

God's Healing for Life's Losses: An Interview with Dr. Robert Kellemen

The GriefShare ministry is pleased to endorse Dr. Robert Kellemen's new book, *God's Healing for Life's Losses*. His wise, gentle insights on the GriefShare videos have encouraged many participants and leaders. We interviewed Dr. Kellemen again so he could share how his book will be a helpful tool for effectively leading GriefShare as well as for personal healing.

1. What is your purpose in writing *God's Healing for Life's Losses*?

People quickly grow weary of Christian books that pretend. They're tired of Christian counselors and well-meaning friends who dispense far too much "happiness all the time, wonderful peace of mind." They're also gravely disappointed when the answers to their questions about suffering reflect more of the wisdom of the world than of the truth of God's Word. The purpose of the book is to assist people in finding God's healing hope in their hurts and losses.

This book focuses on any type of loss—from the grand loss of death to the daily casket experiences of loss of a job, loss of a dream, loss of a relationship.

2. What makes *God's Healing for Life's Losses* different from other grief books?

Christians long for an approach that faces suffering honestly and engages sufferers passionately—all in the context of presenting truth biblically and relevantly. We need to be able to face life's losses *in the context of* God's healing. Jesus did. "I have told you these things, so that *in me* you may have *peace*. In this world you will have trouble. But *take heart!* I have *overcome the world*" (John 16:33).

3. How will reading *God's Healing for Life's Losses* benefit GriefShare leaders?

When we're helping hurting people, it can get messy and confusing. A few road markers on the journey sure would help. *God's Healing for Life's Losses* suggests eight "directional markers" for the grief and growth journey. This book examines Scripture relationally and practically, so GriefShare leaders grow in their ability to explore passages with hurting people—and do so in a natural, loving way. The built-in discussion/application guides benefit leaders—providing an ideal forum and format for candid discussions about grief, emotions, hurt, hope, healing, God's purposes and more.

4. How will GriefShare participants benefit from reading this book?

The “eight stage model” in *God’s Healing for Life’s Losses* helps readers to travel down the grief and growth path. We live in a fallen world and it often falls on us. When it does, when the weight of the world crushes us, we need hope. New life. A resuscitated heart. A resurrected life with resurrected hope. God’s healing path is a personal journey. *God’s Healing for Life’s Losses* uses God’s Word as the sufferers GPS: God’s Positioning System. It traces God’s pathway through grief to growth so that readers learn how to face their suffering face-to-face with God.

5. What advice do you have for GriefShare leaders that will help them become more effective care ministers?

There’s a tendency, on the one hand, for helpers to rush in quoting Romans 8:28 and telling Christ’s story before listening to their friend’s story. So GriefShare leaders need to listen, but that’s not in some “clinical, analytical” sense. We need to listen empathetically. We need to enter the pain, hurt and grief of our hurting friends. Of course, that’s going to elicit pain for the GriefShare leader. So they will need to be taking their hurt, pain, and grief to the Divine Comforter. That’s the message of 2 Corinthians 1:3–11—the only truly effective comforter is the person who consistently turns to the Spirit for His comfort.

Another tendency is for helpers never to share scriptural insight. In our wise desire not to be trite, we end up not offering much of any biblical wisdom. Paul got it right in 1 Thessalonians 2:8 when he said that because he loved them so much, he gave them not only the Scriptures but his own soul, because they were dear to him. We must give people both our souls and God’s Scripture. Truth and love must kiss.

This doesn’t mean “preaching at people.” Rather, it involves the art of the “trialogue”—the GriefShare leader, the GriefShare participant and the Holy Spirit through God’s Word working together. It means having “spiritual conversations” where you ask sensitive, caring, timely questions that relate God’s Word to the sufferer’s life. It means engaging in “scriptural explorations” where you explore specific passages together and ask probing questions so that the person suffering can find biblical wisdom and comfort.

6. How does the Gospel inform the way we care for people who are grieving?

“Christ-centered” or “Gospel-centered” must take priority. There is no hope apart from Christ. There is no healing apart from Christ. And there’s no way to look at life with faith eyes, especially in the midst of painful, confusing circumstances, if we can’t look to the Cross. The Cross of Christ and the Christ of the Cross are the final proofs of God’s good heart for us. The Gospel takes us not only to the past work of Christ, but also to the future. We must read the end of the story where we discover that God wins! Good triumphs over evil. Hope over hurt. Healing over pain.

To purchase *God’s Healing for Life’s Losses*, visit the [GriefShare bookstore](#).