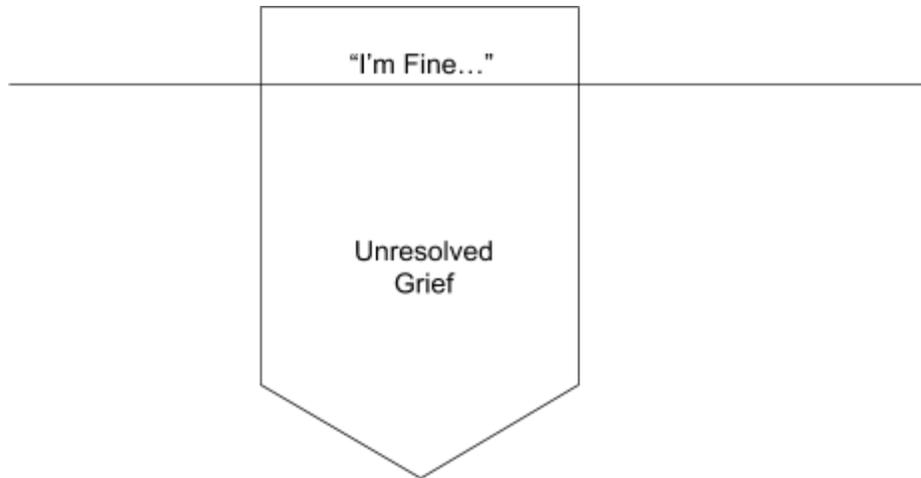


St. Matthew's Church
"Grief and the Christian Life"
Fr. Hayden Butler
Session II

*"Whoever sings songs to a heavy heart
is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day,
and like vinegar on soda."
Proverbs 25:20*

"Like an iceberg..."



Popular Myths about Grief (Review):

1. Don't feel bad
2. Replace the loss
3. Grieve alone
4. Be strong for others
5. Just give it time
6. Keep busy
7. Others are responsible

Short-Term Energy Relieving Behaviors (STERBs):

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Food | Sleeping |
| Drugs/Alcohol/Smoking | Gambling |
| Sex | Social Media/Entertainment |
| Work/Projects/Cleaning | Studying/Intellect |
| Church/Volunteering/Serving | Shopping/Retail Therapy |
| Exercise | Storytelling |

Processing Experiences:

Stimulus - Thought - Feeling - Action

New Action - Reduced Feeling - Different Thought - Present Moment

Habit Formation:

1. Becoming aware of the need for a new action
2. Discovering and being taught the steps or components of the new action in their proper order.
3. Practicing #2 30-40 times.

Maturity is making a decision and letting our feelings catch up to it.

New Action:

Forgiveness - at the emotional level, it means saying goodbye to the hope for a different or better yesterday. It is a new action that leads us to cease resentment towards an offender through acknowledgment that communicates what was done or left undone.

In the Christian Life:

Theologically:

- 1) The reality of the Fall and the inevitability of loss.
- 2) The problem of death and the hope of the resurrection.
- 3) The Church as the meeting place of both.

Practically:

- 1) The importance of acknowledging and taking responsibility for our grief.
- 2) The importance of allowing others to grieve in our midst without trying to “fix” it.
- 3) The importance of uniting our experience of grief, and the whole of our emotional life, to our practice of prayer.

Next Steps:

- 1) *The Grief Recovery Handbook* by Russel Friedman and John James
- 2) Grief Recovery Method | Offered by Fr. Hayden through St. Matthew's
- 3) Spiritual Direction
- 4) *Licensed Therapy [Especially for Trauma, Complex Grief, Etc.]