain each other? The comfort of Isaiah 61 has a face and a name.

Journal: Hearing Jesus claim this passage for himself, I...

DAY 3: Read Psalm 126

Read Isaiah 61:1-3 again first. Then read Psalm 126.

This is a pilgrim song that remembers God bringing exiles home, and it prays for him to do it again: "Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!"

Where does this name something true about you right now? You've been sowing in tears for a while. What has gone in the ground these 30 days: a habit, a friendship, an honesty with God you didn't have before?

Journal: What I've sown in tears this month is...

DAY 4: Read Psalm 71:17-21

Read Isaiah 61:1-3 again, slowly. Then read Psalm 71:17-21.

An older believer looks back on a lifetime with God, including many troubles, and still expects God's future: God "will revive me again." Now turn both texts into prayer, line by line. Pray the exchange of Isaiah 61 over yourself piece by piece: ashes for beauty, mourning for gladness.

Journal: The exchange I most asked for was...

DAY 5: Return to Anchor

Read Isaiah 61:1-3 one last time, and today read it in 2 different translations. Look hard at the last line: the planting is "that he may be glorified." What do you hear now that you didn't on Day 1? You've read this passage multiple times this week. That's the whole point. Careful attention is the opposite of drift, and you just practiced it for 5 days.

Then finish the 30 days by telling 1 person what God did in you this month, in a few honest sentences. Oaks of righteousness grow slowly, and you've got 30 days of growth behind you now.

Journal: As you look back over the past week, where did God meet you, in his Word or in the challenge you took on?

Explore More (Optional)

If you'd like to go further as you grieve, here are a few ways to do so:

- **GriefShare** (obcc.church/grief-groups). A 13-week grief support group here at church, if you want ongoing company for a loss you're still working through, not just a book to read alone.
- **BibleProject, "Book of Lamentations"** (bibleproject.com/videos/lamentations/). A short video on how the Bible actually prays through pain, good if you want something quick before writing your own lament.
- **What Grows in Weary Lands** by Tish Harrison Warren. A reflection on staying faithful through exhaustion and hard seasons.
- **Overcoming Apathy** by Uche Anizor. Gives a clear biblical diagnosis of apathy and the case for pursuing zeal instead.
- **Trusting God** by Jerry Bridges. A steady, Scripture-soaked case that God is in control even when life hurts, for anyone who believes it on paper and struggles to believe it in a hard season.