

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO

# WALKING THROUGH GRIEF



Connecting Parents, Teens & Jesus  
in a Disconnected World

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*A Parent's Guide to Walking through Grief*

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We were even promised sufferings.  
They were part of the programme.  
We were even told, "Blessed are they  
that mourn," and I accepted it. I've got  
nothing that I hadn't bargained for. Of  
course it is different when the thing  
happens to oneself, not to others,  
and in reality, not in imagination.

**C. S. LEWIS, *A GRIEF OBSERVED***



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# A LETTER FROM AXIS

*Dear Reader,*

We're Axis, and since 2007, we've been creating resources to help connect parents, teens, and Jesus in a disconnected world. We're a group of gospel-minded researchers, speakers, and content creators, and we're excited to bring you the best of what we've learned about making meaningful connections with the teens in your life.

This parent's guide is designed to help start a conversation. Our goal is to give you enough knowledge that you're able to ask your teen informed questions about their world. For each guide, we spend weeks reading, researching, and interviewing parents and teens in order to distill everything you need to know about the topic at hand. We encourage you to read the whole thing and then to use the questions we include to get the conversation going with your teen—and then to follow the conversation wherever it leads.

As Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen point out in their book *Difficult Conversations*, “Changes in attitudes and behavior rarely come about because of arguments, facts, and attempts to persuade. How often do *you* change your values and beliefs—or whom you love or what you want in life—based on something someone tells you? And how likely are you to do so when the person who is trying to change you doesn’t seem fully aware of the reasons you see things differently in the first place?”<sup>1</sup> For whatever reason, when we believe that others are trying to understand *our* point of view, our defenses usually go down, and we’re more willing to listen to *their* point of view. The rising generation is no exception.

So we encourage you to ask questions, to listen, and then to share your heart with your teen. As we often say at Axis, discipleship happens where conversation happens.

Sincerely,  
Your friends at Axis

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen, *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 137.



# UNEXPECTED PLACES

**LIFE CAN CHANGE IN AN INSTANT.** It might start with a phone call confirming a diagnosis, the loss of a family member or friend, or the end of a relationship. In that moment, you know your life will never be the same. And if you've lived much time at all, you know that what comes in the days, months, and weeks after the unexpected is a void. And in that void, we grieve.

Grief is guaranteed in this life. It doesn't matter who we are, where we come from, how much money we have, or what our social status is—none of us is immune. The question is not *if* we will grieve, but *when* and *how*. Even for adults, grief can be tremendously difficult and a real challenge to process in a healthy way. But the realities of grief seem all the more daunting when we're trying to guide our kids through the complex web of emotions and experiences that grief brings.

In this guide, we'll look at grief from many angles and answer some of the most common questions about how to parent a child who is grieving. We'll also discuss the best practices for walking with your kids through grief.



