

## When Mourning Dawns

*Living Your Way Fully Through the Seasons of Your Grief*

by James E. Miller

When someone we love dies, grief begins. This normal, natural response to loss can take many different forms and affect us in many different ways—more than most people realize. While grief expresses itself uniquely with each individual, it usually shows a somewhat predictable pattern in the most general of ways.

I am not an advocate of the idea of “the stages of grief” that has been popularized in recent decades. “The phases of grief” might be a more accurate concept, or, as I propose here, “the seasons of grief.” I believe the rhythm of the seasons is a valid approximation, within broad parameters, of how grief commonly proceeds. That concept is a basis for this presentation.

### THE DESIGN OF THIS DVD

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*When Mourning Dawns* is often shown in just one sitting. Using its ready-made divisions, however, it can be shown in four, five, eight, or thirty-seven sittings, or any number in between. The DVD is naturally designed for you to stop it at many different points. Following a general introduction, each of grief's four seasons is described. These seasons are made up of several shorter sections, each beginning with a quotation and proceeding in a descriptive, almost poetic manner about some aspect of that season of grief. There are also several sections that contain specific suggestions for what a grieving person might do to help oneself at a given point in their grief.

### USING THIS PRESENTATION IN ONE PLAYING

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Preview *When Mourning Dawns* so you have a clear idea of how this work has been designed. A soft cover Willowgreen book, also entitled *When Mourning Dawns*, is available for you to read. It's a close, but not exact, version of the narration.

Offer your own short, personal introduction to this showing. Explain in brief how this piece combines nature photography, words, and music to achieve its intended purpose. Then show it.

When it's done, encourage some sort of personal response. If your group is large, divide it into smaller groups of two, three, or four people so that everyone has a chance to talk. If your group is smaller—say, a dozen or fewer—then discuss it all together, making sure that everyone has a chance to speak.

Following are some facilitating questions:

- \* How do you respond to the idea that grief has its seasons (as opposed to stages or phases)? Does it make sense? Is it true to your personal experience?
- \* What season of grief do you feel you're in?
- \* Did one quotation in particular stand out for you? If so, which one? Why that one?
- \* Winter, in many climates at least, is known for being cold. Does the concept of coldness ring true for being in the depth of grief? Why or why not?
- \* What characteristics of spring fit with the evolving nature of grief?
- \* The last quotation in this presentation is, “I have loved. I have been loved. The sun has caressed my face. Life, you owe nothing. Life, we are at peace.” How do you respond to this idea in the context of the later part of grief?
- \* What might the cyclical nature of the seasons say about grief?

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USING THIS PRESENTATION WITH MULTIPLE PLAYINGS

As has been indicated, *When Mourning Dawns* can be used in as many as thirty-seven individual sections or modules, each with a unique message about a particular aspect of grief. A complete transcript of those modules has been prepared, along with a listing of four to ten questions for each module for purposes of group discussion, including use with grief support groups. This guide also includes in-depth information about conducting such groups, as well as various other short writings on grief by Jim Miller. Included as well is an extensive annotated bibliography. It may be purchased for \$24.95 at Willowgreen, Inc., 10351 Dawson's Creek Boulevard, Suite B, Fort Wayne, IN, 46825, by calling 260.490.2222, or by emailing [orders@willowgreen.com](mailto:orders@willowgreen.com).