



Study Guide
Episode 1: Losing My Son
Topic: Grief & Suicide

Listen to the interview with Barb, “Losing My Son.” Engage the group with the following discussion questions, or feel free to summarize your own response and questions for this segment.

- How did you feel listening to Barb’s story of loss? What sorts of emotions and thoughts came up for you?
- Barb said, “*I came to a place where I could go on smiling and say ‘well praise the Lord anyway.’ Or I could be honest and say ‘I have doubts and I’m afraid, I’m fearful’ and be real with who I was and I didn’t have answers.*” Situations like this can create a lot of doubts and fears. How might you sit with someone like Barb who is experiencing such deep fears and doubts?
- Barb said she found hope and faith from a small group of friends at her church. How would you, as a group, a church, or an individual, respond to a parent who has just lost a child? How might you support and be present for them?

Listen to the “Connecting Points” segment with David Brubaker, Associate Professor at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University. David discusses how he has coped with his brother’s suicide.

- David Brubaker learned that his *feelings* about God’s presence didn’t always correlate with God’s *actual* presence. What might you say to someone who is experiencing a deep depression where they felt completely separated from God?
- Those who lose a loved one to suicide often experience a wide range of emotions, some of which are different than losing a loved one in other ways such as through natural causes. What kinds of things might you feel if someone you loved died by suicide?
- Families and friends of a person who die by suicide very often experience what’s known as “survivor’s guilt,” a feeling of responsibility for what’s happened. Barb became angry at herself. David blamed himself for his brother’s decision, feeling he could have stopped it if he had just said something else. *Have you ever felt guilty for something that wasn’t your fault? If so, how did you find healing?*
- If someone you knew was considering suicide, how would you know? Discuss some of the possible “warning signs” of suicide and how you might respond to a person displaying those behaviors. And what are some ways you can make yourself more available to someone who might be considering suicide to make them feel like they could talk to you?