



What I Am Grieving, Carrying, Fearing, and Trying to Understand?

Sometimes what feels like depression cannot be traced to one event. It may be the *accumulated weight of losses, disappointments, responsibilities, fears, and unanswered questions* that have never been fully processed.

What I may be grieving:

Grief is not limited to death. I may be grieving:

- *The loss of a loved one, relationship, friendship, or community.*
- *The person I used to be before illness, trauma, hardship, or disappointment.*
- *A dream, opportunity, marriage, career, or future that did not develop as expected.*
- *Changes in my health, independence, mobility, appearance, or abilities.*
- *A season of life that has ended.*
- *Time that I feel was lost or taken from me.*
- *The apology, acknowledgment, or closure I never received.*
- *Feeling unseen, rejected, betrayed, abandoned, or misunderstood.*
- *The life I thought I would have by now.*

Sometimes depression is grief that has not yet found language.

What I may be carrying

Some burdens are visible; others are hidden behind functioning, serving, smiling, working, parenting, or leading. I may be carrying:

- *Responsibilities that rarely allow me to rest.*
- *Other people's needs, expectations, and emergencies.*
- *Financial pressure or uncertainty.*
- *Family conflict, marital strain, or caregiving fatigue.*
- *Unresolved anger, resentment, shame, guilt, or regret.*
- *The pressure to appear strong when I feel emotionally depleted.*
- *Secrets or experiences I have never felt safe enough to discuss.*
- *The emotional consequences of childhood wounds or past trauma.*
- *Constant concern for children, parents, family members, or others.*
- *Spiritual responsibilities while privately feeling empty.*
- *The belief that everything will fall apart if I stop holding it together.*

Sometimes the question is not, "Why am I weak?" but, "How long have I been carrying more than one person should carry alone?"

What I may be fearing

Fear can live beneath sadness, irritability, withdrawal, perfectionism, and the need to control. I may fear:

- *Losing someone or something else.*
- *Becoming sick, dependent, isolated, or unable to provide for myself.*
- *Failure, rejection, embarrassment, or public judgment.*



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- *Being abandoned or betrayed again.*
- *Disappointing the people who depend upon me.*
- *That my circumstances will never improve.*
- *That I have missed my opportunity or fallen too far behind.*
- *That others will discover I am not as strong as I appear.*
- *That asking for help will make me look weak or unspiritual.*
- *That I will never feel like myself again.*
- *That God has forgotten me, rejected me, or become distant.*

Naming a fear does not make it come true. It allows the fear to be examined instead of silently controlling us.

What I may be trying to understand

Some emotional pain comes from questions that remain unresolved. I may be trying to understand:

- *Why this happened to me.*
- *Why someone I trusted hurt, rejected, or abandoned me.*
- *Why God allowed something that I prayed would not happen.*
- *Why I still hurt after so much time has passed.*
- *Why I feel angry when I believe I should feel grateful.*
- *Why I cannot simply “get over it.”*
- *Why certain situations trigger such a strong emotional response.*
- *Whether I am experiencing depression, grief, burnout, trauma, or a combination.*
- *Who I am now that my life or circumstances have changed.*
- *How to forgive without denying what happened.*
- *How to accept what cannot be changed without surrendering hope.*
- *How to move forward when I cannot return to the person or life I once knew.*

Questions for personal reflection

- *What loss have I never given myself permission to grieve?*
- *What am I carrying that others may not see?*
- *What responsibility has become too heavy for me?*
- *What am I afraid might happen next?*
- *What painful message have I accepted about myself?*
- *What do I need that I have been afraid to ask for?*
- *When did I first notice that I no longer felt like myself?*
- *What part of my life feels most difficult to manage right now?*
- *What would emotional relief look like for me?*
- *Who is a safe person with whom I can tell the whole truth?*

Faith and counseling do not oppose one another. Prayer gives us a place to bring our pain before God; counseling can help us recognize, name, and process what we have brought. Sometimes healing begins when we stop asking, “What is wrong with me?” and begin asking, **“What has happened to me, what am I carrying, and what support do I need now?”**