

Prescriptions for the Heart

Coping with the death of a spouse

The death of your spouse is a life-changing event for which few of us are prepared. Although we understand that each of us will die, the loss of a spouse is always very traumatic because we don't realize how much our lives will change until we experience their absence. This prescription for the heart offers biblical guidance on how to cope with the loss of your spouse and highlights several Bible passages that will help you through this grieving process. It is our prayer that God's word will encourage and help you as you learn to cope with the loss of your spouse.

This information is provided as a free service of the Christian Medical & Dental Associations and your doctor.

A prescription for coping with the loss of your spouse

When coping with the loss of a spouse their absence in our daily lives is often what hurts the most. Their absence is a constant reminder of our loss and it intensifies our grieving. But, it is important to remember that their absence is only a temporary condition. Christians believe that when we die we will be reunited with our lost loved ones and our time together in eternity will have no end. In the book of John, Jesus explains to his disciples that He must leave to prepare a place for them. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you."¹

The apostle Paul explains in the Bible what happens to those who die before us, "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words."²

When one experiences the death of a spouse the grief of our loss can cause us to want to blame God. It is important to remember that sometimes bad things happen to innocent people, not because God wants bad things to happen, but because of the sin that is in the world. When we are suffering it helps to remember God and His Son suffered for us. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."³ God wants to comfort you now at your time of greatest loss, because he loves you. Your job is to make yourself available to Him so that He can help to heal your sorrows and comfort your loss.

Your doctor can help you manage the symptoms of your grief with prescription medications if necessary, but true healing from your loss remains in the hope that we have in tomorrow. Jesus

¹ The Holy Bible: New International Version. 1984. (John 14:1-2). Zondervan: Grand Rapids

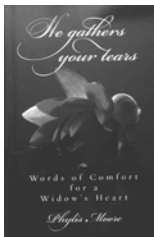
² The Holy Bible: New International Version. 1984. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, 17-18). Zondervan: Grand Rapids

³ The Holy Bible: New International Version. 1984. (John 3:16-17). Zondervan: Grand Rapids

promised His believers that He will never leave us. At this time of sorrow and grief, prayer can help. If you do not have a pastor or a church family that can help meet your needs at this time, your doctor can refer you to a pastor in your community who would be happy to meet and pray with you about coping with your loss.

Additional Resources that can help you cope with the loss of a spouse.

The following resources have been reviewed by the Christian Medical Association and have been found to contain sound Biblical and medical advice that can help you through the grieving process. These books can be found at your local Christian bookstore or you can order them directly from the Christian Medical Association at **888-231-2637**.



He Gathers Your Tears: by Phylis Moore. Her husband's memorial service was an exuberant celebration of life. But when the service was over and the friends went home, Phylis found herself alone and completely unequipped for the trauma of grief. She despaired of ever finding healing for the aching wound in her soul. Yet gradually, as she sought God's promises in the Bible she found the comfort she so desperately sought. Hardback, 127 pages.



When Will I Stop Hurting? by June Cerza Kolf. June Cerza Kolf understands. She, too, has suffered the wound of grief, as a veteran of hospice work, has counseled many mourning people. In this gentle, empathetic book, Kolf leads you through the stages of grief, helping you to understand what to expect as time goes on and making you mindful of potential pitfalls such as anger or guilt, dealing with holidays and experiencing physical distress. Paperback, 73 pages.