

SORROW NOT, 1 Thessalonians 4:13 November 25, 2018

CONNECT

1. What joys and griefs are you experiencing right now? Share one example of each.
2. As you look to this holiday season, which parts do you look forward to? Which parts will be hard?

CELEBRATE

3. How have you been told to handle grief in the past (in churches, in family, among friends)? Were you allowed to express it? Did you feel comfortable doing so?
4. As Christians, is it appropriate to grieve and experience sorrow? Read Matthew 5:4, John 11:35 and Psalm 34:18.
5. What does it mean to grieve without hope? Why is this kind of grief so devastating?
6. What specific hope does Paul want the Thessalonians to focus on? Read 1 Thessalonians 4:14, then 1 Peter 1:3–6. How does this living hope change the nature of grief?
7. Based on this, what does it mean to grieve with hope? Which aspects of it are similar to grieving without hope? Which aspects are different?
8. Read Romans 5:1–5. How does hope change suffering? What does it turn suffering into?
9. When life is hard, where is God? Read Psalm 34:18.
10. Jesus experienced everything we do (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus suffered the death of his adoptive father, Joseph, and the killing of his cousin and good friend, John. What does it mean to you that your God has personally experienced how hard life can be?

CONTRIBUTE

11. Think about the places in church in which you participate (small groups, Sunday Communities, Bible studies, ministries you serve with). Are these safe places to express the full range of emotions? If not, how can you make them safer places for people to express what they're feeling?
12. Take time to think of at least one person in your life who is experiencing grief. Pray for them. Then ask God to show you how you can tangibly love and serve them during this holiday season.