

IF YOU'VE WONDERED...

“What if I want to be with my person?”

After someone dies, you may have the thought that you want to be with them. Some teens find this thought upsetting or are concerned that other people will worry about them or misunderstand if they share it. There are several reasons this thought might come up, and each reason has a different impact and need attached to it.

Anytime you miss someone, the natural response is to wish that you could be with them. When you miss someone who is still alive, you might text, call, or spend time with them. As your brain is trying to adjust to the reality of your person's death, you might notice that you start to do or plan one of these things, then realize that you can't follow through. Recognizing that you can't be with someone is also likely to turn up the volume on the feeling of wanting to see them. Even if you wouldn't typically see or talk to them during this time, that might feel harder or stand out more than usual.

Grief comes with a ton of changes, and many people want things to go back to the way that they were. This is true when the person who died was easy for you to connect with, but it's also often true when the relationship was difficult or painful. Most people feel calmer and more in control when things feel normal, whether that's good, bad, or neutral. After someone dies, you might feel like things would only feel normal if you were with your person, or you might just want all of the changes and hard emotions to go away for a while. Some people worry



that if they say they want to be with their person, others will think they want to die, or are planning to hurt themselves, even if this isn't true. It's normal to feel like you just don't want to handle this anymore, or that everything would be okay if you could talk to your person or be with them again.

Grief can be overwhelming, and might make things that are normally manageable feel impossible to handle. If you are thinking about hurting or killing yourself, or want to be with your person so much that you're struggling to eat or sleep, it's time to get more help. Talk with an adult you trust, such as a caregiver, school staff member, or member of your faith community, or call or text a crisis line or hotline in your area. A trusted adult can help you talk through what you need to stay safe and make holding your grief feel more possible.

➤ What the Bible says:

The biblical texts make it clear that God is the one who determines the length of our lives. God created us, and God knows what is best for us. God understands what our lives will hold and walks with us when we are grieving the loss of someone we love. God not only sees our pain but also shares in our sorrow. Scripture encourages us to receive comfort from God and to trust that God's purposes for our lives are good and loving.

The biblical texts also make clear that taking our own lives is not an escape from pain or a way to be reunited with someone who has died. It is true that death is not the final word because God has the power to raise the dead. It is also true that death is not a way to interact with others who died. Many passages teach that the dead are not able to speak or interact. Those who are alive are able to remember and carry on the memory of those who died. God promises to bring resurrection at the end of time, just before the final judgment. God alone is the judge and will decide what happens in the end. Rather than waiting for that final moment, we can speak with God now and seek guidance for the path ahead. In this way, Scripture reminds us that God's plan to reunite God's people unfolds according to God's timing, not our own.

.....> What you could explore:

What do you wish you could say to or do with your person? When you miss someone very intensely, you may find yourself making wishes or hypothetical plans about what you would say or do with them if they were still alive. Try giving this some intentional space. You can write, draw, or speak out loud what you would do or say if they were present with you. Notice how that feels in your body, and what thoughts and emotions come up when you do this.

What changes have you experienced? Change often occurs really fast in grief, and it can be easy to throw it all into one giant box in your mind. You might feel overwhelmed, or just off kilter because of all the changes that have gone on, and have a hard time recognizing what you're missing or what's bothering you at any one time. Try listing out what's different, including big things (I don't live in the same house) and tiny things (I don't hear their alarm when I get up in the morning). Noticing and giving words to what you're missing and what just feels strange can help you understand your feelings and reactions better.

.....> What you could do:

- **Go somewhere your person liked to go, or do something they liked to do.** Spending intentional time engaging in activities your person enjoyed, or things you did together, can help you feel more connected to them. Sometimes, people get scared that they will forget what it was like to be with their person, or important things about their person. It can help strengthen your memories, as well as create new ones, to reconnect with positive parts of your relationship.
- **Do something in honor of your person.** If your person was still here, what is something they would like to do with you, or would be proud of you doing? Consider doing acts of kindness to honor them, volunteering or donating to a cause that was important to them, or doing something special for someone else they loved.

- **Do something that feels normal.** If you're noticing that you feel very thrown off by all of the changes, think about what could feel more normal to you, even if it's only for a few minutes. Try going to a place that has not changed, baking something, doing a craft, or engaging in some other reliable activity that helps you feel calmer and more settled.
- **Seek out connection with other people.** When you miss someone, it can be hard to connect with others, when you know they aren't the people you really want to talk to or be with. Try connecting with someone else who knew your person, or attending a support group or other gathering with people who may feel similarly, to see if this helps you feel less alone.

.....➤ Where you could look for more information:

✖ **Verses about God being sovereign over life and death:**

Deuteronomy 32:39 • 1 Samuel 2:6 • Job 1:21 and 14:5 • Psalms 139:16 and 104:29-30 • Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 • Isaiah 46:10 • Ezekiel 37 • Daniel 5:23 • James 4:14-15

✖ **God being near to those who are grieving:** Isaiah 15, 41, 43, 57 •

Psalms 34 and 147 • Lamentations 3 • Matthew 5 • John 10 and 14 • Romans 8 • 2 Corinthians 1

✖ **Verses about God valuing life:** Genesis 1:27 and 9:6 • Isaiah 49:15-16

• Psalm 139:13-14 • Proverbs 16:9 • Matthew 10:29-31 • Luke 12:6-7 • John 10:10 • 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

✖ **Chapters about resurrection at the end of time:** Job 19 • Isaiah

26 • Daniel 7 and 12 • John 5 and 11 • Acts 24 • 1 Corinthians 15 • 1 Thessalonians 4 • Revelation 20-21

✖ **Verses about the dead not interacting:** Psalms 6:5, 30:9, 88:10, and

115:17 • Ecclesiastes 9:5-10 • Isaiah 38:18 • Job 7:9-10