

## **Facing Suffering and Grief in Marriage**

Facing suffering and grief is a sobering reality of marriage. How can we faithfully endure and grow amid pain and sorrow? This session will discuss the importance of grief, grace, intimacy, and community and how God can strengthen and teach us in the midst of suffering.

**Michelle Clifford** is the Minister of Staff Development and on the Executive Leadership Team at Scottsdale Bible Church in Arizona. She has a passion for discipleship and drawing out a greater thirst for more of God and His Word in others. Michelle also enjoys developing people within the Church in such a way that brings into focus who God has created them to be for the glory of God and the building up of His church. Michelle has been married to her husband, Jared, since 2003, and they have two children: Chase (11) and Morgan (8). She graduated from the University of North Texas with a Bachelor of Science and has also obtained a master's degree from Phoenix Seminary.

### **I. A Story of Grief and Suffering**

### **II. A Shared Reality of Grief and Suffering**

#### **A. Two things we can know for sure**

- i. We will face grief and suffering in this life  
(John 16:33; 1 Peter 4:12-14; 2 Timothy 3:12)
- ii. We are not alone  
(Deuteronomy 31:6; John 11:33; Romans 8:35-39)

### **III. Facing grief and suffering with God**

#### **A. Facing one's personal grief and suffering with God (Psalm 34:18, 142:1-2; Isaiah 41:10; John 11:35)**

#### **B. Embracing the character of God in the face of grief and suffering (Psalm 139:7-10; Romans 8:28)**

#### **C. Claiming God as their true shelter, rock, and hope (Psalm 18:2, 46:10, 55:22; Romans 8:18; Philippians 3:8; Revelation 21:4-5)**

**IV. Facing grief and suffering with your spouse**

- A. Place God first  
(Psalm 46:10; John 15:5)
  
- B. Communication is key  
(James 1:19)
  
- C. Grace is required  
(Proverbs 12:18; Lamentations 3:22-23; Romans 14:1-23)
  
- D. Pursuit is essential  
(Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Peter 4:8)

**V. Facing grief and suffering with others**

- A. Communication is key  
(Colossians 4:6)
  
- B. Grace is required  
(Colossians 3:13)
  
- C. Invitation needed  
(Hebrews 10:24-25)

**VI. Consequences of not grieving together in marriage**

- A. Self
  
  
- B. Spouse
  
  
- C. Relationship with God and others

**VII. Fruit of grieving together in marriage**

A. Self

B. Spouse

C. Relationship with God and others

(Matthew 5:4, 11:28-30; John 14:27; 2 Corinthians 1:4, 13:4-7;  
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

**VIII. Closing thoughts - Prepare for the Aftermath**

A. Relationship with God

B. Marriage

C. Relationship with others

D. Life

**IX. Q&A Time**

A. Open the time to discussion and questions

B. Pass out prayer prompts as a take-home application

***Additional Readings:***

*Secure in the Everlasting Arms*, Elizabeth Elliot

*A Path through Suffering*, Elizabeth Elliot

*The Meaning of Marriage*, Timothy Keller

*Union with Christ*, Rankin Wilbourne

*Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*, Timothy Keller