

## Journaling through Grief

**Connie Berg**

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*A user-friendly self-help resource, Journaling through Grief contains encouraging scriptures and prompts for coping with the loss of a loved one.*

Connie Berg's *Journaling through Grief* is a hope-filled, Bible-based resource for those navigating loss and the process of healing.

This comforting book begins with a personal letter to those who are grieving. It describes its journal pages as a safe place to write one's innermost thoughts and feelings throughout the grieving process. Its individual entry spaces are designed to be encouraging, and the book asserts that the journal can be used to track one's progress and growth. Biblical verses are present as a means of expanding on the process of grief, and to provide support; they are followed by brief but precise reflections on their words.

More distinctive is Berg's raw documentation of her own experiences with loss and grief. These include her husband's devastating ALS diagnosis, his later untimely death, her feelings of loneliness and sorrow after the funeral, and her struggles to encourage and offer support to her children while she grieved. These memories are mined for insights; because Berg found encouragement from scriptural teachings and messages, she hopes to inspire the same hope and healing in others.

The scriptural references trend toward biblical characters' own struggles with grief, though there are also uplifting verses about not losing heart, using faith as a source for refuge and strength, having hope for restoration, and experiencing joy again. Indeed, this is a book that suggests that people can grow in their faith from the process of grief. It recommends using prayer to cope with sadness and loss. Its reflections are gentle; it discusses the promises of the Bible in musing tones, promising the light of God's love. But despite its own centering perspective, the book also acknowledges that grief is different for everyone, as is the duration that it takes for people to heal. Feelings of guilt, anger, weariness, and loneliness are all given nods, though they are not the focus of this hopeful work.

Most ample is the provided space for recording one's personal thoughts on the recommended topics: there are prompts to discuss finding comfort and strength in God, becoming aware of God's presence even in times of grief, and placing trust in God even during times of uncertainty. These lines are followed by the concluding prompt to write down "my prayer for the day." There is also space for photographs representing special memories, and to write letters to a lost loved one. These help to customize the work, if still within the book's own parameters. The book's nature-based prompts are also soothing, if familiar: sorrow is compared to long nights, and morning to hope. The book gestures to rainbows as symbols of hope, too, as they often follow storms. It takes comfort in the certainty of the sun rising at the start of each day. Its confidence that restoration and healing will occur is a constant.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (May 3, 2022)

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