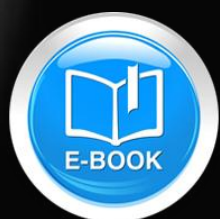




THE OTHER SIDE *Of* MIDNIGHT

Where Grief Meets Glory and
Midnight Turns to Morning



DR. STEPHEN PHINNEY

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The Other Side of Midnight is a deeply personal and biblically anchored journey through grief, trauma, and the redemptive power of Christ. Born from the loss of Dr. Phinney's closest loved ones, this book invites readers to walk through sorrow—not as victims, but as vessels of transformation. Order the Paperback version here >>>



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THE HOLY WORD OF GOD

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The Other Side of Midnight is a deeply personal and biblically anchored journey through grief, trauma, and the redemptive power of Christ. Born from the loss of Dr. Phinney's closest loved ones, this book invites readers to walk through sorrow—not as victims, but as vessels of transformation. With raw honesty and spiritual depth, it reveals how midnight seasons can become gateways to resurrection, legacy, and eternal purpose. For anyone longing to find hope beyond heartbreak, this is your invitation to discover the indwelling Life of Yeshua on the other side of mourning.



DEDICATE TO:

Irma Ethridge

My sister & friend!

This book is lovingly dedicated to you, my spiritual sister, as you walk through the sacred sorrow of losing your faithful husband—may these pages be a balm to your soul and a testimony of Christ's indwelling comfort in the midnight hour.

Stephen

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INSPIRATION

With deep reverence and love, with great sadness, I must share the passing of Gale Ethridge—a treasured board member, lifelong friend, and faithful servant whose legacy of integrity and biblical counsel has shaped me and the heart of IOM America. He crossed over to be with the Lord.

Gale Ethridge entered his eternal rest, not as one defeated by death, but as one clothed in the victory of Christ Yeshua/Jesus. A lifelong farmer, he sowed more than seed—he cultivated generations through indwelling faith, wisdom, and unwavering love. As a husband, father, and grandfather, Gale embodied the spirit of Joshua 24:15: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” His home was a sanctuary of integrity, gentleness, and a godly example.

He was a youth leader in his church through the years and a mentor to countless men. Gale walked in the truth of 2 Timothy 2:2—entrusting what he had learned to be a faithful witness who continues to bear fruit in his absence. Known throughout his Kansas community for his humility, strength, and biblical counsel, Gale lived Micah 6:8: “To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” He was a friend to many, but more than that—a spiritual pillar who pointed others to the indwelling life of Yeshua through word and deed.

Gale's race is complete, but his testimony lives on. As Revelation 14:13 declares, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord... for their deeds follow them.” We rejoice not in loss, but in the assurance that Gale now stands before his

Savior, hearing the words, “Gale, well done, good and faithful servant.”

It’s hard to put into words the weight that now hangs in our hearts. Jane and I are grieving beyond measure—the kind of grief that wraps itself around your ribs and won’t let go. Gale wasn’t just a friend; he was our friend. The only best friend I had in Kansas. The one who never wavered, never doubted, never left.

We shared more than conversations and ministry goals—we shared silence, prayer, and the kind of understanding that doesn’t need to be explained. His presence was a shelter! The kind of man you trusted with the most fragile parts of yourself. With Gale, I never had to perform, never had to posture. I could just be, and that was enough.

His voice still speaks in my mind—the soft conviction, the biblical truth, the laughter. Oh, the laughter. And now it’s quiet.

Jane and I will carry this loss into the marrow of our days. Kansas will never feel the same. I will never feel the same.

We ask for prayer—deep, unwavering intercession for his precious family. The grief they bear must be unbearable. May the Lord, in His mercy, cradle them with supernatural peace and surround them with the comfort that only He can give. May the legacy of this indwelling faithful man hold them together when everything else seems to unravel.

Gale, you finished well. Sir, you are a jewel in the Crown of Christ. Enjoy your new beginnings, pain-free, no sorrow, only joy. You are not only a blessing to Yeshua, but also to all of us who will join you soon. - Stephen!

INTRODUCTION

I did not choose grief. It chose me.

Like a thief in the night, it crept into my soul—uninvited, unrelenting, and unfamiliar. It shattered my rhythms, silenced my laughter, and left me staring into midnight, and I could not escape. I searched for answers in the dark but found only isolation. I cried out to God, and for a time, it felt as though heaven had closed its doors.

But grief, I have learned, is not the absence of God—it is the place where He draws near.

In the midnight of my soul, I discovered the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3). He did not offer me platitudes. He offered me His presence. He did not erase my pain. He entered it. And in that sacred exchange, I began to see what I could not see before: that midnight is not the end of the story.

There is joy in the morning!

This book is not a roadmap out of sorrow. It is a testimony of walking through it—with the One who conquered death, who weeps with those who mourn, and who promises joy in the morning (Psalm 30:5). It is for those who feel stuck in the shadows, unsure if the sun will ever rise again. It is for the brokenhearted, the weary, the questioning, and the waiting.

I have known sorrow before. I've walked through valleys, prayed through storms, and stood beside others as they buried their loved ones. But nothing prepared me for the ache of losing one of my best friends. It was not just the absence of a

person—it was the tearing of a soul-thread, woven through years of laughter, prayer, shared burdens, and sacred trust. When he left this earth, something in me collapsed. The world didn't just feel quieter—it felt hollow.

Grief came swiftly, but not loudly. It was not a scream—it was a silence that thundered. I found myself reaching for the phone to text him, only to remember. I scrolled through old messages, reread emails, and lingered over photos that now felt like relics of a life interrupted. The sorrow was not just emotional—it was spiritual. It provoked a lament I had never known, a groaning too deep for words (Romans 8:26). I wept not only for what was lost, but for what would never be again on this side of eternity.

This friend was more than a companion—he was a covenant brother. We carried each other's burdens, spoke truth in love, and dreamed of revival together. His absence left a void that no one else could fill. And yet, amid that void, I sensed the whisper of the Comforter. Not to erase the pain, but to sanctify it. To remind me that love this deep is never wasted, and that grief this profound is a testimony to the gift we were given.

I do not pretend to understand the timing. I do not rush to explain the mystery. But I do know this: my sorrow has become sacred ground. It has driven me to the feet of Yeshua in ways I never imagined. It has stripped away pretense and awakened a longing for eternity that no earthly joy could satisfy. And in the midnight of this loss, I began to see glimmers of morning—not because the pain is gone, but because His presence remains.

Yeshua called me to write this—not as a theologian, not as a teacher, but as a grieving friend.

In the quiet aftermath of loss, when words failed and tears spoke louder than sermons, I heard His gentle prompting: “There are others.” Others who, like me, were blindsided by the depth of sorrow, surprised by the flood of emotions that surged without warning. This grief was not tidy. It did not follow the script. And yet, in the chaos of mourning, I sensed His heart—for those who feel overwhelmed, confused, even ashamed by the intensity of their pain. He reminded me that grief is not weakness—it is evidence of love. And love, when surrendered to Him, becomes a pathway to healing. So, I write, not to explain grief away, but to walk with those who are still in the storm, and to testify that Yeshua meets us there.

If you are holding this book, you are not alone. The Comforter has come. And He is leading you—step by step, tear by tear—toward the other side of midnight.

Walk with me as I share what grief has taught me.

CHAPTER ONE

DENIAL | RESISTANCE

Protective numbness is often the soul's first response to deep loss—a mercy in disguise. It wraps itself around the heart like a fog, shielding us from the full weight of sorrow we are not yet ready to bear. In those early moments, emotions feel suspended, reality blurred, and time strangely distorted.

We may move through routines mechanically, speak in hushed tones, or feel disconnected from our surroundings. This numbness is not denial—it is survival. It allows the spirit to breathe while the heart begins to process the unthinkable.

Even in Scripture, we see this grace at work: when Job received news of his children's death, he tore his robe and fell to the ground in worship—not because he felt nothing, but because he was held in the tension between shock and surrender. Protective numbness is not the absence of indwelling faith—it is the quiet space where indwelling faith begins to awaken.

IT FEELS UNREAL

I remember the moment I heard the news. My heart did not break—it froze. The words landed, but they did not register. It was as if my soul refused to translate them into truth. “He’s gone.” No. Not him. Not now. Not like this. I nodded, I listened, I even prayed—but inside, I was resisting. Denial is not rebellion—it is the soul's instinctive defense against devastation. It is the mind's way of saying, “I need time to catch up to this pain.”

In Scripture, we see this resistance in the disciples themselves. When Yeshua spoke openly of His coming death, Peter rebuked Him: “Never, Lord! This shall never happen to You!” (Matthew 16:22). Peter wasn’t being defiant—he was being human. He loved Yeshua deeply, and the thought of losing Him was unbearable. Denial, in this sense, is often rooted in love. It is the heart’s protest against separation, against finality, against the tearing of covenant bonds.

Even Mary and Martha, when their brother Lazarus died, struggled to reconcile their indwelling faith with their grief. “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died,” they said (John 11:21, 32). Their words carried both belief and bewilderment. They knew Yeshua’s power, yet His timing crushed them. Denial often masquerades as theological confusion—“How could a good God allow this?”—but underneath it is a cry of relational anguish: “I wasn’t ready to say goodbye.”

This stage of grief is sacred. It is not a failure of indwelling faith—it is the beginning of it. Denial creates space for the soul to breathe before it breaks. It allows us to function when functioning feels impossible. And in that space, Yeshua does not rush us. He weeps with us. He stands outside our tombs and calls us by name. He does not shame our resistance—He enters it.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

Denial is often the soul’s first defense against devastation. It is not a sin—it is a symptom of love interrupted. When someone we cherish is suddenly gone, our spirit recoils. We resist the finality, the silence, the absence. Even the most indwelling faithful among us may whisper, “This cannot be.” But

Scripture does not condemn this resistance—it meets it with compassion. The Word of God acknowledges our frailty and offers a pathway through the fog of disbelief.

One of the clearest examples is found in John 11. When Lazarus died, both Mary and Martha confronted Yeshua with grief-laced theology: “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” Their words were not accusations—they were expressions of sorrow wrapped in confusion. They believed in His power, but they struggled with His timing. And what did Yeshua do? He did not rebuke them. He wept. He entered their grief. He stood in the tension between divine sovereignty and human sorrow and revealed the heart of the Father: “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25).

Denial, then, is not something to be crushed—it is something to be shepherded. The biblical answer is not to rush acceptance, but to invite presence. God does not demand immediate understanding; He offers Himself. In Psalm 34:18, we are told, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” This is not a distant comfort—it is incarnational. The Spirit of God draws near to those who cannot yet say goodbye, who still expect the phone to ring, who still hear their loved one’s voice in dreams and memory.

The resistance to death is also a reflection of eternity written on our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). We were not created for separation—we were created for communion. Death feels wrong because, in the original design, it was. But the Gospel does not leave us in denial—it leads us through it. It acknowledges the sting of death (1 Corinthians 15:55) and then declares its defeat. The resurrection of Yeshua is not just a theological event—it is a personal promise. For every

believer who mourns, there is a coming reunion. Denial fades when hope rises.

So, what is the biblical answer to denial? It is not a lecture—it is a Lamb. It is the presence of Christ in the tomb of our sorrow. It is the gentle voice of the Shepherd who calls us by name, even when we are hiding in the shadows of disbelief. It is the assurance that grief is not the end of the story. And it is the invitation to walk with Him—step by step—toward the other side of midnight.

ACTION STEPS

1. Bring Your Honest Grief to God

- **Action:** Pour out your emotions in prayer, lament, and worship—even when words feel broken.
- **Scripture:** “Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.” —Psalm 62:8
- **Insight:** Denial begins to soften when we stop hiding our pain and start inviting God into it. He welcomes raw honesty and meets us in the depths.

2. Anchor Yourself in Eternal Truth

- **Action:** Meditate on Scriptures that affirm resurrection, reunion, and God’s sovereignty over death.
- **Scripture:** “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die.” —John 11:25
- **Insight:** Truth does not erase grief, but it reframes it. The Word of God gently dismantles denial by reminding us that death is not the final word.

3. Invite the Body of Christ into Your Grief

- **Action:** Share your sorrow with trusted believers who will pray, listen, and walk with you.
- **Scripture:** “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”—Galatians 6:2
- **Insight:** Isolation strengthens denial. Community breaks it. God often uses others to speak comfort, confirmation, and clarity into our mourning.

4. Surrender the Timing and Mystery to God

- **Action:** Release your need to understand “why” and trust God’s eternal plan—even when it hurts.
- **Scripture:** “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” —Proverbs 3:5
- **Insight:** Denial often clings to unanswered questions. Surrender is the doorway to peace. Trusting God’s character allows us to rest in His sovereignty.

For one night, I let denial wrap itself around me like a borrowed coat—ill-fitting, but warm enough to silence the chill of truth. I did not wrestle with reality or demand answers from the silence. I allowed myself to forget, to breathe, to exist without explanation. And in that fleeting reprieve, I found not weakness, but mercy. Because sometimes, grace looks like letting go of what you cannot yet carry, just for a night.

CHAPTER TWO

ANGER | RESENTMENT

Anger was the stage I never expected to face—especially as a believer. I thought my indwelling faith would shield me from resentment, that trust in God would override the ache. But grief doesn't follow tidy rules. When I lost my loved one, a fire rose within me—quiet at first, then fierce. I was angry at the timing, at the silence, at the seeming injustice of it all. I found myself wrestling with questions I had never dared to ask: Why now? Why them? Why didn't You intervene, Lord?

Through this stage, I learned that anger is not rebellion—it's a cry for meaning. It's the soul demanding answers from the only One who can give them. And in that wrestling, I discovered something sacred: Yeshua does not flinch at our fury. He meets us in it. He listens. He stays. And slowly, He begins to turn our resentment into surrender.

Surrendered presence—allowing the Holy Spirit to gently unveil truth, one layer at a time. As believers, we are not called to suppress sorrow, but to bring it into communion. The psalmist declares, “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18). In our resistance, He draws near. In our denial, He whispers truth.

Anger and Resentment in the Journey Toward Acceptance

“How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?” —Psalm 13:1

Anger is often the most misunderstood stage of grief—especially among believers. We are taught to trust, to surrender, to rejoice in suffering. Yet when death strikes close, a fire rises within us. It may begin as a whisper of injustice, a silent protest against the timing, the silence, the seeming absence of divine intervention. We ask questions we never thought we'd voice: Why now? Why them? Why didn't You stop this, Lord?

This anger is not rebellion—it is the soul's cry for meaning. Scripture does not dismiss it; it gives it language. David, a man after God's own heart, cried out in anguish, "My soul is in deep anguish. How long, Lord, how long?" (Psalm 6:3). Job, stripped of everything, declared, "I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul" (Job 7:11). Even Yeshua, facing death, groaned deeply and wept at Lazarus' tomb (John 11:33–35). These moments reveal that anger, when brought before God, becomes a pathway to deeper communion—not a detour from indwelling faith.

Resentment often follows closely behind. It settles in when anger is left unspoken, when grief is buried beneath spiritual platitudes or forced positivity. It can manifest as bitterness toward others, withdrawal from community, or even quiet disappointment in God. But Scripture warns us: "See to it that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble" (Hebrews 12:15). Resentment, if left unchecked, can distort our view of God and isolate us from His healing presence.

Yet there is hope. The way through anger is not suppression—it is surrender. God invites us to bring our fury, our questions, our grief to Him. Our emotions do not threaten him; He is moved by them. The psalmist declares, "Pour out

your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us” (Psalm 62:8). In the pouring out, healing begins. In the honesty, intimacy is restored.

Acceptance does not mean we stop feeling. It means we stop resisting the presence of God in our pain. It means we allow Him to meet us in the fire, to speak truth into our resentment, and to gently turn our mourning into deeper trust. The cross itself is the ultimate answer to our anger—it is where divine love met human suffering, where justice and mercy kissed.

For those in Christ, death is not the end. It is a doorway. And while the ache remains, so does the promise: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more” (Revelation 21:4). Until that day, we grieve with honesty, wrestle with hope, and walk forward with the One who understands our sorrow.

I never expected anger to be part of my grief.

As a believer, a teacher of the Word, and someone who has walked others through sorrow, I thought I would bypass that stage—move straight into trust, into peace, into the comforting arms of Scripture. But when I lost my loved one, something unexpected rose within me. It wasn’t rage. It was quieter than that. It was a slow-burning ache, a protest lodged deep in my spirit. I found myself asking questions I had never dared to ask: Why now, Lord? Why them? Why didn’t You intervene?

I was surprised by how quickly resentment crept in—not just toward the circumstances, but toward the silence. I knew God was present, but I couldn’t “feel” Him. I quoted the verses, I prayed the prayers, but underneath it all, I was angry. Not because I didn’t believe—but because I did. I believed He

could have stopped it. I believed He saw it coming. And I couldn't understand why He didn't act.

That phase humbled me. It reminded me that grief doesn't follow theology—it follows love. And love, when severed by death, cries out for justice, for answers, for restoration. I learned that anger is not the enemy of indwelling faith—it's often the doorway to deeper intimacy. When I finally brought my fury to the Lord, He didn't rebuke me. He received it. He sat with me in it. And slowly, He began to turn my resentment into surrender.

I still carry the ache. But I no longer carry it alone.

ACTION STEPS

1. Bring Your Anger Directly to God

- **Scripture:** “Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.” —Psalm 62:8
- Anger becomes destructive when it's buried or misdirected. Scripture invites us to bring our raw emotions to the Lord—not to hide them, but to release them in His presence. Like David in the Psalms, we are called to lament honestly. Speak the truth of your pain aloud in prayer. God is not offended by your questions; He is moved by your honesty.
- **Action:** Set aside time to pray without filters. Journal your anger, speak it aloud, or write a psalm of lament. Let God meet you in the unspoken places.

2. Guard Against Bitterness

- **Scripture:** “See to it that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.” —Hebrews 12:15

- Resentment is anger that has settled into the soul. It distorts our view of God, isolates us from others, and poisons our spiritual walk. Scripture warns us to uproot bitterness before it takes hold. This requires intentional forgiveness—not just of people, but sometimes of our own expectations of God.
- **Action:** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any hidden resentment. Name it, confess it, and release it. Declare forgiveness—even if emotions haven’t caught up yet.

3. Remember God’s Compassionate Character

- **Scripture:** “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” —Psalm 34:18
- In grief, it’s easy to interpret silence as absence. But Scripture reminds us that God draws near to those in sorrow. He is not distant or indifferent—He is Emmanuel, God with us. Reflecting on His character helps reframe our pain through the lens of His love.
- **Action:** Meditate on passages that reveal God’s compassion (e.g., Psalm 23, Isaiah 53, John 11). Speak them aloud. Let truth replace assumption.

4. Anchor Your Hope in Eternity

- **Scripture:** “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more.” —Revelation 21:4
- Anger often stems from the finality of death. But for those in Christ, death is not the end—it is a transition. Anchoring our hope in the resurrection and the promise of reunion helps soften the sting of loss. Acceptance begins when eternity becomes our lens.

- **Action:** Declare the promises of eternal life. Write a letter to your loved one expressing hope in reunion. Share your testimony with someone who needs comfort.

As we close this chapter, may every believer find renewed strength in the promises of God. Amid sorrow and healing, let us hold fast to the hope we have in Christ—a hope that anchors the soul and lights the path ahead. May the grace of our Lord Yeshua Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, guiding us through every season with peace and purpose.

CHAPTER THREE

BARGAINING WITH GOD

I never imagined I'd find myself bargaining with God—yet in the wake of my loss, there I was, offering prayers laced with conditions, pleading for exchanges I knew He didn't owe me. It surprised me, even unsettled me, to realize how quickly grief had reshaped my theology into negotiation. I've taught surrender, preached trust, and written of unwavering indwelling faith, but in that moment, my heart exposed a raw desperation that bypassed doctrine and reached for anything that might ease the ache. It wasn't rebellion—it was a wounded child trying to make sense of a shattered world.

As a child, I developed a quiet habit of making “deals” with God—simple, innocent bargains whispered in the dark when pain felt too heavy to bear. If I could just be spared the embarrassment, the loneliness, the ache of rejection, I promised to be better, to pray more, to obey without question. These weren't theological negotiations; they were the desperate attempts of a tender heart trying to find control in a world that often felt unpredictable and unkind. I didn't yet understand the sovereignty of God or the depth of His grace—I only knew that pain made me feel powerless, and bargaining gave me a sense of agency, however fragile.

Looking back, I see how those early “deals” shaped my spiritual reflexes. I learned to associate obedience with reward, and suffering with some hidden fault that needed correcting. It wasn't until much later that I began to grasp the truth: that God doesn't trade in transactions, but in

transformation. Yet even now, in moments of deep sorrow, that childhood instinct can resurface—offering promises, pleading for reprieve, hoping to rewrite the story. It’s humbling to realize how formative those early patterns were, and how gently God continues to unravel them, not with condemnation, but with compassion.

It was a sobering moment when I realized that my bargaining wasn’t just a symptom of grief—it was a quiet resistance to the sovereignty of God. In trying to negotiate outcomes, rewrite circumstances, or offer spiritual currency in exchange for relief, I was, in essence, placing my will above His. I wasn’t trusting His wisdom; I was trying to override it. That recognition pierced me deeply, not with shame, but with conviction. God’s sovereignty isn’t something to be bartered with—it’s the anchor in the storm, the assurance that even in loss, He remains good, purposeful, and in control. Accepting that truth didn’t erase the pain, but it did begin to heal the part of me that thought I had to manage it alone.

REBELLION IN THE GARMENTS OF CONTROL

Bargaining with God is a subtle yet profound error that often emerges in seasons of pain, uncertainty, or loss. It masquerades as indwelling faith, cloaked in desperation and longing, but at its core, it is rebellion—a demand for our way over His. The human heart, when wounded, instinctively reaches for control. We offer promises, spiritual transactions, and conditional obedience in hopes of altering the course of divine sovereignty. Yet Scripture is clear: God does not negotiate His eternal plan. He invites surrender, not stipulations. Bargaining is not a sign of trust—it is a symptom of mistrust, a refusal to yield to the wisdom and authority of the One who sees the end from the beginning.

Throughout Scripture, we find examples of individuals who attempted to bargain with God, only to face the consequences of rebellion. King Saul, in 1 Samuel 15, disobeyed God's command to destroy the Amalekites completely. He spared what seemed valuable and then tried to justify his actions by offering sacrifices. Saul's behavior was transactional—he believed religious offerings could override disobedience. But the prophet Samuel rebuked him sharply: “To obey is better than sacrifice... For rebellion is like the sin of divination” (1 Samuel 15:22–23). Saul's bargain was not devotion—it was defiance, and it cost him the kingdom. His story reveals that bargaining with God is not merely a misstep; it is a rejection of divine authority.

The rich young ruler in Matthew 19 offers another glimpse into the heart of bargaining. He approached Yeshua with a question about eternal life, eager to secure salvation on his own terms. When Yeshua told him to sell all he had and follow Him, the man walked away sorrowful. He wanted discipleship without surrender, blessing without sacrifice. His wealth became the condition of his obedience, and his refusal to yield exposed a heart unwilling to trust God's eternal plan. Bargaining, in this context, is a demand for customized obedience—a spiritual contract that places human preference above divine command.

At the heart of bargaining lies a deeper issue: the rejection of God's sovereignty. Isaiah 46:10 declares, “My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.” God's plans are eternal, unchanging, and perfect. To bargain with Him is to suggest that His will is negotiable, that our understanding is superior, and that His timing must be adjusted to suit our comfort. This posture is not humility—it is pride. It is the same spirit that

led Lucifer to say, “I will ascend...I will make myself like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:13–14). Bargaining is not just a coping mechanism—it is a form of idolatry, where self becomes the god we serve.

Even in grief, God calls us to trust, not to negotiate. Job, in the depths of unimaginable loss, refused to curse God or demand explanations. Instead, he declared, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him” (Job 13:15). Job’s posture was not transactional—it was worshipful. He did not offer bargains for restoration; he submitted to the mystery of God’s will. His story teaches us that indwelling faith is not found in controlling outcomes but in trusting the One who holds them. Bargaining, by contrast, seeks to manipulate divine outcomes through human effort, revealing a heart unwilling to rest in the sovereignty of God.

Bargaining also distorts our understanding of grace. Grace is unearned, undeserved, and freely given. When we attempt to trade obedience for blessing, or sacrifice for favor, we undermine the very nature of grace. We turn relationships into transactions, and intimacy into obligation. God does not respond to deals—He responds to surrender. Proverbs 3:5–6 exhorts us to “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him.” Submission is the antidote to bargaining. It is the posture of a heart that acknowledges God’s wisdom, timing, and authority as supreme.

To repent of bargaining is to confess that we have tried to control what only God can govern. It is to name our negotiations as rebellion, not merely an emotional reflex. 1 John 1:9 assures us that “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us.” God does not shame the grieving

heart—He heals it. But He does so on His terms, not ours. The path to peace is not paved with bargains; it is found in bowing low before the throne and saying, “Thy will be done.”

Worship replaces bargaining. It reorients the soul from demand to devotion, from control to communion.

In the end, the error of bargaining with God is not just theological—it is relational. It reveals a heart that has not yet learned to trust the Father’s goodness in the absence of understanding. It is rebellion in the garments of control, a demand for our way over His. But God, in His mercy, invites us to lay down our conditions, to surrender our negotiations, and to embrace the mystery of His eternal plan. For in that surrender, we find not only peace—but the presence of the One who never bargains yet always loves.

ACTION STEPS

1. Confess the Bargaining Spirit as Rebellion

- **Action:** Acknowledge that bargaining is not indwelling faith—it’s a form of control and rebellion against God’s sovereignty.
- **Scripture:** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” — 1 John 1:9
- **Reflection:** Begin with an honest confession. Name the bargains you’ve made and surrender them at the foot of the cross. God desires truth in the inward parts (Psalm 51:6).

2. Renew Your Mind with God’s Sovereignty

- **Action:** Saturate your heart with Scriptures that affirm God’s eternal plan and unchanging authority.

- **Scripture:** “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” — Romans 12:2
- **Reflection:** Replace bargaining thoughts with biblical truths. Meditate on passages like Isaiah 46:10, Proverbs 19:21, and Psalm 115:3 to realign your thinking with God’s rule.

3. Practice Unconditional Worship

- **Action:** Worship God not for what He gives, but for who He is.
- **Scripture:** “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” — Job 13:15
- **Reflection:** Worship breaks the grip of control. Sing, pray, and declare God’s goodness even when circumstances don’t change. Worship is the language of surrender.

4. Pray Prayers of Submission, Not Negotiation

- **Action:** Shift your prayer life from asking for outcomes to yielding to God’s will.
- **Scripture:** “Not my will, but Yours be done.” — Luke 22:42
- **Reflection:** Model your prayers after Yeshua in Gethsemane. Invite God to shape your desires rather than fulfill your demands.

5. Identify and Dismantle Idols of Control

- **Action:** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas where you’ve placed your will above God’s.
- **Scripture:** “You shall have no other gods before Me.” — Exodus 20:3

- **Reflection:** Bargaining often exposes hidden idols—comfort, timing, outcomes, relationships. Repent and dethrone them through fasting, prayer, and accountability.

6. Seek Godly Counsel and Body-Life

- **Action:** Invite trusted believers to walk with you through grief and surrender.
- **Scripture:** “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” — Proverbs 15:22
- **Reflection:** Isolation fuels bargaining. Community brings clarity, correction, and comfort. Share your struggles and let others speak truth into your journey.

7. Journal Surrender and God’s Indwelling Faithfulness

- **Action:** Write down moments of surrender and how God met you in them.
- **Scripture:** “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets.” — Habakkuk 2:2
- **Reflection:** Journaling helps track spiritual growth. Document your release of control and the peace that follows. It becomes a testimony for future storms.

8. Embrace the Mystery of God’s Will

- **Action:** Accept that not all answers will come, but peace can still reign.
- **Scripture:** “The secret things belong to the Lord our God.” — Deuteronomy 29:29
- **Reflection:** Indwelling faith flourishes in mystery. Let go of the need to understand everything. Trust that God’s plan is good, even when it’s hidden.

Even in the ache of unanswered prayers and the silence that follows shattered bargains, God remains indwelling, faithful. He does not meet us at the negotiation table—He meets us at the altar. It is there, in the place of surrender, that peace begins to flow and trust is reborn.

The Father does not demand perfection; He invites honesty. And when we lay down our conditions and cling to His character, we discover a deeper intimacy than any bargain could ever offer. Let this be the moment where striving ceases and surrender begins—not as a loss, but as a holy exchange. For in yielding to His will, we find the very heart of God.

In Christ, you can do this!

CHAPTER FOUR

DEPRESSION | SORROW

There comes a phase in sorrow that lingers longer than most—a season marked by deep sadness, emotional heaviness, and quiet withdrawal from the world around us. It is not always dramatic or visible; often, it settles in like a fog, numbing the senses and stretching across days, weeks, even years.

This is where grief becomes weighty, where the soul feels suspended between longing and resignation. Words fail, energy fades, and even prayer can feel distant. Yet in this prolonged valley, God does not retreat. He draws near to the brokenhearted, not with quick fixes, but with sustaining presence. **Though this may be the longest phase**, it is not without purpose—for even here, the Lord is gently shaping, healing, and preparing the heart for resurrection hope.

Depression, at its core, is overwhelming sorrow wrapped in the quiet ache of defeat. It is not merely a clinical label or emotional imbalance—it is the soul's cry when hope feels distant and strength has run dry. In Scripture, we see this reflected in David's laments, Elijah's exhaustion, and Jeremiah's weeping.

Depression is the heart's response to prolonged grief, unmet expectations, and the crushing weight of loss.

It whispers lies of isolation and finality, convincing the sufferer that healing is out of reach. But the truth remains: even in the depths, God is present. He does not shame the

sorrowful or rebuke the weary. Instead, He invites them to bring their brokenness to Him—not for instant relief, but for enduring restoration. Depression may feel like defeat, but in Christ, it becomes the soil where resurrection begins.

INTERNAL TEMPER TANTRUM

I still remember the moment my mentor looked me in the eye and said, “Depression is nothing more than an internal temper tantrum.” At first, the words felt jarring—almost dismissive of the heaviness I carried. But as I sat with the statement, its deeper meaning began to unfold. He wasn’t minimizing my sorrow; he was exposing the silent protest within me—the part of my soul that resisted surrender, that demanded answers, relief, or reversal. Depression, in this light, became a spiritual standoff: my will versus God’s. It was the ache of unmet expectations colliding with the refusal to release control. And while the pain was real, so was the invitation—to lay down my demands, to stop wrestling, and to let the Father hold me in my brokenness. That moment marked a turning point, not because the sadness vanished, but because I began to see it not as punishment, but as a pathway to deeper surrender.

Over time, I came to understand that my internal temper tantrum was more than emotional unrest—it was a quiet rebellion against the sovereignty of God. Beneath the tears, silence, and withdrawal was a heart unwilling to accept that God’s ways were higher, His timing perfect, and His decisions final. I wanted control, closure, and comfort on my terms. But the tantrum—though silent to others—was loud in the heavens, echoing my resistance to trust the One who sees the end from the beginning. It was a refusal to bow, to release, to say, “Thy will be done.” And yet, in His mercy, God did not

meet my rebellion with wrath, but with grace. He waited, gently, until I could see that surrender is not defeat—it is worship. Accepting His sovereignty didn't erase the pain, but it did anchor me in peace. It was there, in the letting go, that healing began.

Deep sorrow is not a sin—it is a sacred phase of the soul's journey, where the heart wrestles with the weight of God's choices and the silence that often follows them. It is the valley between human understanding and divine sovereignty, where grief does not mean rebellion, but rather the slow unfolding of surrender. Scripture is filled with saints who mourned deeply—Job, David, Naomi, even Yeshua Himself—each one passing through sorrow as part of accepting the Father's will. God does not rush this process. He allows time, space, and tears for the soul to come to terms with His decisions. In this phase, we are not condemned for feeling loss; we are invited to trust that His will, though painful, is perfect. Embracing the sovereignty of God does not mean we stop grieving—it means we grieve with hope, knowing that His plan is unfolding even in the shadows.

The Sacred Weight of Sorrow

There is a phase in the believer's journey that few speak of openly—a season of deep sorrow, emotional heaviness, and spiritual withdrawal. It is not rebellion, though it may feel like resistance. It is not sin, though it may carry the weight of grief and confusion. This phase is sacred, for it is here that the soul begins to wrestle with the sovereignty of God. Scripture does not shy away from sorrow. David poured out his anguish in the Psalms, Elijah collapsed under the broom tree in despair, and even Yeshua wept over Jerusalem and groaned in Gethsemane. These moments were not signs of spiritual

failure—they were expressions of holy lament. In sorrow, the heart confronts the reality that God’s choices often come wrapped in mystery, loss, and unanswered questions. The human spirit, longing for clarity and comfort, must learn to embrace the Father’s will even when it wounds.

My temper tantrum was sin, but my sorrow was not!

I once believed that depression was a flaw, a weakness to be overcome. But through the counsel of a mentor and the refining fire of personal grief, I came to see it differently. He told me, “Depression is an internal temper tantrum.” At first, I resisted the idea. But over time, I realized that beneath my sadness was a quiet protest—a refusal to accept that God’s decisions were final, that His timing was perfect, and that His silence was not abandonment. My sorrow had become a spiritual standoff, a place where I demanded answers instead of offering surrender. And yet, God did not meet me with condemnation. He met me with compassion. He waited for me to see that the tantrum was not about emotion—it was about control. It was the ache of wanting my way, my healing, my resolution. And when I finally laid down my demands, I discovered that surrender is not weakness—it is worship.

Deep sorrow, then, is not a detour from indwelling faith—it is part of the path. It is the valley where we learn to say, “Thy will be done,” not with resignation, but with reverence. It is the place where we stop bargaining and start trusting. God’s sovereignty is not always easy to accept, especially when it leads us through loss, delay, or unanswered prayers. But it is in this phase that the soul is shaped, refined, and prepared for resurrection hope. The Father does not rush our grief. He walks with us through it, inviting us to trust Him not because we understand, but because we believe He is good. And when

we embrace His will, even in sorrow, we find peace—not because the pain disappears, but because His presence becomes enough.

Importance of embracing Yeshua’s sorrow from within—as the pathway to freedom from bitterness and the sanctification of our own grief.

To walk in freedom from bitterness, we must first learn to embrace the sorrow of Yeshua—not as a distant historical event, but as a living reality within us. The sorrow of Christ was not passive or self-centered; it was purposeful, redemptive, and deeply personal. Isaiah prophesied that He would be “a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3), and yet His sorrow did not embitter Him—it empowered Him to intercede, to love, and to obey unto death. When we allow His sorrow to dwell within us, we begin to see our own grief through the lens of redemption. His sorrow becomes the filter through which our pain is purified, our anger softened, and our bitterness dismantled.

Bitterness is often born from unresolved sorrow—a grief that has turned inward and calcified into resentment. It whispers that God was unfair, that others were careless, that healing is out of reach. But Yeshua’s sorrow speaks a different word. It invites us to weep with Him, not alone. It teaches us that grief is not a prison, but a passage. When we embrace His sorrow, we stop asking “Why me?” and begin to ask, “What now, Lord?” His sorrow does not erase our pain, but it sanctifies it. It transforms our wounds into places of communion, where we meet the suffering Servant and find that He understands us fully.

This internal embrace of Yeshua's sorrow is not a one-time event—it is a daily surrender. It means allowing His Spirit to search the hidden places of our hearts, to expose the roots of bitterness, and to replace them with the fruit of compassion. It means choosing to forgive, even when the pain is fresh. It means trusting that our tears are not wasted, but gathered by the One who wept first. As Paul wrote, “I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings” (Philippians 3:10). To participate in His sufferings is to allow His sorrow to reshape ours, to let His grief become our guide through the valley.

Freedom from bitterness does not come by suppressing sorrow—it comes by surrendering it to the One who bore it perfectly. When we embrace Yeshua's sorrow from within, we find that our own grief begins to lose its sting. The poison of bitterness is replaced with the balm of mercy. We become tender where we were hardened, hopeful where we were cynical, and peaceful where we were restless. This is the mystery of divine sorrow—it does not destroy us; it delivers us. And in that sacred exchange, we become more like Him through releasing Him.

ACTION STEPS

1. Acknowledge Your Sorrow Without Shame

- **Action:** Name your grief before God, recognizing it as a legitimate part of your spiritual journey.
- **Scripture:** “Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.” — Psalm 62:8
- **Reflection:** Sorrow is not weakness—it is an invitation to intimacy. Begin by bringing your pain into the light of God's presence.

2. Invite the Sorrow of Yeshua to Dwell Within You

- **Action:** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the heart of Christ in your suffering.
- **Scripture:** “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” — Isaiah 53:3
- **Reflection:** Meditate on the sufferings of Yeshua. Let His sorrow become your companion, not your condemnation.

3. Identify Bitterness as a Spiritual Stronghold

- **Action:** Examine your heart for signs of resentment, unforgiveness, or hardened emotions.
- **Scripture:** “See to it that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” — Hebrews 12:15
- **Reflection:** Bitterness often hides beneath unresolved grief. Ask God to expose and uproot it.

4. Surrender Control and Embrace God’s Sovereignty

- **Action:** Release your expectations and trust God’s redemptive plan, even in sorrow.
- **Scripture:** “Not my will, but Yours be done.” — Luke 22:42
- **Reflection:** Bitterness thrives where control reigns. Surrender is the soil where healing grows.

5. Renew Your Mind with the Word of God

- **Action:** Replace bitter thoughts with Scripture that affirms God’s goodness and indwelling faithfulness.
- **Scripture:** “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” — Romans 12:2

- **Reflection:** Let the Word reframe your grief. Study Psalms of lament, the sufferings of Christ, and promises of restoration.

6. Seek Healing Through Body-Life and Counsel

- **Action:** Share your sorrow with trusted believers, mentors, or spiritual counselors.
- **Scripture:** “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” — Galatians 6:2
- **Reflection:** Isolation deepens bitterness. Healing often comes through shared sorrow and godly counsel.

7. Prayers of Release and Mercy

- **Action:** Verbally release those who have wounded you and ask God to heal your heart.
- **Scripture:** “Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” — Colossians 3:13
- **Reflection:** Forgiveness is not forgetting—it is choosing freedom. Pray for grace to let go.

8. Journal Your Journey from Bitterness to Surrender

- **Action:** Document your process of embracing Yeshua’s sorrow and releasing your own.
- **Scripture:** “Write down the revelation and make it plain.” — Habakkuk 2:2
- **Reflection:** Journaling helps track spiritual growth and becomes a testimony of transformation.

9. Worship Through the Pain

- **Action:** Use worship as a weapon against bitterness and a balm for sorrow.

- **Scripture:** “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” — Psalm 34:18
- **Reflection:** Worship shifts your focus from wounds to the Healer. Sing even when it hurts.

Bitterness may masquerade as strength, but it is only sorrow left unhealed. True freedom comes not by suppressing grief, but by embracing the sorrow of Yeshua within us—His holy lament, His divine ache, His unwavering surrender.

When we allow His sorrow to shape our own, bitterness loses its grip and healing begins to flow. This is not weakness—it is worship. It is the sacred exchange where our wounds become altars, our tears become prayers, and our grief becomes a gateway to deeper intimacy with the Father. So let the sorrow speak, but let it speak through Him. For in Yeshua’s sorrow, we find the strength to forgive, the courage to release, and the power to rise. And in that rising, bitterness is buried, and resurrection life begins.

CHAPTER FIVE

ACCEPTANCE | PEACE

There comes a quiet shift in the journey through sorrow—a moment not marked by fanfare, but by a gentle settling of the soul. It is the gradual embracing of reality, where the sting of loss begins to soften and the heart no longer resists what God has allowed. This phase is not denial, nor is it instant healing. It is the Spirit-led acceptance that life will not return to what it was, and yet, God is still good. Peace begins to rise—not because the pain is gone, but because the soul has stopped fighting against it. In this sacred space, the believer starts to see glimpses of purpose, threads of redemption, and the quiet assurance that nothing has been wasted. As Ecclesiastes reminds us, “He has made everything beautiful in its time” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). This is the time when beauty begins to emerge from ashes.

Meaning in the making is the holy work of this phase. It is where testimonies are born, ministries are birthed, and grief becomes a gift offered to others. The believer begins to ask not “Why did this happen?” but “How will God use this?” It is the phase where sorrow is no longer the enemy, but the soil in which compassion, wisdom, and deeper indwelling faith take root. The peace that accompanies this process is not passive—it is active, shaped by surrender and sustained by hope. In embracing reality, we do not lose what was—we honor it by allowing it to shape what is becoming. And in doing so, we reflect the heart of Yeshua, who embraced the

cross not with bitterness, but with purpose, knowing that resurrection would follow.

My selfish flesh resists grief not because it fears pain, but because it fears release. There is a part of me that clings to sorrow as if it were the last thread connecting me to the one I lost. Letting go feels like betrayal, like erasing their presence from my story. And so, my flesh fights—holding onto tears, rehearsing memories, resisting comfort—because it believes that sorrow is sacred, that pain preserves the bond.

But in truth, this is a deception.

The Spirit gently reveals that love is not measured by how long I mourn, but by how faithfully I live in light of what was given. My grief, when surrendered, becomes a testimony—not a tether. And in releasing the pain, I do not lose the person—I honor them by allowing God to transform my sorrow into purpose. The flesh may fight, but the Spirit invites me to trust that healing does not sever—it sanctifies.

Somewhere along the way, I became best friends with my sorrow. It was familiar, predictable, and strangely comforting—a companion that understood my loss when others could not. I carried it with me like a sacred relic, believing it honored what I had lost. But I didn't realize that in clinging to sorrow, I was slowly drifting from the indwelling Life of Christ. My grief had become a sanctuary, but not a holy one—it was a place where pain ruled, and resurrection was kept at a distance. The voice of mourning muffled the intimacy I once knew with Yeshua, and I found myself living more in memory than in abiding. It wasn't until the Spirit gently confronted me that I saw the truth: sorrow had become my identity, and in doing so, it had eclipsed the

very Life that came to set me free. Christ does not ask me to forget—He asks me to follow from the inside out. And to follow Him, I must release the grief I've befriended and embrace the Life that now lives within me.

When Sorrow Becomes a Bad Friend

I never set out to make sorrow my closest companion. It crept in quietly, like a guest who overstayed his welcome, and I—too weary to protest—let him settle in. At first, grief felt sacred. It marked the depth of my love, the weight of my loss, and the sincerity of my lament. I wore it like a mantle, believing it honored those I had lost and the wounds I still carried. In the silence of my soul, sorrow spoke fluently. It understood the ache that others overlooked, the tears that came without warning, and the questions that had no answers. I began to trust it, lean on it, and even defend it. Without realizing it, I had made sorrow my confidant, my compass, my comfort, and my worst enemy.

But sorrow, when left unchecked, is a subtle thief. It does not storm the gates of the heart—it whispers. It convinces you that healing is betrayal, that joy is premature, and that hope is naïve. It teaches you to rehearse pain instead of release it, to build altars to memory rather than surrender to resurrection. And slowly, almost imperceptibly, it begins to eclipse the indwelling Life of Christ. I didn't notice at first. I still prayed, still taught, still proclaimed truth. But my soul had shifted. I was abiding more in my sorrow than in my Savior. The grief that once felt holy had become a substitute for His presence. I had traded intimacy for introspection, communion for coping.

The Spirit of Christ is gentle, but He is not passive. He began to stir within me—not with condemnation, but with

conviction. He reminded me that He is not merely the God who comforts the brokenhearted; He is the Resurrection and the Life. He does not dwell in tombs—He calls us out of them. I began to see that my friendship with sorrow had become a form of spiritual idolatry. I had allowed it to define me, direct me, and dwell in places reserved for Christ alone. The indwelling Life does not coexist with death—it conquers it. And to walk in His fullness, I had to confront the grief I had befriended.

Letting go was not betrayal—it was obedience. It was not forgetting—it was following. Christ did not ask me to deny my sorrow; He asked me to surrender it. To place it in His hands, not as a trophy of suffering, but as a testimony of redemption. In doing so, I discovered that my pain did not diminish the Life of Christ within me—it was magnified through my surrender. His indwelling presence began to reclaim the territory sorrow had occupied. Where grief had built walls, His Spirit planted gardens. Where mourning had muted my worship, His Life restored my song.

This chapter of my journey is not about abandoning sorrow—it's about dethroning it. It's about recognizing that even the sincerest grief can become a counterfeit comfort if it replaces the abiding presence of Christ. The invitation of Yeshua is not merely to be consoled—it is to be indwelt. To live not from the memory of loss, but from the power of resurrection. And so, I choose to release my friendship with sorrow—not because it was never real, but because it was never meant to reign. I choose the indwelling Life of Christ, who walks with me through the valley, but never leaves me there. He is my Friend, my Comforter, my Resurrection—and in Him, my soul finds rest.

The Sovereignty of God in the Shadow of Loss

There is no wound quite like the death of a loved one. It pierces the soul, disrupts the rhythm of life, and leaves behind a silence that echoes louder than words. In the wake of such loss, the heart naturally asks, Why?—not always in rebellion, but often in desperation. We search for meaning, for purpose, for some divine thread that weaves our sorrow into something sacred. And it is here, in the valley of mourning, that we are invited to confront the sovereignty of God—not as a cold decree, but as a holy comfort. Scripture does not shy away from grief. From Job’s lament to David’s tears, from Mary’s weeping at the tomb to Yeshua Himself groaning in spirit, the Bible affirms that sorrow is real. But it also declares that God is sovereign, even in death.

To accept God’s sovereign plan in the loss of a loved one is not to suppress grief—it is to surrender it. It is to acknowledge that our days are numbered by the Lord (Psalm 139:16), that He gives and He takes away (Job 1:21), and that His purposes are often hidden but never cruel. The cross itself is proof that God can ordain suffering without abandoning love. In Christ, death was not avoided—it was conquered. And because of Him, we do not grieve as those without hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). The sovereignty of God does not erase the sting of death, but it does anchor us in the assurance that nothing—not even loss—is wasted in His hands.

As I walked through the valley of personal loss, I wrestled with this truth. I wanted answers, closure, and clarity. But what God offered was Himself. He reminded me that His ways are higher (Isaiah 55:8–9), that His thoughts are eternal, and that His love is not proven by the absence of pain but by His presence within it. Slowly, I began to see that accepting

His sovereign plan was not resignation—it was worship. It was the posture of a heart that says, *Though You slay me, yet will I trust You* (Job 13:15). It was the surrender of control, the release of bitterness, and the embrace of mystery.

In time, the Spirit began to transform my mourning into ministry. The loss that once felt like a closed door became a gateway to deeper compassion, intercession, and eternal perspective. I realized that God's sovereignty is not a theological concept to be debated—it is a refuge to be entered. It means that my loved one's life was not cut short but completed. That their death was not random but redeemed. That even in the final breath, God was present, purposeful, and preparing a reunion that no grave can prevent.

To accept God's sovereign plan in loss is to lift our eyes from the grave to the throne. It is to declare, even through tears, that He is good, He is wise, and He is near. It is to trust that the One who numbers the stars also numbers our sorrows, and that He collects every tear in His bottle (Psalm 56:8). This is not easy faith—it is enduring indwelling faith. It is the kind that holds fast when feelings falter, and the kind that finds peace not in understanding, but in abiding. And so, I choose to rest in His sovereignty—not because I understand all His ways, but because I know His heart. In the shadow of death, I have found the light of His presence. And in that light, I walk forward—not alone, not forsaken, but held by the One who reigns over life and death alike.

This book became the fruit of this lesson!

ACTION STEPS

1. Surrender the Need to Understand

Release the demand for answers and embrace the mystery of God's sovereignty. Instead of asking why, begin asking who—Who is God in this loss? Who is He revealing Himself to be? Trust that His ways are higher and His purposes eternal (Isaiah 55:8–9). Write a prayer of surrender, naming the questions you've carried and laying them at the feet of Yeshua.

2. Let the Word Wash Over Your Grief

Let the Word of God become your refuge. Meditate daily on passages that affirm both God's sovereignty and His compassion—such as Psalm 139:16, Job 1:21, Romans 8:28, and 1 Thessalonians 4:13. Journal how each verse speaks to your loss and allow the Spirit to reframe your sorrow through the lens of eternal hope.

3. Transform Mourning into Ministry

Ask the Lord how He might use your grief to comfort others. Whether through writing, intercession, or simply being present with someone else in pain, offer your testimony as a vessel of healing. Remember 2 Corinthians 1:3–4: “He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction.” Your loss can become a living witness of God's redeeming love.

4. Recommit to Abiding in Christ

Grief can subtly displace intimacy. Recenter your heart in the indwelling Life of Christ by renewing your commitment to abide in Him daily (John 15:4–5). Create space for worship, silence, and communion—not as a way to escape sorrow, but to invite Yeshua into it. Let His presence be your portion, your peace, and your path forward.

In the sacred tension between grief and glory, I have come to see that accepting God's sovereign plan is not a passive resignation—it is a bold declaration of trust. It is the soul's defiant choice to worship in the valley, to believe in resurrection while standing beside the grave. Though sorrow may linger, it no longer leads. Christ does. His indwelling Life is not diminished by death—it is revealed through it. And so, I lift my eyes, not to what was lost, but to Who remains. The One who numbers my days, collects my tears, and prepares a reunion beyond time. In Him, my mourning finds meaning, my questions find rest, and my heart finds home. I do not walk away from grief—I walk through it, held by the sovereign hand of the One who conquered it. And in that holy embrace, I find peace.

When grief is stewarded with spiritual responsibility—neither suppressed nor idolized—it becomes a holy pathway to awakening. Suffering, when surrendered to the sovereignty of God, strips away illusions, distractions, and self-reliance, exposing the soul's deepest need for the indwelling Life of Yeshua. It is in honest wrestling, the tear-stained prayers, and the quiet surrender that the Spirit begins to stir. The soul, once dulled by pain, becomes sensitized to Presence. The heart, once heavy with loss, begins to beat in rhythm with eternal hope. Yeshua does not bypass suffering—He inhabits it. And when we walk through grief with Him, not around Him, we discover that resurrection is not just an event—it is a Person living within us. In this sacred awakening, sorrow becomes seed, and the Life of Yeshua becomes the harvest. What once felt like death now pulses with divine purpose, and the soul rises—not in denial, but in indwelling power.

CHAPTER SIX

COST OF REFUSING

To bypass the proper phases of grief is to risk spiritual stagnation and emotional distortion. When sorrow is suppressed, denied, or rushed, it festers beneath the surface, often manifesting as bitterness, numbness, or misplaced anger. The soul, designed to process pain in communion with the Spirit, becomes fragmented when grief is ignored. Unattended wounds do not heal—they harden. And in that hardening, the heart becomes less receptive to the gentle promptings of the indwelling Life of Christ. What was meant to be a season of sanctified mourning turns into a cycle of unresolved suffering, robbing the believer of clarity, intimacy, and spiritual vitality. The cost is not only personal—it is relational. We begin to isolate, perform, or pretend, rather than abide, receive, and embrace the comfort of Yeshua.

Moreover, when grief is mishandled, it can subtly reshape our theology. We may begin to view God through the lens of our pain rather than His promises. The enemy thrives in this confusion, whispering lies that distort the character of God and diminish our trust in His sovereignty. Without intentional recovery, we risk building identities around loss rather than redemption. We cling to shadows instead of stepping into the light. But grief, when walked through rightly, becomes a refining fire—not a consuming one. It purifies, clarifies, and ultimately awakens the soul to the abiding presence of Yeshua. To neglect this process is to forfeit the very healing

that Christ died to secure. The cost is high—but the invitation to restoration is higher still.

SEVENTY AND FREE

I am seventy years of age as I write this. And while the world may see that as the twilight of life, I've come to realize it's the hour of deepest awakening. I've walked through valleys I never expected, buried loved ones I thought I couldn't live without, and carried sorrows that etched themselves into the marrow of my soul. For years, I thought I was managing grief well—pressing forward, staying busy, quoting Scripture, and doing ministry. But beneath the surface, something was missing. I had not truly walked through the phases of grief with the Spirit of Christ—I had merely survived them. And survival, I've learned, is not the same as surrender.

It wasn't until I slowed down—until the noise of life quieted and the ache grew louder—that I began to see the invitation hidden in my suffering. The Spirit gently revealed that I had befriended sorrow more than I had embraced the indwelling Life of Yeshua. I had honored the pain, but I had not let it be transformed. And so, at seventy, I began a new journey—not of denial or delay, but of authentic biblical recovery. I revisited the stages of grief, not as a psychological checklist, but as a spiritual pilgrimage. Lament became my prayer language. Tears became my offering. And Scripture became my anchor—not to escape pain, but to walk through it with holy purpose.

Each phase—shock, sorrow, wrestling, surrender, and renewal—became a doorway to deeper intimacy with Christ. I stopped asking why and started asking what now, Lord? I allowed the Spirit to search me, to heal me, and to reintroduce

me to the Person of Yeshua—not just as Savior, but as Comforter, Healer, and Resurrection. I discovered that biblical recovery is not about forgetting—it’s about re-framing. It’s about seeing loss through the lens of eternity and letting grief become a servant of grace rather than a master of despair.

Now, I speak not as one who has mastered the process, but as one who the mercy of God has mastered. These steps—when walked with humility and truth—awaken the soul to the indwelling Life we often overlook in our pain. At seventy, I feel more alive than I did at thirty. Not because the sorrow is gone, but because Yeshua reigns within it. He has turned mourning into movement, ashes into beauty, and grief into a gateway for glory. And if He can do that in me, He can do it in anyone who dares to walk through the valley with Him—not around it.

Mastered by Mercy

I’ve lived long enough to know that grief does not follow a script, and healing rarely arrives on schedule. The valleys I’ve walked were not brief detours—they were seasons that shaped me, stripped me, and ultimately sanctified me. I once believed that strength meant pressing on, holding it together, and quoting Scripture louder than my pain. But I’ve come to see that true strength is found in embracing my pain. It is found in letting mercy do its work—not just around my sorrow, but within it. These steps of biblical recovery—when walked with humility and truth—do not erase the ache, but they awaken the soul to the indwelling Life of Yeshua that pain so often obscures.

I “feel” younger than ever! Not because the sorrow has vanished, but because Yeshua’s youth reigns within it. His

presence has become my portion, His voice my compass, and His mercy my covering. I no longer ask Him to remove the valley—I ask Him to walk with me through it. And in that walk, I’ve discovered treasures I never would have found on the mountaintop. He has turned mourning into forward motion. What once paralyzed me now propels me. The ashes I carried have become the soil for beauty, and the grief that once felt like a grave has become a gateway for glory. This is not poetic exaggeration—it is the testimony of a soul that has been undone and remade by the mercy of God.

I’ve learned that pain, when surrendered, becomes a prophet. It speaks of the indwelling faithfulness of God, the nearness of His Spirit, and the power of resurrection life. I’ve stopped trying to explain my suffering and started allowing it to reveal Him. The mercy of God does not always change our circumstances—but it always changes us. It softens what was hardened, heals what was hidden, and restores what was lost. And if He can do that in me—an aging man marked by sorrow and seasoned by grace—He can do it in anyone who dares to walk through the *valley of the shadow of death* with Him, not stepping around it. The invitation is not to avoid pain, but to meet Yeshua in this dark valley, for it is there, in the shadows, that His light shines brightest. And it is there, in the depths, that we discover the indwelling Life we were always meant to live.

The Holy Work of Unfiltered Grief

There comes a moment in every believer’s journey when the soul can no longer pretend. The grief is too deep, the questions too loud, and the ache too persistent to be dressed in polite prayers. It is in this sacred moment that God invites us to pour out our sorrow without filters—not as a failure of

indwelling faith, but as a pathway to it. Scripture does not sanitize suffering; it sanctifies those who are willing to embrace it. The Psalms of lament, such as Psalm 13 and Psalm 42, model a kind of raw, holy honesty that many believers have forgotten how to express. “How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?” (Psalm 13:1) is not a cry of rebellion—it is the voice of a heart refusing to hide. David, Asaph, and the sons of Korah did not edit their anguish; they offered it. And in doing so, they found intimacy with the God who does not flinch at human pain.

To pour out grief before God is to trust Him with the unspoken, the unresolved, and the unhealed. It is to come not with answers, but with tears. The Man of Sorrows, described in Isaiah 53:3, is not distant from our suffering—He is acquainted with it. He does not merely observe our grief; He enters it. When we lament, we do not cry into a void—we cry into the heart of Christ. He welcomes our brokenness, not as a burden, but as a bridge. In fact, lament is one of the most intimate forms of worship noted in the Word of God. It says, I still believe You’re listening, even when I don’t understand. It says, I trust Your character, even when I cannot trace Your hand. This kind of honesty does not drive God away—it draws Him near from the inside out.

Unfiltered grief is not spiritual immaturity—it is spiritual courage. It is the refusal to settle for shallow comfort or religious performance. It is the soul’s insistence that God is big enough to handle our deepest wounds. And He is. When we pour out our lament, we make room for His presence to fill the empty spaces. We allow the Spirit to minister not to the mask, but to the marrow. The Psalms teach us that lament is not the end—it is the beginning. It is the doorway to healing,

the invitation to encounter, and the soil in which hope is reborn. In the presence of the Man of Sorrows, our grief becomes sacred. And in that sacred space, we are not undone—we are remade.

The Sacred Struggle of Grief

Grief often brings questions that pierce deeper than the pain itself. Why now? Why them? Why me? These are not casual inquiries—they are cries from the soul, echoing through the chambers of loss and longing. For many, these questions feel dangerous, even irreverent. But Scripture tells a different story. God does not silence the grieving heart—He engages it, fills it, and comforts it. Like Jacob wrestling with the angel at Peniel (Genesis 32), we are invited into a sacred struggle, one that does not end in answers but in transformation. Jacob did not walk away with clarity—he walked away with a limp and a new name. His wrestling started out as rebellion—then took a Holy turn toward relationship. And so, it is with us. When we ask hard questions in the presence of God, we are not necessarily resisting Him—we are reaching for Him.

The Bible is filled with saints who dared to ask. Job questioned the justice of his suffering. David cried out, “Why, O Lord, do You stand far off?” (Psalm 10:1). Even Yeshua, in His humanity, asked, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). These were not moments of spiritual collapse—they were moments of divine communion. God does not rebuke the honest heart. He embraces it. He wrestles with it. And in that wrestling, something holy happens. We are stripped of pretense, emptied of self-reliance, and positioned for encounter. The questions may remain unanswered, but the soul is changed. Like Jacob, we walk away marked—not by defeat, but by intimacy.

To ask hard questions is to trust that God is not fragile. It is to believe that He is both sovereign and near, both holy and tender. This stage of grief is not a detour—it is a doorway. It leads us deeper into the character of God, into the mystery of His will, and into the reality of His presence. The transformation does not come from getting what we want—it comes from encountering what He wants. And in that encounter, our questions become less about explanation and more about communion. We stop demanding answers and start receiving grace. We stop wrestling for control and start clinging to the One who holds all things together.

So, I encourage you to ask. Wrestle. Weep. God is not offended—He is engaged. He does not withdraw from the struggle; He enters it. And when the dust settles, you may not have the answers you sought, but you will have the presence you longed for. You will walk away changed, not because the pain disappeared, but because the Person of Christ met you in it. And that kind of transformation is worth every question.

Trusting Beyond Emotion

There comes a moment in grief when the soul, weary from wrestling, begins to loosen its grip. Not because the pain has passed, but because the heart has glimpsed something greater than understanding: the sovereignty of God. This is the turning point—not for resolution, but of release. It is the quiet shift from striving to surrender, from demanding answers to declaring trust. Job stood at this precipice when he uttered, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15). His body was broken, his emotions raw, his questions unanswered. Yet his spirit bowed—not in defeat, but in resilient indwelling faith. This is the posture of the surrendered soul.

To trust God's sovereignty when emotions lag is not hypocrisy—it is holiness. It is choosing to anchor the soul in truth when feelings offer no support. The psalmist modeled this when he said, "Why are you cast down, O my soul? Hope in God" (Psalm 42:11). He spoke to his own despair, not with denial, but with direction. Indwelling faith does not erase emotion—it leads it. It speaks into the storm and says, "Peace, be still," even when the waves keep crashing. This kind of trust is not passive—it is active. It is the deliberate choice to believe that God is good, even when life is not. It is the surrender that says, "I do not understand, but I will not let go."

Releasing control is not a one-time act—it is a daily offering. It is the soul's way of saying, "I am not God, and I do not need to be." In grief, this surrender is especially sacred. It does not come easily. It is forged in the fire of loss, shaped by the silence of unanswered prayers, and sealed by the whisper of the Spirit. But when it comes, it brings peace—not the peace of resolution, but the peace of relinquishment. The soul no longer demands to know why—it rests in God's prerogative of the "why." And that rest is holy.

This turning point is not the end of grief—it is the beginning of grace. It is where the soul stops fighting for control and starts abiding in Christ. It is where trust becomes a lifeline, not a luxury. And it is where the heart, though still broken, begins to beat in rhythm with heaven. *Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.* This is not resignation—it is resurrection surrender. It is the soul rising from the ashes, not with answers, but with allegiance. And that kind of trust changes everything.

The Communion of the Mourning Soul

Grief often feels like exile—a lonely wilderness where words fail and companions disappear. But Scripture reveals a deeper truth: grief is not isolation, it is invitation. It is the place where the Comforter draws near, not to remove the sorrow, but to inhabit it. Yeshua promised, “The Helper, the Holy Spirit... will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you” (John 14:26). In our mourning, the Spirit does not offer platitudes—He offers presence, indwelling presence. He ministers as Comforter, not by explaining the pain, but by entering it. He becomes the whisper in the silence, the warmth in the ache, the communion in the solitude. This is the mystery of divine comfort: it does not bypass grief—it sanctifies it.

When Yeshua said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4), He was not romanticizing sorrow. He was revealing its sacred potential. Mourning opens the heart to a kind of comfort that cannot be manufactured or mimicked. It is the comfort of Christ Himself—gentle, near, and unshakable. In grief, we do not find answers—we find Him. And in finding Him, we discover that comfort is not the absence of pain, but the presence of God. The Holy Spirit does not rush the process. He sits with us in it. He weeps with us, groans with us, and intercedes for us with “wordless sighs too deep for words” (Romans 8:26). This is not abandonment—it is communion.

The Comforter does not come to erase our humanity—He comes to inhabit it. He reminds us that Yeshua Himself was “a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3). Our mourning is not foreign to heaven—it is familiar. And because of that, we are never alone. The Spirit’s presence transforms grief from a tomb into a temple. It becomes the place where

we meet God—not in triumph, but in tenderness. The tears we shed become prayers. The silence we endure becomes sacred space. And the ache we carry becomes the altar where comfort is poured out.

To mourn is to be blessed—not because grief is good, but because God is good. The Comforter does not promise to fix what is broken—He promises to fill it. And in that filling, we are changed. We become people of communion, not isolation. We learn to walk with sorrow and joy, with questions and trust, with wounds and worship. This is the ministry of comfort. It is not loud—it is lasting. It is not quick—it is holy. And it is available to every soul who dares to mourn in the presence of God.

When Sorrow Becomes Seed

Grief, when held in the hands of God, does not remain a wound—it becomes a witness. This is the mystery of redemptive reflection: the ability to look back on pain and see purpose. Not because the suffering was light, but because the Spirit was present. In time, the soul begins to perceive what once felt unbearable as the birthplace of ministry. The tears become water for future harvests. The silence becomes soil for testimony. And the sorrow becomes seed—planted in indwelling faith, raised in hope, and multiplied in love. Joseph understood this when he said to his brothers, “What you meant for evil, God meant for good” (Genesis 50:20). His suffering was not erased—it was confirmed.

Redemptive reflection does not deny the pain—it dignifies it. It allows the soul to revisit the valley, not with bitterness, but with vision. The Holy Spirit begins to reveal how each loss, each ache, each unanswered prayer was not wasted. It

was woven. Woven into a tapestry of grace, where the threads of suffering become the backdrop for glory. This is not spiritual optimism—it is divine reality. Scripture is filled with stories of sorrow turned to strength. Ruth’s widowhood led to a legacy. David’s lament birthed psalms. Paul’s imprisonment produced epistles. And Christ’s crucifixion became our redemptive story. In every case, pain was not the end—it was the beginning.

As redemptive reflection deepens, testimony begins to form. The soul no longer hides its wounds—it honors them, each is a battle scar. It speaks of grief not as a curse, but as a calling. Ministry flows from the very places that once felt like tombs. The mourner becomes a messenger. The broken become builders. And the comforted become comforters. This is the divine exchange: beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, praise for despair (Isaiah 61:3). The story of suffering becomes a song of the indwelling proof of our salvation—not because the pain disappears, but because God appears in it.

To reflect redemptively is to partner with heaven. It is to say, “I will not waste my sorrow—I will sow it.” And in that sowing, lives are changed. Generations are touched. The Church is strengthened. And the name of Yeshua is magnified. This is the power of testimony, our story. It does not glorify the pain—it glorifies the Redeemer. And in doing so, it turns every tear into a tool, every scar into a story, and every loss into a legacy.

Grief may have marked the beginning of your journey, but it does not define the end. In the hands of the Redeemer, sorrow becomes sacred ground—where testimony is birthed and ministry takes root. What once felt like devastation is now a doorway to divine purpose. The pain you endured is not

wasted; it is woven into the fabric of a greater story, one that echoes Joseph's declaration: "What you meant for evil, God meant for good." This is not mere survival—it is spiritual multiplication.

So, walk forward—not as one defeated, but as one deployed. Your wounds are not liabilities; they are invitations. Invitations to comfort others, to speak truth, to carry hope. The Holy Spirit, who walked with you, in you, through the valley, now empowers you to lead others through theirs. Your sorrow is a seed—and the harvest will be eternal. Let your life declare what your grief has taught: that God is faithful, that redemption is real, and that every tear sown in surrender will reap a testimony of grace.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT

Midnight in Scripture is not merely a time—it is a symbol. It marks the deepest darkness, the moment when hope seems furthest away. Yet again and again, God chooses midnight as the hour of intervention. Paul and Silas sang hymns in prison “at midnight” (Acts 16:25), and the earth shook with deliverance. The Israelites were released from Egypt “at midnight” (Exodus 12:29–31), and the long night of bondage gave way to freedom. Midnight is not the end—it is the turning point. For the believer, it is the moment heaven begins to move.

Grief often feels like a midnight season—long, silent, and suffocating. But Scripture assures us that “weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5). The promise is not that we will avoid sorrow, but that sorrow will not have the final word. On the other side of midnight, joy is waiting—not shallow happiness, but deep, redemptive joy. The kind that comes from knowing Christ has entered our suffering and emerged victorious. A midnight tomb preceded the resurrection itself. But when the stone rolled away, the world saw what God had been preparing in the dark: life, light, and eternal hope.

Hope on the other side of midnight is not wishful thinking—it is anchored in the character of God. He is the One who “gives songs in the night” (Job 35:10), who “turns mourning into

dancing” (Psalm 30:11), and who “makes all things new” (Revelation 21:5). The believer does not wait in vain. Even when emotions lag and answers are delayed, the Spirit whispers, “The morning is coming.” And when it comes, it brings clarity, comfort, and a commissioning. The darkness was not wasted—it was preparation. The sorrow was not punishment—it was planting. And the joy that follows is not temporary—it is eternal.

So, if you find yourself at midnight, hold fast. Lift your eyes to the horizon of grace. The dawn is not far off. The Comforter is nearby. And the Redeemer is already at work. On the other side of midnight, your testimony will rise, your joy will deepen, and your hope will shine like the morning sun. For in Christ, even the darkest night bows to the light of His love and indwelling Life.

A Title Etched in Grief and Redemption

The title “The Other Side of Midnight” was not born from theological study or poetic inspiration—it was born from heartbreak. When my younger sister Donna passed away at just sixteen years of age, the world as I knew it collapsed. Her death was sudden, shattering, and unexplainable. In the wake of that loss, I had no framework for biblical grief. I didn’t know how to mourn with hope, how to wrestle with God, or how to let sorrow become sacred. All I knew was that midnight had come—and it felt permanent.

Yet even in that darkness, something stirred. As we engraved the words “A shout of joy comes in the morning” on Donna’s stone, I didn’t fully understand what they meant. I wasn’t ready to. But somehow, those words carried a whisper of eternity—a hint that this wasn’t the end. They spoke of a

dawn I couldn't yet see, a joy I couldn't yet feel, and a Redeemer I couldn't yet trust. It was as if the Spirit Himself had chosen the phrase, planting a seed of hope in soil too raw to receive it. That engraving became a prophetic marker—not of closure, but of promise. It became a theme for this book.

Years later, as I began to walk with Christ more deeply and study grief through the lens of Scripture, I realized that “The Other Side of Midnight” was more than a poetic phrase—it was a spiritual reality. Midnight is the hour of deepest sorrow, but it is also the threshold of divine intervention. It is where God begins to move, even when we cannot. Donna's passing marked my midnight, but her legacy—engraved in stone and etched in my heart—became the doorway to ministry. Her life and death became a seed, and through the Spirit's comfort, that seed has borne fruit in testimony, teaching, and the commissioning of others.

I did not know how to grieve biblically then. But God, in His mercy, met me anyway. He waited in the midnight. He whispered through the engraving. And He carried me to the other side—not by removing the pain, but by redeeming it. Now, every time I speak of “The Other Side of Midnight,” I do so not as one who escaped grief, but as one who was transformed by it. Donna's story lives on—not in sorrow, but in sacred purpose. And through it, I've come to believe that no midnight is final when Christ is present.

We must learn how to grieve, or hope will get lost!

Grieving with Eyes Lifted

Grief, when viewed through the lens of eternity, begins to shift. It does not disappear, but it is reframed—no longer a final chapter, but a temporary ache on the way to reunion. For

the believer, sorrow is not the end of the story. It is the space between resurrection and return. Paul writes, “We do not grieve as those who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13), not to minimize mourning, but to magnify the promise. Our tears are real, but so is our hope. We grieve, yes—but we grieve forward. We grieve with expectation. We grieve with our eyes lifted toward the horizon of eternity.

The promise of resurrection transforms how we carry loss. It reminds us that death is not a thief—it is a threshold. Those who die in Christ are not gone—they are glorified. They are not lost—they are waiting. And we, who remain, begin to long for eternity with a deeper urgency, not as an escape from pain, but as a fulfillment of love. Heaven becomes more than a doctrine—it becomes a destination. The veil between now and forever feels thinner. The ache of absence becomes a holy hunger. And the believer begins to live with eyes fixed on the unseen, knowing that “what is mortal will be swallowed up by life” (2 Corinthians 5:4).

This eternal perspective does not numb the heart—it awakens it. It teaches us to live with purpose, to love with abandon, and to speak with urgency. Every moment matters. Every soul matters. And every sorrow becomes a seed for glory. The Spirit reminds us that “our light and momentary afflictions are achieving for us an eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17). What feels unbearable now will be eclipsed by the beauty of reunion. The loved ones we mourn are not just memories—they are part of the great cloud of witnesses, cheering us on until the trumpet sounds and the dead in Christ rise.

To grieve with hope is to walk through the valley with a map. It is to feel the pain but refuse despair. It is to mourn deeply

but live boldly. And it is to declare, even through tears, that Christ has conquered death, and that eternity is not far off. This is the power of the gospel—it does not remove grief, but it redeems it. It does not erase longing, but it fulfills it. And it does not silence sorrow, but it sings over it with resurrection joy.

Hope Made Alive Within

As the believer begins to long for eternity, a deeper mystery unfolds: eternity is not only ahead—it is already within. The resurrection Life of Yeshua does not merely await us in heaven; it indwells us now. This is the joy that grief cannot steal—the joy of Christ alive in the soul. Paul declared, “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). This is not poetic language—it is a spiritual awakening. The same Yeshua who conquered death now lives in us, and His Life becomes our joy, our strength, and our eternal perspective.

Grief may shake the emotions, but it cannot uproot the indwelling Christ. His joy is not circumstantial—it is covenantal. It flows from union, not from ease. And in the valley of sorrow, it becomes our anchor. The believer discovers that joy is not the absence of mourning—it is the presence of the Messiah. Yeshua Himself said, “I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you” (John 16:22). This joy is not fragile—it is eternal. It is the joy of resurrection, the joy of reunion, and the joy of indwelling Life.

As we grieve with hope, we begin to live with joy—not a shallow happiness, but a Spirit-born gladness that flows from knowing we are never alone. The Life of Yeshua within us becomes our comfort, our communion, and our

commissioning. We do not merely wait for heaven—we walk with heaven inside us. And that changes everything. The believer becomes a carrier of eternal perspective, a vessel of resurrection joy, and a witness to the indwelling Christ. Even in grief, we shine. Even in mourning, we minister. And even in longing, we live.

This is the mystery of the gospel: that the One who conquered death now dwells in us, and His joy becomes our strength. On the other side of midnight, we do not merely find hope—we find Him. And in finding Him, we discover that eternity has already begun.

Beloved reader, do not rush past your grief. Do not despise your sorrow. And do not fear the pain that breaks your heart open. These are not signs of weakness—they are invitations to encounter. Every tear you shed, every question you ask, and every ache you carry is part of a sacred journey—a journey that leads to the fullness of Christ. The path of mourning is not a detour from God’s plan; it is often the very soil where His eternal purpose begins to bloom.

You were not meant to bypass grief—you were meant to walk through it with Yeshua indwelling you, guiding you, and transforming you. Embrace each step. Let the sorrow soften your heart. Let the pain deepen your dependence. And let the questions draw you into communion. For in this holy process, you will discover that Christ is not only your destination—He is your companion. He is your comfort. He is your joy. And He is your fullness.

Walk boldly. Mourn honestly. Hope fiercely. And trust that the God who began a good work in you will carry it to completion—through every midnight, into every morning,

and into the eternal glory of union with Him. This is your inheritance: not just survival, but sanctification. Not just healing, but holiness. Not just comfort, but commissioning. Embrace it all—and you will find that grief, when surrendered, becomes the gateway to glory.

LEGACY NOTE

MEMORY | IMPACT

From Trauma to Testimony

Grief did not begin for me in adulthood—it was seeded in childhood, long before I had the language to name it. Trauma came early, quietly, and without permission. As a boy, I learned to navigate sorrow with survival instincts rather than spiritual tools. Pain became familiar, but not yet sacred. I carried wounds that shaped my view of God, others, and myself—wounds that whispered lies about worth, safety, and love. And though I grew in years, those early fractures remained, tucked beneath the surface, waiting to be redeemed.

Then came the loss that shattered everything: the death of my younger sister, Donna, at just sixteen years of age. Her passing was not only a heartbreak—it was a spiritual rupture. I had no framework for biblical grief, no theology for mourning, no understanding of how to process sorrow in the presence of God. All I knew was that midnight had come, and it felt eternal. When we engraved the words “A shout of joy comes in the morning” on her stone, not fully knowing what they meant—but sensing, somehow, that they carried a promise. A whisper of hope. A seed of eternity.

Years later, as I began to walk more deeply with Christ, I realized that every trauma, every loss, and every unanswered question had been part of a divine tapestry. Donna’s life and death became a turning point—not just for me, but for the ministry that would follow. Her memory now lives in every

book I write, every soul I comfort, and every reformer I commission. The pain I once buried has become the soil for testimony. The grief I once feared has become the gateway to glory. And the trauma I once carried alone has become a shared story of redemption.

This legacy is not mine alone—it belongs to every person who has ever mourned without a map, grieved without a guide, or suffered without understanding. It belongs to those who are still walking through midnight, wondering if morning will ever come. To them I say: *it will because Christ is faithful*. Because Donna's story lives on. And because the Comforter does not waste sorrow—He uses it for His glory. My life is proof. Her legacy is proof. All those loved ones I have lost are a legacy. And the ministry born from our shared pain is a living altar to the God who turns mourning into mission.

Dear reader, if you find yourself in the depths of mourning, know this: your sorrow is not a dead end—it is a doorway. The grief you carry is not a sign of weakness, but of love. And when surrendered to the Lord, it becomes the very soil where joy can take root. Scripture promises, “Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy” (Psalm 126:5). This is not a random sentiment—it is divine reality. The joy of the Lord is not a denial of pain; it is His presence that shines through it. It is the strength that rises when you have none left. It is the comfort that comes when words fail. And it is the holy gladness that grows when you choose to trust Him in the valley.

Turning mourning into joy begins with an invitation. Invite the Man of Sorrows—Yeshua Himself—into your grief. Speak honestly. Weep freely. Wrestle faithfully. And then,

listen. The Holy Spirit, your Comforter, will begin to whisper truth into the silence. He will remind you of eternity, of resurrection, and of the indwelling Life that cannot be shaken. As you walk with Him, your sorrow will not vanish—but it will be transformed into ministry. You will begin to feel the stirrings of joy—not shallow happiness, but deep, Spirit-born gladness. And in time, you will find yourself comforting others with the same comfort you received. This is the joy of the Lord: not an escape from mourning, but a miracle within it.

Many times, turning mourning into the joy of the Lord requires two essential steps: finding a solid, biblically sound discipler and joining a Christ-centered support group. Grief has a way of isolating the heart, making it vulnerable to deception, despair, and spiritual passivity. But healing rarely happens in isolation. A mature discipler—rooted in Scripture and led by the Spirit—can walk with you through the valleys, helping you interpret your sorrow through the lens of truth rather than emotion. They speak life when your own voice falters, and they anchor you in the promises of God when your footing feels unstable. Likewise, a Christ-centered support group surrounds you with fellow believers who understand the weight of mourning and the power of resurrection hope. In that sacred community, tears are shared, prayers are lifted, and testimonies of healing become fuel for your journey. Together, these two gifts—discipleship and Spirit-led fellowship—create a pathway for grief to be transformed into joy, not by human strength, but by the indwelling life of Christ.

Authentic believers must exercise discernment when seeking counsel and support, especially in seasons of deep mourning.

While secular counseling may offer temporary relief or coping strategies, it often centers on humanistic psychology—emphasizing self-discovery, emotional validation, and behavioral modification—rather than the transformative truth of Scripture. This can subtly shift the focus away from Christ and toward self, leading believers to anchor their healing in methods rather than in the Messiah. Biblical guidance, on the other hand, confronts sorrow with eternal perspective, calling the mourner to surrender, renewal, and resurrection life. The Word of God does not merely soothe emotions—it sanctifies them. That’s why authentic healing requires counsel rooted in the authority of Scripture and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. When believers choose biblical discipleship and Christ-centered support, they are not just comforted—they are conformed to the image of Christ, even through grief.

AVOID THE BAND-AIDS

Grieving alongside unsaved, non-indwelt individuals—those who do not possess the Life of Christ within—can be spiritually hazardous for authentic believers. While their intentions may be sincere, their worldview is shaped by fleshly reasoning, emotional relativism, and psychological ideologies that often contradict the heart of the Gospel. In moments of vulnerability, sorrow can become a breeding ground for deception. When surrounded by those who do not walk in the Spirit, believers may be subtly influenced to adopt mindsets rooted in entitlement, self-preservation, or the pursuit of personal justice—ideologies that elevate human rights above divine surrender. These voices may encourage you to “demand closure,” “assert your boundaries,” or “claim what you deserve,” yet Yeshua never modeled such responses

in His own suffering. He laid down His rights, embraced the cross, and entrusted His grief to the Father.

The danger lies in the slow erosion of spiritual discernment. When grief is processed through the lens of psychology rather than the Word, believers risk exchanging the mind of Christ for the philosophies of man. This can lead to bitterness, self-focus, and a distorted view of healing—one that seeks comfort without sanctification, relief without resurrection. The indwelt believer is called to a higher path: to grieve with hope, to suffer with purpose, and to be conformed to Christ even in sorrow. That kind of transformation cannot be found in secular support or non-indwelt companionship. It requires fellowship with those who carry the same Spirit, who speak the language of heaven, and who point you back to the cross when the world tempts you to look inward.

Yeshua never promised emotional ease—He promised eternal life. And that Life, when released from within, reshapes grief into glory. To walk that path, believers must guard their hearts, choose their companions wisely, and anchor their mourning in the truth that only those indwelt by Christ can truly understand: that death is not the end, and sorrow is not sovereign. Only Yeshua is.

LEARN FROM MY MISTAKES

I lived in a world marked by relentless rejection, pain, and loss—a landscape where sorrow seemed to shout louder than hope. The wounds ran deep, and for a time, I reached for every self-help fix the world offered: coping strategies, psychological insights, emotional affirmations. But none of them healed me. They only bound me tighter to the very past I longed to escape. These methods taught me to manage my

pain, not to be transformed by it. They encouraged me to revisit my trauma, rehearse my losses, and redefine my identity through brokenness. But I'm here to tell you—none of it worked. It wasn't until I surrendered to the Life of Yeshua within me that true healing began. His indwelling presence didn't just comfort me; it rewrote my story.

Yeshua doesn't offer a better version of your old life—He gives you a new past. Through His death and resurrection, He buried your sorrow, your shame, and your rejection in the grave. And when He rose, He gave you His history: one of righteousness, acceptance, and eternal belonging. That's the miracle of being in Christ. You are no longer defined by what was done to you, but by what He did for you. The world says, "Fix yourself." Yeshua says, "Die to self and live through Me." That's not a bandage—it's a resurrection. And once you taste that kind of freedom, you'll never settle for anything less.

Yeshua did more than offer us a new future—He gave us a new past, His past. When we are placed in Christ, His sinless history becomes ours, His perfect obedience replaces our failures, and His victory over death rewrites our story from beginning to end. We are no longer tethered to the wounds, regrets, or losses of our former life. Yet grief, if not surrendered to the Lord, can become a tool in the enemy's hands. Satan is a master of distortion—he uses sorrow to keep believers bound to their old identity, whispering lies that healing is impossible and that pain defines them. If left unchecked, grief becomes a spiritual stronghold, a cycle of remembrance that resists the redemptive work of Christ. But when we embrace the truth of our union with Yeshua—His past, His present indwelling, and His eternal future—we step

into freedom. Grief loses its grip, and the enemy loses his leverage. In Christ, even our mourning is redeemed.

IDENTITY AND GRIEF

Our new identity in Yeshua is not a symbolic upgrade—it is a divine exchange. Scripture declares that “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Through spiritual union with the crucified and risen Messiah, we are no longer defined by our former self, our past griefs, or the wounds that once shaped us. Romans 6:4 affirms that we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that “just as Christ was raised from the dead... we too might walk in newness of life.” This newness is not circumstantial—it is spiritual and eternal. In Yeshua, our identity is rooted in His righteousness, His victory over sin and death, and His indwelling Life that empowers us to suffer with purpose and overcome with joy.

Grief, though real, no longer holds dominion over the believer who walks in this identity. The enemy may attempt to use sorrow to anchor us to the past, but the truth of our position in Christ severs that chain. Philippians 3:13–14 calls us to “forget what lies behind and strain forward to what lies ahead,” pressing on toward the upward call of God in Messiah Yeshua. This is not denial—it is divine perspective. In Him, suffering becomes a fellowship (Philippians 3:10), grief becomes a gateway to glory (Romans 8:18), and every tear sown in indwelling faith becomes a harvest of joy (Psalm 126:5). Our identity in Yeshua clears us of bondage to past grief and commissions us to walk in the victory of His resurrection—even amid sorrow.

IN CONCLUSION

Biblical Process for Dealing with Grief and Loss

1. Acknowledge the Reality of Grief

- **Scripture:** John 11:35, Ecclesiastes 3:4
- Grief is not a sign of spiritual failure—it is a human response to loss. Even Yeshua wept at Lazarus' tomb. Denying sorrow delays healing. Begin by acknowledging your pain before God, allowing yourself to feel without shame.

2. Bring Your Grief to the Lord in Prayer

- **Scripture:** Psalm 62:8, 1 Peter 5:7
- Pour out your heart to God. He invites you to cast your burdens upon Him. Prayer is not just a spiritual discipline—it is a lifeline for the grieving soul. Speak honestly, cry freely, and listen expectantly.

3. Surrender Your Pain to the Cross

- **Scripture:** Galatians 2:20, Romans 6:6
- Your grief must be crucified with Christ. This means releasing your sorrow, regrets, and unanswered questions into His death. In doing so, you allow His resurrection Life to begin transforming your mourning into purpose.

4. Renew Your Mind with the Truth of Your Identity

- **Scripture:** Romans 12:2, Colossians 3:1–3
- Grief often distorts identity. Replace lies with truth: you are not defined by loss, but by your union with Yeshua. Meditate on Scriptures that affirm your new creation status, eternal security, and spiritual authority.

5. Reject Psychological Ideologies

- **Scripture:** Colossians 2:8, 2 Corinthians 10:5
- Be discerning. The world may offer self-help, emotional entitlement, or victimhood narratives. These bind you to your past. Take every thought captive and align your healing with the Word, not worldly wisdom.

6. Surround Yourself with Indwelt Believers

- **Scripture:** Hebrews 10:24–25, Proverbs 13:20
- Healing happens in Spirit-led community. Seek out mature disciplers and Christ-centered support groups. Avoid grieving in isolation or with those who do not carry the Life of Christ—they may unintentionally reinforce bondage.

7. Embrace the Fellowship of Suffering with Christ

- **Scripture:** Philippians 3:10, 2 Corinthians 1:5
- Your grief is not wasted. In Christ, suffering becomes sacred. You are invited to share in His sufferings, not as punishment, but as a pathway to deeper intimacy and eternal glory.

8. Release the Life of Christ Within You

- **Scripture:** Colossians 1:27, Romans 8:11
- Healing comes not from coping, but from releasing the indwelling Life of Yeshua. Let His Spirit comfort, empower, and renew you. His resurrection power is not distant—it resides in you.

9. Walk in the Newness of Life

- **Scripture:** Romans 6:4, Isaiah 61:3

- Grief may leave scars, but it does not define your walk. In Christ, you are called to beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, and praise instead of despair. Step forward in indwelling faith, knowing your sorrow has been redeemed.

10. Comfort Others with the Comfort You've Received

- **Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 1:3–4
- Your healing becomes a ministry. As God comforts you, you are commissioned to comfort others. Your testimony of grief and redemption will become a beacon of hope for those still in the valley.

Grief is not a detour—it is part of the path. And if you are in Christ, that path leads to victory. But hear this clearly: victory is not found in skipping steps, suppressing sorrow, or rushing past the pain. It is found in walking through every phase of grief with Yeshua as your companion, your Comforter, and your resurrection Life. The world may tell you to “move on,” but the Spirit says, “Move through.” There is no shortcut to healing, only surrender. And in that surrender, you will discover a strength that does not come from you—it comes from Him.

You are not called to pretend you're fine. You are called to be refined. That means allowing the Holy Spirit to meet you in shock, sorrow, wrestling, surrender, and renewal. Each phase is holy. Each tear is seen. And each ache is an opportunity for deeper intimacy with the Man of Sorrows who bore your grief on the cross. Do not fear the process. Embrace it. For it is in the valley that your roots grow deep, your indwelling faith is forged, and your testimony is born.

But do not stay there. You were not made to camp in mourning—you were made to rise in resurrection. The same Spirit who raised Yeshua from the dead dwells in you (Romans 8:11), and He is calling you forward. Not in denial, but in dominion. Not in haste, but in holiness. Go forth in victory—not because the grief is gone, but because Christ reigns within it. Let your scars become stories. Let your sorrow become seed. And let your life declare that grief is not your master—Yeshua is.

Take the time. Honor the process. But do not forget the promise: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4). That comfort is not passive—it is powerful. It equips you to walk in newness of life, to comfort others, and to carry the glory of God through your testimony. You are not just surviving grief—you are being sanctified through it. And on the other side of midnight, joy awaits. Go forth, beloved. The victory is already yours in Christ.

Abba Father, I come before You not as one who understands the depths of sorrow, but as one who has walked through it—marked, refined, and surrendered. You have seen every tear, every ache, every silent cry that words could not carry. And yet, You did not leave me there. You sent Your Son, Yeshua, to bear grief itself—to crucify loss, and to resurrect hope.

So now, Father, I release my grief to the crucified and resurrecting Life of Yeshua. I lay down the weight of loss at the foot of the Cross, and I entrust it to the One who conquered death, who rose not only to redeem but to indwell.

Let His Life rise within me—Not as a distant comfort, but as a present power.

Let the sorrow that once defined me be swallowed up in His victory. Let the memory of loss be transformed into testimony, and let the ache become an altar where Your glory dwells.

I choose not to carry what You have already borne. I choose not to grieve as one without hope. I choose to be mastered by mercy, and to walk in the fullness of the indwelling Christ.

Father, breathe resurrection into every place grief once ruled.

Let Your Spirit testify within me: That Yeshua lives, and because He lives, I live also. In His holy, indwelling Name—Yeshua the Messiah—I pray, Amen.

I would also like to lovingly recommend two of my other books that have deeply ministered to readers walking through seasons of grief, growth, and spiritual renewal: *Devotions with Yeshua* and *The Book of Prayers*. *Devotions with Yeshua* offers daily reflections that draw the heart into intimate communion with Christ, while *The Book of Prayers* provides Spirit-led intercessions for every season of life. Both resources are designed to anchor believers in truth, stir hope, and cultivate a deeper walk with the indwelling Life of Christ.

Review or order here: [Lulu.com/Spotlight/DrPhinney/](https://lulu.com/Spotlight/DrPhinney/)

TOP SCRIPTURES TO REMEMBER

Psalms 34:18 – “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”

2. Psalm 147:3 – “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

3. Isaiah 41:10 – “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God...”

Comfort in Mourning

4. Matthew 5:4 – “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

5. 2 Corinthians 1:3–4 – “...the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction...”

6. John 11:35 – “Jesus wept.”

Hope Beyond Sorrow

7. Revelation 21:4 – “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more...”

8. Romans 15:13 – “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing...”

9. Psalm 30:5 – “...Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.”

Crying Out to God

10. Psalm 42:11 – “Why are you cast down, O my soul...? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him...”

12. Lamentations 3:31–32 – “For the Lord will not cast off forever... he will have compassion...”

Shared Sorrow and Support

13. Romans 12:15 – “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

14. Galatians 6:2 – “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Grief in Biblical Figures

15. 2 Samuel 18:33 – “...O my son Absalom... Would I had died instead of you...”

16. Job 1:20–21 – “...The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Refining Through Sorrow

17. Isaiah 53:3–4 – “...a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief...”

18. Hebrews 4:15 – “...we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses...”

Eternal Perspective

19. 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – “...that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.”

20. Psalm 116:15 – “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

OTHER PASSAGES:

In seasons of sorrow, the Word of God becomes our refuge. “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18), and “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds” (Psalm 147:3). When grief floods our soul, we remember that “Blessed are those who mourn, for

they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4), and that “Jesus wept” (John 11:35), showing us that even the Son of God entered into human sorrow. “Fear not, for I am with you,” He says in Isaiah 41:10, “be not dismayed, for I am your God.” In our darkest nights, “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning” (Psalm 30:5), and “The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still” (Exodus 14:14).

Grief is not foreign to Scripture—it is etched into the lives of David, Job, Jeremiah, and even Jesus. David cried, “O my son Absalom... Would I had died instead of you” (2 Samuel 18:33). Job declared, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21). Jeremiah lamented, “Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears” (Jeremiah 9:1). And Isaiah foretold of Christ, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3).

Yet in sorrow, we are not abandoned. “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). “Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you” (Psalm 55:22). “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him” (Psalm 28:7). Even when our hearts cry out, “Why are you cast down, O my soul?” (Psalm 42:11), we are reminded to “Hope in God; for I shall again praise him.”

Grief is not the end of the story. “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord, “plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11). “All things work together for good to those who love God” (Romans 8:28). “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17). “And God shall wipe away every

tear from their eyes...” (Revelation 21:4). Jesus promises, “I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2), and “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25).

So, we grieve, but not as those without hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). We mourn, but we are comforted. We sorrow, but we are sustained. And in every tear, every ache, every silent night, we are held by the One who understands grief more deeply than we ever could—and who promises that joy will rise again.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Stephen R. Phinney – Founder &
President of IOM America

Dr. Stephen R. Phinney is a prophetic voice in a fractured age—an author, teacher, and eschatologist whose ministry blends biblical scholarship with Spirit-led urgency. As founder and president of IOM America (Institute of Ministry), Dr. Phinney has devoted his life to declaring the indwelling life of Yeshua and equipping the Church to stand unshaken amid cultural collapse.

His writings—marked by theological depth and prophetic clarity—challenge believers to return to the Cross, embrace co-crucifixion, and walk in perfect union with Christ. From devotionals rooted in Hebrew word studies to systematic theology confronting liberal ideologies, Dr. Phinney wields truth as both sword and salve. His recent monograph, *Kingdoms at War*, ignited a global conversation around liberalism, cultural rebellion, and authentic Christianity.

With decades of ministry leadership, media production, and creative outreach, Dr. Phinney inspires a multigenerational audience—particularly Gen-Z—to rise in courage, clarity, and consecration. His voice carries the ache of the watchman and the fire of the reformer. Whether preaching, podcasting, writing, or mentoring, he lives to awaken the remnant and proclaim: *Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

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OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

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