



Syllabus

15800 Calvary Rd.
Kansas City, MO 64147

Course: CO436-LG: Death, Dying & Grief Counseling
Credit: 3 Semester hours
Semester: Fall 2026
Time: Session #2 (October 19th-December 11th) (**Online Only**)
Professor: Dr. Luther Smith MRS, MACP, Psy.D.
Email: luther.smith@calvary.edu

I. DESCRIPTION

The course is designed to help the student understand the various dynamics of death, dying, and grief through a conscientious study of God's Word (Prerequisite: CO244 Introduction to Counseling).

Students will be exposed to sensitive subject matter throughout this course. It will be important to demonstrate self-awareness and sensitivity while engaging in this material.

This course includes both in-person and online students together. In-person students attend classes in person, online students attend the class via the online classroom (Canvas). All interaction and assignments for in-person and online students are done in the online classroom (Canvas).

II. OBJECTIVES

A. General competencies to be achieved:

1. Students will learn the Biblical worldview of death, dying, and grief (PLO 1, 2).
2. Students will learn a Biblical approach to caring for the grieving person (PLO 3, 4, 5, 6).
3. The student will receive practical tools for caring for counselees through the grieving process (PLO 3, 4, 5, 6).
4. Students will learn how to assess the spiritual and physical needs of those facing death, dying, and grief situations (PLO 3, 4, 5, 6).

B. Specific competencies to be achieved:

1. Students will be able to articulate the Biblical worldview of death, dying, and grief (PLO 1, 2).
2. Students will demonstrate an ability to communicate the Biblical worldview of death, dying, and grief response through appropriate evangelism and discipleship ministry (PLO 3, 4, 5, 6).
3. Students will demonstrate an ability to utilize the Biblical approach in caring for those facing death, dying and grief situations (PLO 3, 4, 5, 6).

III. REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

1. **Reading Journals:** (Four (4) pages each) The student will write a **Four (4) page journal** following **each class** period that demonstrates a mastery of the reading assignment and class material and the student's personal reflection on what they read from the chapters in the book. The student will also need to demonstrate the ability to compare this information. Each journal will be due according to the course schedule. There will be a **total of six (6) journals**. Each journal will be worth 50 points (GC 1, 2, 3, 4; SC 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).
2. **Death, Dying, and Grief Discussion:** **Note: You must have a webcam to complete this assignment.** The student will post a 5–10-minute response video (or audio response) with a discussion that is supplied by the instructor on Canvas. Each reflection and discussion will come from the information from the book and how it is related to the lectures covered in class. Each student will post a 3–5-minute reply video to at least two of their classmates. There will be a total of six (6) discussions. Each one will be worth 50 points (GC 1, 2, 3, 4; SC 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

B. Written Assignments

1. **Death, Dying, and Grief Case Study Paper** –The student will write a paper on a case study on a counselee concerning death, dying, and grief. The student will write about the psychological, sociological, and spiritual aspect of the counselee and their experience. The student will also discuss how the student as the counselor would guide and advise the counselee in the case study through the process. The paper will be 8-10 pages in length, which does not include the cover page and the bibliography. The paper is worth 400 points (GC 1, 2, 3, 4; SC 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).
1. Discussion Posts and Responses (GC 1, 2, 4; SC 1, 2, 3)
Students will participate in six discussion posts on Canvas. Each post will interact around four things for discussion: (1) Summary of content including author's/presenter's theme and main point, (2) An assessment of how the content

Our Mission: To Prepare Christians to serve in the church and the world according to the Biblical worldview.

does/does not reflect the Biblical worldview, (3) Highlights the student found in the material, and (4) Specific aspects that can be used to build a Biblical counseling approach from the material presented.

- a. Selected chapter from Powlison Text
- b. Supplemental Video 1
- c. Selected chapter from Guthrie Text
- d. Selected chapter from Alcorn Text
- e. Supplemental Video 2
- f. Selected chapter from Erickson-Tada Text

IV. METHODS

A. Teaching

1. Lectures by the instructor
2. Large group discussion
3. Research and writing
4. Quizzes on the lectures

B. Grading

1. Weight given to course assignments.

6 Journals (completed according to schedule) <i>50pts</i>	300 pts	30%
6 Death, Dying, & Grief Discussion Videos <i>50pts</i>	300 pts	30%
Death, Dying, & Grief Case Study Paper	400 pts	40%
2. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

Grading Scale

Grade Value Grade Point Value
Per Semester Hour

A	100-93	4.0
A-	92-90	3.7
B+	89-87	3.3
B	86-83	3.0
B-	82-80	2.7
C+	79-77	2.3
C	76-73	2.0
C-	72-70	1.7
D+	69-67	1.3
D	66-63	1.0
D-	62-60	0.7
F	59-0	0.0

Our Mission: To Prepare Christians to serve in the church and the world according to the Biblical worldview.

V. MATERIALS

A. Bible

The Bible is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (*meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages*), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB, English Standard Version (ESV), New King James (NKJV), or King James (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (*paraphrases and thought-for-thought translations like NLT and NIV*) may be used as supplemental sources. Please ask the professor if you have questions about a particular translation or version.

B. Required Textbooks

Alcorn, Randy. *If God is Good: Faith in the Midst of Suffering and Evil*. Multnomah Books, 2009. ISBN# 978-1-60142-132-6 Price: 8.00.

Wiersbe, David and Warren. *Ministering to the Mourning: A practical guide for Pastors, Church Leaders, and other Caregivers*. Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 2006.

VI. CLASS POLICIES

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism is defined as copying any content without identifying the source. This also includes taking another person's or AI entity's ideas or constructs and presenting them as your own. The use of AI generated content in student work is prohibited (even if cited) as it does not represent original work created by the student and is an unreliable aggregate of ideas from other sources. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated.

A Secondary Statement Regarding Using AI For All Reports/Projects

Artificial intelligence (AI) in academic use could be beneficial for you as the student. However, when misused it may limit your ability to think critically. As the professor *I cannot catch nor stop you in the act of using AI for your papers and research*. However, it is my expectation that you as the student will do your best by your ability and skill as a human being in the subject(s) that you desire to study. Below is the percentage threshold concerning the effort you put in your paper and the presence of AI within your paper.

Our Mission: To Prepare Christians to serve in the church and the world according to the Biblical worldview.

0-10 percent of AI*	No points deducted from your paper/project.
11-20 percent of AI*	A third of your overall points are deducted from your paper/project.
21-30 percent of AI*	75% of your overall points will be deducted from your paper/project.
30+ Percent of AI	You will receive no points for the paper/project.

*Keep in mind this deduction is *added* to the points that you would lose due to other things (Improper writing style, grammar, etc.).

Writing Style

All class papers must follow the APA style according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th edition*. You can find APA resources under the **Getting Started Checklist** located in the *Introduction to Biblical Counseling* Course on Canvas.

Late Work

Papers, projects, etc. are due at the class period assigned. Unless under an emergency or an extreme circumstance, which will be determined at the discretion of the instructor, **no late work will be accepted.**

Accommodations Statement

Students with disabilities have the responsibility of informing Jamie Franz the Accommodations Support Coordinator (aso@calvary.edu) of any disabling condition that may require support.

Learning Center

The Clark Academic Center (learning@calvary.edu), located in the library building, provides free academic assistance for all students. Student tutors aid with all facets of the writing process, tutor in various subject areas, prepare students for exams and facilitate tests. Please take advantage of this service.

Our Mission: To Prepare Christians to serve in the church and the world according to the Biblical worldview.

VII. TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Week/Date	Course Topics	Assignments
Week 1	Introduction to the course Syllabus overview	Read <i>If God Is Good</i> (pgs. 9-40) Read <i>Ministering to the Mourning</i> (Chap. 1) Reading journal #1 DUE
Week 2	Philosophical and Theological Survey of Death, Dying, and Grief	Read <i>If God Is Good</i> (pgs. 47-84) Read <i>Ministering to the Mourning</i> (Chaps. 2-3) Reading journal #2 DUE Death, Dying, and Grief Discussion Video #1 DUE
Week 3	An examination of Biblical Counseling	Read <i>If God Is Good</i> (pgs. 327-352) Read <i>Ministering to the Mourning</i> (Chaps. 4-5) Reading journal #3 DUE Death, Dying, and Grief Discussion Video #2 DUE
Week 4	Crisis Defined and Counseling the Whole Person	Read <i>If God Is Good</i> (pgs. 141-177) Read <i>Ministering to the Mourning</i> (Chaps. 6-7) Reading journal #4 DUE Death, Dying, and Grief Discussion Video #3 DUE
Week 5	Understanding the Concept of Grief from the Biblical perspective	Read <i>If God Is Good</i> (pgs. 225-282) Read <i>Ministering to the Mourning</i> (Chaps. 8-9) Reading journal #5 DUE Death, Dying, and Grief Discussion Video #4 DUE
Week 6	Death, Dying, and Grief, and the Impact of Counseling on The Subject	Read <i>If God Is Good</i> (pgs. 392-436) Read <i>Ministering to the Mourning</i> (Chap. 10) Reading journal #6 DUE Death, Dying, and Grief Discussion Video #5 DUE
Week 7	Common threads in Counseling (Pt. I)	Read <i>If God Is Good</i> (pgs. 449-479) Reading journal #7 DUE Death, Dying, and Grief Discussion Video #6 DUE
Week 8	Common threads in Counseling (Pt. II)	Death, Dying, & Grief Case Study Paper DUE

Our Mission: To Prepare Christians to serve in the church and the world according to the Biblical worldview.

VIII. Suggested Bibliography

Baker, Bruce. *For Thou Art With Me: Biblical Help for the Terminally Ill and Those Who Love Them*. Larkspur, CO: Grace Acres Press, 2019.

Dunn, Bill. *Through a Season of Grief: Devotions For Your Journey From Mourning to Joy*. Thomas Nelson Publications, Nashville, TN, 2004.

Floyd, Scott. *Crisis Counseling: A Guide for Pastors and Professionals*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2008.

McMinn, Shari Howard. *Death: Where is Thy Sting? Recovery from the Loss of Our Loved Ones and Preparation for Our Own Final Days*. Fort Morgan, CO: BCF Publishing, 2020.

Powlison, David. *Seeing With New Eyes: Counseling the Human Condition Through the Lens of Scripture*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003.

Tautges, Paul. *Comfort Those Who Grieve: Ministering God's Grace in Times of Loss*. Day One Publications, 2009. ISBN# 978-1-84625-155-9 Price: 10.00.

Teterud, Wesley M. *Caring for Widows: You and Your Church can Make a Difference*. Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids MI, 1993.

Wolfelt, Alan. *Healing a Parents Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas after your Child Dies*. Companion Press, Bozeman, MT, 2002.

Surviving the Holidays, Grief Share, Pamphlet, Published by Church Initiative, Wake Forest, NC., 1984.