

TRY IT ON

WHAT FITS MY GRIEF?

The Grieving of Hezekiah

Some features to help you determine if you want to **TRY ON** the grief because the circumstances are similar to your own:

- Unexpected sad or unwanted news
- Having achievements threatened
- Diagnosis of a terminal illness
- Unexpected sickness
- Swiftly approaching death or destruction

Some feelings to help you determine if you want to **TRY ON** the grief because the emotions are similar to your own:

- Helplessness
- Indecisiveness
- Fearfulness
- Incompleteness
- Discouragement
- Frustration

A summary of what happened:

As a leader, Hezekiah had accomplished many things for his city; his improvements included making water tunnels, improving building structures, providing economic relief, and housing refugee families. All these accomplishments were threatened by the news that a powerful enemy wanted to destroy him and his city. Hezekiah's efforts to appease the enemy with gifts and treasures failed, and he was unable to stop the attacks. So Hezekiah tore his clothes, put on grieving garments, and went to the place of worship. He prayed that God would hear his cry for help. He contacted a godly leader, Isaiah, for advice. After all this, Hezekiah became sick and was told by the godly leader that he should prepare his family for his death. After this terminal diagnosis, Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and begged God to remember all the good he had done and to extend his life. Then Hezekiah wept bitterly.



Some of the actions of Hezekiah that you can **TRY ON** to see if any fit you well:

- **Change clothes** - Some clothes are more fitting for grieving than others. Changing clothes can help to express your sadness. Even raging by tearing or ripping clothes can be a way to express anger and maintain safety. Putting on rough or uncomfortable clothes can help you to feel the pain surrounding you and express your distress. You may prefer to wear a certain color of clothing to match your mood. For example, some cultures use black or white arm bands to indicate grief. Consider if a specific article of clothing, jewelry, or accessory that can be worn or carried would be helpful to have during this time.
- **Go to a place of worship** - Sacred spaces help with sacred conversations. Returning to a place where you have experienced God or journeying to a different place of worship can give you time to gather thoughts and form prayers that you want to share.
- **Try medicine** - Consult a physician or try medicine that has helped others. Sometimes the body needs medicine or nutrients from the natural world to fight illness, and healing can come through medical experts.
- **Consult an expert** - Asking a safe person to be with you in the grieving can invite support. You can share and receive encouragement from those you respect. Sometimes you may even hear from God through another who may be experienced in hearing what God wants to say or who has a perspective of your situation you may not have.
- **Find a wall** - Some things are beyond your ability to change, like a wall. Leaning against a wall can remind you to lean on God's strength in times of trouble, and facing the wall can remind you that you cannot change the situation you face and you need God's help. Consider praying or crying while facing a wall. Some people pray by writing their prayers and putting their prayers in the cracks in a wall or by writing directly on the walls.

- **Tell God what you want**- Do you want God to listen ... to see ... to intervene? Do you want God to bring deliverance or healing? Ask God for help. Treat God like a person who can respond to you, and like a parent God may give you what we want or may say, "No."

Some of the phrases of Hezekiah that you can TRY ON to see if any feel right for you:

- Lord, you made everything.
- Deliver me.
- God, hear me.
- Save us.
- God, see me.
- Remember the good I have done.
- Here's what is true.
- What sign can you give me?

Some ideas you can TRY ON with a child:

- **Dress up or down** - Invite your child to decide what to wear while grieving or to go clothes shopping with you. See if there are certain clothes that remind your child of the person who is sick or has died or clothes that would make your child feel connected to that person.
- **Go somewhere special** - Ask your child if there might be a sacred space that would be nice to visit or linger.
- **Ask your child to finish these sentences:**
 - I would like to connect with God by going to _____.
 - I think it would be nice to visit _____.
 - I feel close to God when I am _____.
 - I feel connected to this situation when I am _____.
- **Set up a doctor's visit** - Give the child opportunities to be at a medical facility and share with the child what the child might experience when there. If someone that the child knows is sick, see if there is anything that the doctors would recommend for the child or ways that the child can help those who are sick or in need of medicine. If someone that the child knows has died, visit that medical facility where the person

received treatment and discuss what the experience might have been like. Connect with the caregivers who helped the person or do something special for those involved in offering care. Allow the child to ask questions about what happened and clarify the symptoms that were experienced, if needed.

- **Contact a leader** - Discuss with your child about whether your child has any questions regarding what is happening. Ask your child who would be a safe person that your child would like to ask questions or pray with.

A summary of what happens next:

After Hezekiah prayed for deliverance from the powerful enemy, God kept the destruction from happening by causing the enemy to turn around. After Hezekiah wept because of his terminal illness, the godly leader returned with a message that God had heard Hezekiah's weeping and would grant Hezekiah's prayer by healing him. Hezekiah was given the medicine he needed so that he could recover. Hezekiah composed a song of thanksgiving that has inspired many over the years, and he lived 15 more years and contributed much to the rebuilding of his city and country.

Where to find the Grieving of Hezekiah:

2 Kings 19-20