



## SINGLE PARENTING HOME BIBLE STUDY

# GET UP & GET GOING

## Lesson 2

10:00 – 10:05

### I. OBJECTIVE

- ✚ To understand the emotional weight of the loss of a marriage or parent
- ✚ To Explore how to overcome this particular grief

10:05-10:15

### II. EXAMINING THE ISSUE

#### A. In General, Life is a Roller Coaster

The up's and down's of life are mimicked by amusement park rides. Think about some visits to an amusement park and introduce yourself by sharing memories with the others.

1. If you could design a ride for an amusement park, which would be entitled "Hell," what would that ride be like?
  - A slow, five-minute ride up to the top of a roller coaster which was high in the clouds
  - A ride that tipped you upside down, twirling you in circles while you were held in by rotting straps
  - A completely dark ride on a high speed boat with explosions in the water
  - A two-hour ride on a kiddy train next to \_\_\_\_\_
  - Any ride sitting next to \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Comparing the past five years of your life to a roller coaster, share:
  - One peak
  - One gut-wrenching valley
  - One scary moment

## B. The loss of a way of life – DON'T LOOK BACK!

The loss of a relationship is painful and unsettling, regardless of the way it occurred. From the moment we knew our relationship was over until now, we have undergone changes to most of the major areas of our lives. We may be only just beginning to feel stable and secure again.

But while things may have *settled down* for us, often we have failed to *settle in* to the new life. Many people who are divorced, separated, or never-married, keep looking backwards; they may be relieved to be rid of their spouse, but they deeply miss the state of *being married or being in a relationship with a man or woman*. Even those who want to embrace their new single status are often bound by the power of the past. Whether you miss it or not, the loss of your key relationship has had major effects on you:

- ***Your social life*** may be in a state of transition. It is likely that in your marriage, your social life revolved around couples. Now it often feels awkward to be in the company of married couples. You may need to cultivate a new set of friends, or to find the courage to reconnect with you married friends.
- ***The parental role*** changes dramatically. It may be heightened or diminished, depending on whether you have primary custody of the children. If so, the bulk of the nurturing and disciplining of the children is dropped into your lap **at a time when you may be in the greatest emotional crisis of your life**. If you don't have custody, you may feel more like an aunt or an uncle, dropping in for week-ends with presents, trips to the zoo, and other fun times, but missing out on most of the tough and tender times as a parent.
- ***The financial costs*** are significant. Often your total income is reduced, while your expenses remain the same. The legal costs of divorce are an added burden.
- In terms of ***sexuality***, the loss of your partner sometimes requires another major adjustment on your part. If the marriage had deteriorated greatly, the loss would not seem so great. Nevertheless, sexuality will likely be an important area of decision for you.
- ***Even household duties***, once shared to some degree with your spouse, are now all up to you. Many people are not prepare for cooking, nor fixing leaky faucets, nor haggling with mechanics.
- If your are going to adjust to being single again, you will have to make major shifts in your ***identity***. Being single again or single with a child is a new, unexplored

territory. You may have lived “out on your own” for several years between your parents’ home and your marriage, but the single-again stage is NOT simply stepping back again into the “out on your own” stage. Some of the places may look familiar, but it is as if too many of the signs and markers have been changed. For instance, the mere process of dating again is often markedly different from earlier years.

### **C. Divorce is like a death**

Many of us had expected (either consciously or unconsciously) to live “happily ever after.” If didn’t work out that way for us, nor does it work out that way for many couples. Grief follows the loss of the expectation:

- Death of a relationship
- Death of years of promises and promises
- Death of years of planning
- Death of love
- Death of things shared
- DEATH OF LIFE TOGETHER (rich with love and laughter, pain and hurt)

### **D. Grieving Divorce or Separation is not easy**

We MUST WORK THROUGH the loss of the married stated. It is a difficult “death” for which to grieve:

- No formal funeral for this agonizing loss
- Many relatives and friends might not have supported us in our decision to divorce, so we feel guilty about having disappointed them, too.
- There is not life insurance check to cover the expenses of the death of a marriage or ease the entry into a new life
- While the grief of losing a marriage is enormous, the responsibilities of daily life continue on as if nothing had happened.
- Work, family, and friends still demand our time.
- The car still breaks down.
- No employer offers six weeks of paid “divorce leave” to allow time to sort out all of the feelings.
- Therefore, it is common to have a very delayed grieving process for the loss of our marriage.

### **E. THE POWER OF EXPECTATIONS - HOPE**

- To move forward, we must be free from the power of our old dreams
- Begin to MAKE new dreams

- Be aware of the magnitude and scope of the “death” which has occurred
- We must work through the stages of grief -- PROCESS
- Through Christ, the future is full of hope, but we must leave the grayness of our past and become the persons we were always meant to be.
- Know that you don’t have to be alone. That is why this ministry was formed.

## GROUP STUDY

### III. READ THE STORY OF RUTH (Ruth 1:1-10)

#### A. Groups Discuss the Following Among Themselves:

1. There was a famine in their country, so \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and their sons decided to emigrate to Moab. Over the next ten years, \_\_\_\_\_ and both of the sons died. **How do you evaluate this family’s strategy for survival?**
  - They made a bad decision. They should have stayed.
  - You do the best you can and see what happens.
  - It’s hard to make a decision when there are no good solutions.
  - God judged them for leaving their home.
  - They did the only thing they could do to survive.
  - Bad things happen to everyone. You can’t second guess.
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Which of the following emotions do you think they might have felt as foreigners arriving Moab?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> fear	<input type="checkbox"/> loathing
<input type="checkbox"/> shame	<input type="checkbox"/> confusion
<input type="checkbox"/> hope	<input type="checkbox"/> loneliness
<input type="checkbox"/> intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/> joy
<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	
  
3. How do you imagine Naomi felt after her husband and both sons died, and she was alone in Moab with her two daughters-in-law?
  
4. Naomi hears that the famine is over in Judah and she decides to go back home. She tells her daughters-in-law that they should stay behind in their home country. How do you evaluate Naomi’s decision to go home?
  - Good decision. Go back to you family and roots.
  - Bad decision. There is no going back.
  - Be careful. After 10 years, things have changed.
  - When you are alone in a foreign land, going home is the best answer.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Orpah decided to stay in Moab, while Ruth decided to leave with Naomi. Ruth vowed: “Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and you God my God.” Why do you think Ruth decided to go with Naomi?

- She had been converted
- She must have come from a broken home.
- She had a strong sense of loyalty and devotion.
- She saw this as being in her own best interest.
- She saw this as being in Naomi’s best interest.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## SESSION WRAP-UP CLASS DISCUSSION

6. There are three reactions to crises in this story. Which do you think reflects the way you have responded to being single again? Why?
- Like Naomi and Elimelech, I dared to move to a strange land when things got bad enough.
  - Like Naomi and Orpah, I returned home when I lost everything.
  - Like Ruth, I was willing to risk my future and go to any lengths to show support for a loved one.
7. Do you have a “Ruth” in your life (e.g., someone who is showing commitment and faithfulness to you in the midst of your changes)?
8. For whom are you being a “Ruth” (showing commitment and faithfulness to someone else)?
9. **LET US PRAY**



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## Nugget of the Week # 2

Determine to break the cycle of the “dysfunctional” family.



A functional family is one in which unconditional love is expressed and family members are in harmony with one another.

1. Meditate on this Scripture and pray for harmony and unconditional love over your family:

### Psalm 133

- 1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.
- 2 *It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;*
- 3 *As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: **for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.***

In the space provided below, write some of the unity can help break the cycle of dysfunction in your family, based on Psalm 133. **Hint: In a dictionary, reference the underlined words.**
