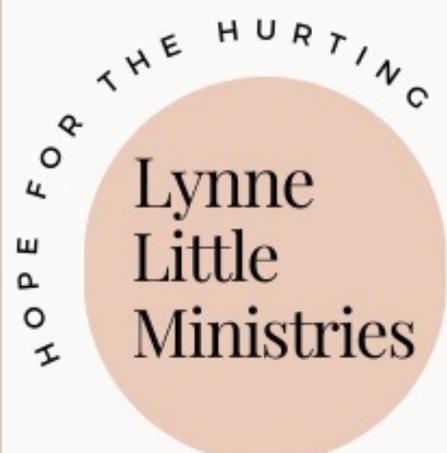


Checklist for the Grieving

HOW SHALL I THEN LIVE?

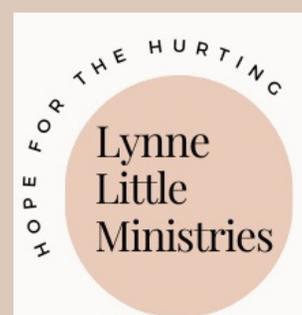


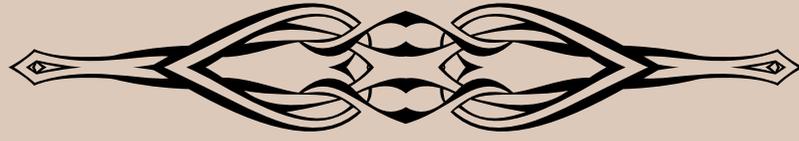
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You have experienced unthinkable tragedy. I too endured the worst when my only child was killed in an automobile accident. At the time it felt like my life was over. Even though I was a person of faith, it took a long time to regain a sense of normality. I offer these suggestions to aid you in your passage through pain.

1. **Disregard** all assumptions of what are supposed to be “typical” ways to grieve. This includes any comparisons between others’ experiences, any “steps” that imply that grief follows a particular order, or suggestions that your progress is insufficient to any random standard.
2. **Be kind** to yourself in this season. Allow yourself room to grieve. Cry, journal, eat what you like when you can, go outside often, exercise sufficiently so that you become tired enough to sleep, watch only uplifting programs, and listen to music that brings joy, not sorrow. Fall asleep to the sound of beautiful things: ocean waves, scriptures, soothing music, podcasts, or audio books.
3. **Distance** yourself from negative people to the extent that you can. Surround yourself with affirming friends.
4. **Read** all you can about others’ experiences. It helps to know that others have gone on before you and lived to tell it.
5. **Remember** God. You may be angry with God, but don’t leave Him out of the loop. Pray for the strength and courage to go on.





6. **Forgive** those who say thoughtless things. What they say can be very hurtful. People do not generally know what to say to you in these circumstances. Holding grudges will increase your pain. Forgive them, not because they deserve it, but because *you* do. You deserve to live free.

7. **Consider** joining a grief support group appropriate to your loss. It is not one-size-fits-all. For instance, bereaved parents benefit more from a group that addresses the loss of a child. If necessary, find a group out of your circle of acquaintances. You may feel more free to express yourself with strangers. Visit more than one group until you find the best fit.

8. **Search** for ways to forget yourself throughout the day. Every step you take outside your circumstance brings you closer to restoration. Force yourself to get out of bed and find something that engages your full attention. When you can, find ways to give out of your pain. It will no doubt be the most difficult thing you will do. But inexplicably, it helps speed healing.

9. **Persevering** through grief takes great courage and energy. Find sources of positive replenishment and make use of them. Do what you love. Play an instrument, paint, knit, write, sew, crochet, read, garden, sing, pray, shop, invite the grandkids, or volunteer at your favorite charity. When you fill your life with good things, you will be less likely to rely on unhealthy coping mechanisms.

10. **Find** something to make you laugh each day.

