GRIEF IS A PROCESS.
While each person’s process is unique and the way we process each event is unique, there are some similar stages we go through in grieving.

STAGES OF GRIEF

SHOCK
You hear the bad news or you experience the tragedy. As a result, you feel numb. It’s hard to believe this is real. You walk around in a fog or a daze. The reality has yet to set in!

DENIAL
You protect yourself from reality by acting as if it’s not real. You try not to think about it or talk about it, so you don’t have to face reality. Each time you feel pain, you push it away as hard as you can.

ANGER
The emotion that has been building in your body during the first two stages comes out in an explosion. Frustration can only stay bottled up for so long and you’re surprised by what comes out of your mouth or what you do with your body. Why am I so angry?!

BARGAINING
While reality hadn’t set in during stage 1, it certainly is setting in by stage 4. You start feeling the desire to find a way out of this process. You tell yourself or others, “I’m fine. I’m pretty much over this. It’s been hard, but I’m doing great.”

DEPRESSION
The darkness you tried to find a way around has set in to your heart. You feel overwhelmed, hopeless, and heavy-laden, maybe even stuck. The question “why?” is pervasive and your sense of motivation is lackluster in multiple areas.

TESTING
You start seeking realistic solutions. With some timidity, you pursue opportunities and crack open the door of your heart. Not much, but a little.

ACCEPTANCE
You start turning from the past and start looking towards the future. Life starts to feel “normal” again, but it’s a new normal. You don’t feel the way you used to before the loss, but you’ve embraced the change and you’re moving forward once again.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS
1. Which stage(s) are you in today? Which words in that description were most relevant?
2. What is one practical step you could take today to embrace your stage or move towards the next stage? Identify that step and take it before you go to sleep tonight.
3. What passage of Scripture or spiritual truth could encourage that step? Write it down someplace where you’ll see it multiple times per day.
4. Who would be able to encourage and support you in this process? Ask for their help today.