

GROWING THROUGH GRIEF TOGETHER



Conversations with Deborah Conlon

A journey from grief and mourning to hope, healing and restoration

> "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."
> **Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NIV)**

INTRODUCTION — MY JOURNEY, OUR CONVERSATIONS, OUR HOPE

Growing Through Grief Together was birthed from personal loss—not only the loss of loved ones, but also the painful experiences of divorce, childhood trauma and abuse. These experiences brought me through many years of restoration, healing, forgiveness and drawing closer to God. Along the way, I have been learning that life can continue beyond our scars, and that the pain of our past does not have to define our future.

Through my own journey, I have come to understand that grief is not limited to death. We grieve relationships, broken dreams, lost opportunities, the loss of identity, the security we once knew and sometimes even the person we thought we would become.

Grief touches every part of our lives—our hearts, minds, bodies, relationships and faith.

These conversations have been created to provide a safe, compassionate space where we can share our stories, acknowledge our pain, feel heard and understood, and begin navigating the journey through grief, loss, trauma and change.

Together, we explore the grieving process, recognising that we may experience numbness, denial, anger, bargaining, sadness and, in time, acceptance. These experiences do not always follow a particular order, and we may revisit different emotions as we continue to heal.

We learn to give ourselves permission to grieve rather than suppressing, avoiding or rushing through our pain.

There is wisdom in the words of Ecclesiastes 3:1. There is a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance (Ecclesiastes 3:4). Healing is not about denying the season we are in; it is about learning how to walk through it with honesty, faith, support and hope.

Our journey is not about forgetting those we have loved, pretending that our losses did not matter, or expecting ourselves to be strong every day. It is about learning to live again, carrying our memories with love while allowing God to renew our hearts, restore our hope and help us rebuild our lives.

OUR STARTING POINT — JESUS WEPT

Before we begin exploring our own experiences of grief, we will look at three significant biblical passages that reveal the depth of Jesus' sorrow and compassion.

Jesus was not distant from human suffering. He entered into the pain of those around Him, expressed His own anguish and brought His deepest sorrow before the Father.

By exploring these three moments, we discover that grief is not a weakness, tears are not a failure of faith, and sorrow does not mean that hope has disappeared.

1. JESUS WEPT AT THE TOMB OF LAZARUS

John 11:33–35 — Grief, love and compassion

> *Jesus saw Mary weeping and those who had come with her also weeping. He was deeply moved and troubled, and He wept.*

Jesus knew that He was about to raise Lazarus, yet He still entered into the sorrow of the moment. His tears remind us that knowing God is able to bring hope does not mean we will not experience pain today.

What this means for us: We are allowed to grieve. We are allowed to cry. We can bring our sorrow honestly into God's presence and allow others to sit with us in our pain without feeling that we must explain it away.

2. JESUS WEPT OVER JERUSALEM

Luke 19:41–44 — Rejection, brokenness and what could have been

> *As Jesus approached Jerusalem, He wept over the city. He recognised its failure to understand the way of peace and the devastating consequences that lay ahead.*

His tears reveal the sorrow of seeing brokenness, missed opportunities and the consequences of choices.

What this means for us: Sometimes we grieve not only what happened, but also what might have been. We mourn relationships that did not heal, dreams that did not unfold, opportunities that were lost and the pain of rejection or watching someone we love struggle.

We can acknowledge these losses without allowing regret to become the permanent definition of our lives.

3. JESUS' CRIES AND TEARS IN HIS DEEPEST AGONY

Hebrews 5:7; Matthew 26:36–39 — Overwhelming sorrow, prayer and surrender

> *In Gethsemane, Jesus expressed the depth of His anguish. He told His disciples that His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow, and He prayed to His Father.*

Jesus did not pretend that the road ahead was easy. He brought His anguish honestly before God and surrendered Himself to the Father's will.

Hebrews 5:7 also describes Jesus offering prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears.

What this means for us: We can be honest about our deepest pain. We can admit when we feel overwhelmed, afraid, exhausted or uncertain. Surrender does not mean that our circumstances no longer hurt; it means that we bring what we cannot control before God and seek His strength to face what lies ahead.

FROM ALLOWING GRIEF TO DISCOVERING HOPE

These three biblical passages introduce us to three important dimensions of our journey:

Lazarus' tomb	**FEEL**	Give yourself permission to grieve.
Jerusalem	**UNDERSTAND**	Acknowledge what has been lost and the pain of what could have been.
Gethsemane	**SURRENDER**	Bring your deepest sorrow to God and learn to trust Him one day at a time.

As we continue these conversations, we will explore how these experiences relate to our own lives. We will reflect on the people we have loved, the losses we have endured, the pain we have carried and the ways we have tried to cope.

We will learn to recognise what needs attention, release what we cannot change, receive support without shame and take practical steps towards restoration. We will also discover how our experiences, when processed with wisdom and compassion, can deepen our empathy for others. In time, the comfort we receive may become a source of encouragement to someone walking a similar road.

2 Corinthians 1:3–4 reminds us that God comforts us in our troubles so that we can comfort others with the comfort we ourselves have received.

Our scars do not have to be hidden, and our stories do not have to end with the pain. We can learn from what we have experienced without allowing it to define our worth or determine our future.

A PRAYER FOR OUR JOURNEY

Heavenly Father,

As we begin these conversations, help us to come just as we are. Give us the courage to acknowledge our grief, the grace to allow ourselves to feel, and the wisdom to understand what our experiences have meant to us.

Meet us in the places where we have felt abandoned, rejected, wounded or overwhelmed. Help us to release shame, challenge the beliefs that keep us bound to our pain, and receive Your love, comfort and peace.

Teach us to grieve without losing hope, to remember without remaining trapped in the past, and to trust You when we cannot understand the journey ahead.

May these conversations become a place of compassion, truth, prayer and healing. As You restore our hearts, help us to become a source of hope and encouragement to others.

Lead us as we renew our minds, restore what has been wounded and rebuild our lives, one moment and one day at a time.

In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER - RENEW • RESTORE • REBUILD

May this series bring you renewed hope as you learn to live beyond your scars.
May you find the courage to grieve, the grace to heal, the faith to trust and the strength to begin again.
And may you discover that even through seasons of mourning, there can be hope, peace, renewed purpose and, in time, joy.

One conversation. One moment. One day at a time.