

Breaking Your Unholy Covenant With Grief

I have spent several years of my life chasing a dream. A dream of living a satisfied life. We needed more money, a different home, a different geography for that different home. I have contemplated going back to school to find a great career, starting my own business, living abroad or heaven help me, just living away from the Midwest. I have strategized, planned, made payoff schedules and spent hours researching and pinning dream boards on Pinterest.

You know what? None of that is wrong. What has been wrong is my heart. I have chased all of these dreams with a great hope that they would bring me fulfillment. Every single time we have moved, it has been with great hope for new and wonderful adventures. Every single time, I have been sorely disappointed. I don't know about you, but repeating that pattern over and over gets old. It's discouraging and depressing.

In past blogs, I have been giving an account of my healing journey with Jesus. A few weeks ago, I discovered another layer in my life. I had had a dream that was confusing but strangely felt like it was God speaking to me. Then, a day later a random conversation with someone pointed even more to the fact that God was putting his finger on something. So, I did some heart exploration, and had a talk with a close friend about it all. Through all of that, the Holy Spirit spoke to me about the fact that I had made a covenant with grief.

I have been abandoned more than once—as a child, and in a very serious relationship. In all of the pain that comes with things like that, I had allowed my heart to be tied to grief. Now, understand me, there is a time for grieving. It is definitely a part of the healing process. I had just never let

that time end. I had lived most of my life with a layer of sadness, pain and grief lining everything. Yuk! Consequently, I have spent so much time searching for a new place, a new me, a new thing, but never finding it. In that moment, with my friend there, God gently revealed my heart. Then He even more gently removed that connection with grief. There was no fanfare, no fireworks, I simply said, "I release this to you Jesus." Over the next several weeks, I noticed a huge difference in myself. Something is missing from my heart. The grief that was never supposed to be there is gone.

None of this means I will stop dreaming or pursuing things I have longed for. I have just discovered that my circumstances cannot dictate my heart's joy. No amount of money, no size of home, no location or career, no ministry position can fill up the space my identity should occupy. Joy comes from just being. It's in being who I am, a daughter of God. My living circumstances do not add or take away from my worth. It's not connected to any outer thing; It's all an inside job. I look forward to the future because I know that no matter what that future is, there will be joy.

*Adapted from NextGen Worship blog. **Hayley Kahler** is a proud mother to 3 boys and wife to Clint Kahler. She loves Jesus, coffee and chocolate. Hayley has led worship with her husband for 20+ years.*