

Michelle Moore

Moving FORWARD
with Grief

Faithful Home
Bible Studies

Moving FORWARD with Grief

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About the Author



Michelle Moore is a wife, mom, mimi, educator, writer, and speaker. She spent 22 years in public school as a Spanish teacher and as a Literacy Academic Facilitator. She now serves as the principal of a private, Christian school.

She and her husband, Michael, have been married for 28 years and are blessed with two incredible children: Elizabeth and her husband, Christian, who have a sweet, precious little newborn son that Michelle loves to cuddle and snuggle; and Joshua, who ran ahead to Heaven at the age of 16 in 2013. He lived a life devoted to Christ, and one day they will be reunited with him for all eternity.

Michelle and her husband live in Northwest Arkansas where they worship with Mt. Comfort Church of Christ. They are active with both the Razorbacks for Christ ministry and the Young Adult ministry.

She is the author of *A Race Well-Lived*, a Bible study designed to give you strength and encouragement as you run your race towards Heaven. You can connect with her through her blog, *With Eyes on the Cross*, at witheysonthecross.com.

About This Study

This is not your typical Bible study. Grieving was not something I could put on a calendar and complete like part of a to do list. This study was written with that in mind. Work on it when your heart feels up to it. Read what you can. Answer the questions that you can. There are frequent, natural stopping places so that you can do what your heart can handle. There are 9 chapters, but within each chapter, there are plenty of opportunities to pause as you consider what you have studied. Let your heart chew for a while on what it has read. Give your heart the chance to really sit in the scriptures. There is no need to rush. You don't have to finish a chapter in a day or even in a week. Spend extra time on the harder parts. Spend less time on the parts that come easier to you. There are no right or wrong answers. The goal is to allow your heart to grieve in a healthy way while keeping your eyes focused on the cross and on the promise of eternity!

Before we get started in our study, let's see where we are in our grief. Notice how often the word "heart" is used in the paragraph above? Our hearts are a huge part of our grief. One of the ways that my husband and I used to "check in" with each other was just to simply ask, "How is your heart today?" It was a way that we could share how we were feeling with a few words. It was also a way that we could figure out how to best help one another.

So, let me ask you, "How is your heart today?"

I'm praying for you as you walk this journey that no one chooses!

Michelle

Memorization Tips

Memorizing scripture is so important because it gives us truths to pull directly from our hearts when life becomes hard or the evil one is attacking. There are so many stories of POWs who survived because of scriptures they had memorized and hymns they would hum quietly to themselves. While you and I will likely never become a POW, we will face hard things. What better way to face them than with God's word tucked away in our hearts (Psalm 119:11) to pull out at exactly the right time!

- Memorize in phrases instead of word by word.
- Say the first phrase over and over. Say the next phrase over and over. Add those two phrases together and say them over and over until they are etched on your tongue. Continue until you have memorized the passage.
- Use gestures to help with recall.
- Throughout the day, recall the passage that you have memorized. Practice in the shower, on the drive to work, when you eat your lunch.
- Write the scripture on a notecard to carry with you to practice.
- Write the scripture every day.
- Practice frequently.

Grieving
with Hope

Grief is hard. It's messy. It's not a nice, neat list of stages. It's more like a ball of yarn knotted together with multiple stages happening all at the same time.

It's an individual journey, and everyone navigates it differently. My husband and I lost the same son, and we have grieved differently. My grandmother and I have both lost a child, and we have grieved differently. It can feel very isolating. People don't know how to treat you. Do I express my condolences? Do I share a story? Do I say his name? No, she might cry.

→ How are you currently navigating your grief journey?

"Grief, I've learned, is really just love. It's all the love you want to give, but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go."

Jamie Anderson

October comes around every year. I love the fall colors. Yet, it is also a very difficult month. I feel like I spend most days in October holding my breath. Hoping that I can keep myself together. Even when I try not to look at the calendar, my body knows and remembers.

On October 1, 1996, I experienced my first significant loss when my grandfather passed away. This amazing man built me a Barbie doll house. He built me stilts and laughed as I tried to walk on them. He made me a slingshot and taught me how to use it. He taught me to drive. The day before he died, we found out I was pregnant with our first child. I never got to tell him.

October 29th, 2001, I experienced my next significant loss - my step father. I adored that man. And I was so grateful for the joy he brought to my mom. Joy that I heard in her laughter and saw in her eyes.

October 15th, 2013. My mom had surgery to have a cancerous tumor removed. It was not successful. Doctors gave her two years. I came home from spending a couple of weeks caring for her and three days later found myself in the emergency room begging God to save our 16-year-old son, Joshua. Doctors were frantically trying to resuscitate him. They did. We were airlifted to Children's Hospital in Little Rock and three days later, we sent him on to Heaven ahead of us.

Two months later, my husband's uncle died. Two months after that, his dear great aunt. She was the one who would give him cookies when his grandmother said he had had enough. Two months later, my mom left this earth to receive her eternal reward. We didn't get two years with her.

After that, every time the phone rang, we held our breath. Grief is exhausting, and we were living in a fog. I remember feeling accomplished if I had brushed my teeth and got to school with matching shoes. I didn't care if they matched what I was wearing, just as long as they matched each other.

Our entire world had been turned upside down. Everything was so different. Our morning commute, our after school activities, our place at church. The grocery store list no longer included his favorite foods. Even going out to eat was heart-wrenching - "just 3" the hostess would say. It felt like a punch in the gut. She couldn't have known.

I don't know how we would have survived without the outpouring of love - from the church, from our neighbors, from the teachers and students at my school. Yet there comes a time when everyone has to go back to their own lives, and we have to make a decision. We had to

choose how we would live while we waited to be reunited with our sweet boy. Would we allow anger and bitterness to control us or would we look to the cross? It looks easy on paper. It isn't in reality. It's hard. How could we possibly live well while mourning someone who was no longer here with us.

→ Write 1 Thessalonians 4:13

"Do not grieve like those without hope." That seems like a rather high expectation! Does that mean we don't grieve? Of course not! We are sad. We miss that cotton top kiddo of ours every single day. It says we do not grieve as those without hope. We grieve, we just grieve differently because we have the promise of eternal salvation. Before Jesus brought Lazarus back from the dead, He wept. Even though we grieve, we also anticipate a reunion in Heaven that is beyond anything our human minds can fathom. It's a paradox. It seems to be a contradiction, yet it isn't. We grieve with hope!

→ What does grieving with hope look like to you?

For me, it means moving FORWARD with grief. Not moving on or moving past it, instead carrying it with me as I am learning to live again and learning to find joy in the mourning. It means living each day knowing that I am one day closer to being reunited with those I love.

This year, we will navigate the 9th anniversary of our sweet boy receiving his reward. It took awhile, but one of our most significant moments was when we realized that God was not punishing us when Joshua died. He was rewarding Joshua for a life well lived. Our worst day ever, was his absolute best. Is there not some comfort in knowing that while we hurt, our children do not?

Bible Study

→ Read John 11:1-44

1. What do you notice about Mary and Martha during their time of grief?
2. How did Martha grieve with hope? (Hint: Read verse 24)
3. What was Jesus' response to Mary and Martha's grief?

We do not grieve alone! Our Heavenly Father hurts with us. He keeps track of our tears.

→ Write Psalm 56:8

This story may be a little hard to read. Mary and Martha got what they wanted, Lazarus rose from the dead. We are not going to get that this side of Heaven. It's a challenge to read someone else's story when they got the ending that we wanted. However, let me encourage you to hang on to what Martha said in verse 24. She didn't know that Jesus was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. She just trusted that she would see him at the resurrection. Do you trust God's promise that

those who follow Him will be rewarded with an eternity in Heaven? If not, please reach out to a minister or church member that you trust and talk to that person about how you can become an heir to the kingdom. If you aren't ready to do that, please read the Appendix to learn more about the gospel and God's plan for our salvation.

Moving FORWARD with grief requires us to be intentional. It is a choice that we have to make. In the beginning, that choice has to be made multiple times a day, sometimes hourly. As time passes, it is a choice that has to be made less and less often.

Grieving with Hope

- Memorize 1 Thessalonians 4:13
- Spend some time with God in prayer thanking Him for the memories you have of the love and joy you shared with those who have moved on ahead to Heaven. Ask Him to help you grieve with hope.
- Write a letter to someone you are grieving or a letter about something you are grieving.