When Someone You Love Dies...

Has someone you loved fallen asleep in death?

Are you still grieving?

Do you need help in dealing with your grief?

Is there hope for the dead?

If so, what is it?

How can we be sure?

In this brochure, such questions will receive comforting answers from the Bible. We invite you to read it carefully.

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Publishers
Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada
Georgetown, Ontario, Canada
2006 Printing
This publication is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.
Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*
When Someone You Love Dies
English (*we*-E)
Made in Canada

"It Can't Be True!"

A NEW YORK (U.S.A.) man relates: "My son Jonathan was visiting friends a few miles away. My wife, Valentina, didn't like him to go out there. She was always nervous about the traffic. But he loved electronics, and his friends had a workshop where he could get practical experience. I was at home in west Manhattan, New York. My wife was away visiting her family in Puerto Rico. 'Jonathan will be back soon,' I thought. Then the doorbell rang. 'That'll be him for sure.' It wasn't. It was the police and paramedics. 'Do you recognize this driver's license?' the police officer asked. 'Yes, that's my son's, Jonathan's.' 'We've got bad news for you. There's been an accident, and . . . your son, . . . your son has been killed.' My first reaction was, 'It can't be true!' That bombshell opened a wound in our hearts that is still healing, even years later."

'We've got bad news for you. There's been an accident, and . . . your son, . . . your son has been killed.'

A father in Barcelona (Spain) writes: "Back in the Spain of the 1960's, we were a happy family. There were María, my wife, and our three children, David, Paquito, and Isabel, aged 13, 11, and 9 respectively.

"One day in March 1963, Paquito came home from school complaining of severe head pains. We were baffled as to what could be the cause —but not for long. Three hours later he was dead. A cerebral hemorrhage had snuffed out his life.

"Paquito's death took place over 30 years ago. Even so, the deep pain of that loss stays with us to this day. There is no way that parents can lose a child and not feel that they have lost something of themselves—regardless of how much time passes or how many other children they may have."

These two experiences, where parents lost children, illustrate how deep and lasting the wound is when a child dies. How true the words of a doctor who wrote: "The death of a child is usually more tragic and traumatic than the death of an older person because a child is the last person in the family expected to die. . . . The death of any child represents the loss of future dreams, relationships [son, daughter-in-law, grandchildren], experiences . . . that have not yet been enjoyed." And this sense of deep loss can also apply to any woman who has lost a baby through miscarriage.

A bereaved wife explains: "My husband, Russell, had served as a medical aide in the Pacific theater during World War II. He had seen and survived some terrible battles. He came back to the United States and to a more tranquil life. Later he served as a minister of God's Word. In his early 60's he began to have symptoms of a heart problem. He tried to lead an active life. Then, one day in July 1988, he suffered a massive heart attack and died. His loss was devastating. I never even got to say good-bye. He was not just my husband. He was my best friend. We had shared 40 years of life together. Now it seemed that I had to face a special loneliness."

These are just a few of the thousands of tragedies that strike families throughout the world every day. As most grieving persons will tell you, when death takes your child, your husband, your wife, your parent, your friend, it is truly what the Christian writer Paul called it, "the last enemy." Often the first natural reaction to the dreadful news may be denial, "It can't be true! I don't believe it." Other reactions often follow, as we will see.—1 Corinthians 15:25, 26.

However, before we consider the feelings of grief, let us answer some important questions. Does death mean the end of that person? Is there any hope that we can see our loved ones again?

There Is a Real Hope

The Bible writer Paul offered hope of relief from that "last enemy," death. He wrote: "Death is to be brought to nothing." "The last enemy to be abolished is death." (1 Corinthians 15:26, *The New English Bible*) Why could Paul be so sure of that? Because he had been taught by one who had been raised from the dead, Jesus Christ. (Acts 9:3-19) That is also why Paul could write: "Since death is through a man [Adam], resurrection of the dead is also through a man [Jesus Christ]. For just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive."—1 Corinthians 15:21, 22.

Jesus was deeply grieved when he met a widow of Nain and saw her dead son. The Bible account tells us: "As [Jesus] got near the gate of the city [Nain], why, look! there was a dead man being carried out, the only-begotten son of his mother. Besides, she was a widow. A considerable crowd from the city was also with her. And when the Lord caught sight of her, he was moved with pity for her, and he said to her: 'Stop weeping.' With that he approached and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still, and he said: 'Young man, I say to you, Get up!' And the dead man sat up and started to speak, and he gave him to his mother. Now fear seized them all, and they began to glorify God, saying:

'A great prophet has been raised up among us,' and, 'God has turned his attention to his people.'" Notice how Jesus was moved with pity, so that he resurrected the widow's son! Imagine what that portends for the future!—Luke 7: 12-16.

There, in front of eyewitnesses, Jesus performed an unforgettable resurrection. It was a token of the resurrection that he had already predicted some time prior to this event, a restoration to life on earth under "a new heaven." On that occasion Jesus had said: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out."—Revelation 21:1, 3, 4; John 5:28, 29; 2 Peter 3:13.

Other eyewitnesses to a resurrection included Peter, along with some others of the 12 who accompanied Jesus on his travels. They actually heard the resurrected Jesus speak by the Sea of Galilee. The account tells us: "Jesus said to them: 'Come, take your breakfast.' Not one of the disciples had the courage to inquire of him: 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after his being raised up from the dead."—John 21:12-14.

❖ *Questions to Ponder* ❖

What is a natural reaction to the death of a loved one?

What did Jesus do for a widow at Nain?

What promise regarding the dead did Jesus give?

Why could Peter and Paul be sure that there would be a resurrection?

What questions deserve an answer?

Therefore, Peter could write with utter conviction: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for according to his great mercy he gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."—1 Peter 1:3.

The apostle Paul expressed his confident hope when he said: "I believe all the things set forth in the Law and written in the Prophets; and I have hope toward God, which hope these men themselves also entertain, that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous."—Acts 24: 14, 15.

Millions therefore can have the solid hope of seeing their loved ones alive again on earth but under very different circumstances. What will those circumstances be? Further details of the Bible-based hope for our lost loved ones will be discussed in the final section of this brochure, entitled "A Sure Hope for the Dead."

But first let us consider questions you may have if you are grieving over the loss of a loved one: Is it normal to grieve this way? How can I live with my grief? What can others do to help me cope? How can I help others who are grieving? And principally, What does the Bible say about a sure hope for the dead? Will I ever see my loved ones again? And where?

Is It Normal to Feel This Way?

A BEREAVED person writes: "As a child in England, I was taught not to express my feelings in public. I can remember my father, an ex-military man, saying to me through clenched teeth, 'Don't you cry!' when something had caused me pain. I cannot recall whether my mother ever kissed or hugged any of us kids (there were four of us). I was 56 when I saw my father die. I felt a tremendous loss. Yet, at first, I was unable to weep."

In some cultures, people express their feelings openly. Whether they are happy or sad, others know how they feel. On the other hand, in some parts of the world, notably in northern Europe and Britain, people, especially men, have been conditioned to hide their feelings, to suppress their emotions, to keep a stiff upper lip and not wear their hearts on their sleeves. But when you have suffered the loss of a dear one, is it somehow wrong to express your grief? What does the Bible say?

Those Who Wept in the Bible

The Bible was written by Hebrews of the eastern Mediterranean region, who were expressive people. It contains many examples of individuals who openly showed their grief. King David mourned the loss of his murdered son Amnon. In fact, he "wept with a very great weeping." (2 Samuel 13:28-39) He even grieved at the loss of his treacherous son Absalom, who had tried to usurp the kingship. The Bible account tells us: "Then [David] the king became disturbed and went up to the roof chamber over the gateway and gave way to weeping; and this is what he said as he walked: 'My son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! O that I might have died, I myself, instead of you, Absalom my son, my son!'" (2 Samuel 18:33) David mourned like any normal father. And how many times have parents wished they could have died in place of their children! It seems so unnatural for a child to die before a parent.

How did Jesus react to the death of his friend Lazarus? He wept on nearing his tomb. (John 11:30-38) Later, Mary Magdalene wept as she neared Jesus' sepulcher. (John 20:11-16) True, a Christian with an understanding of the Bible's resurrection hope does not grieve

inconsolably, as some do who do not have a clear Bible basis for their beliefs regarding the condition of the dead. But as a human with normal feelings, the true Christian, even with the hope of the resurrection, does grieve and does mourn the loss of any loved one.—1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14.

To Weep or Not to Weep

What about our reactions today? Do you find it difficult or embarrassing to show your feelings? What do counselors recommend? Their modern views often merely echo the Bible's ancient inspired wisdom. They say that we should express our grief, not repress it. This reminds us of faithful men of old, such as Job, David, and Jeremiah, whose expressions of grief are found in the Bible. They certainly did not bottle up their feelings. Therefore, it is not wise to cut yourself off from people. (Proverbs 18:1) Of course, mourning is expressed in dif-

It is normal to grieve and weep when a loved one dies

ferent ways in different cultures, also depending on the prevalent religious beliefs.*

What if you feel like weeping? It is part of human nature to weep. Recall again the occasion of Lazarus' death, when Jesus "groaned in the spirit and . . . gave way to tears." (John 11: 33, 35) He thus showed that weeping is a normal reaction to the death of a loved one.

This is supported by the case of a mother, Anne, who had lost her baby Rachel to SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). Her husband commented: "The surprising thing was that neither Anne nor I cried at the funeral. Everyone else was weeping." To this, Anne responded: "Yes, but I have done plenty of crying for both of us. I think it really hit me a few weeks after the tragedy, when I was finally alone one day in the house. I cried all day long. But I believe it helped me. I felt better for it. I had to mourn the loss of my baby. I really do believe that you should let grieving people weep. Although it is a natural reaction for others to say, 'Don't cry,' that doesn't really help."

The Grieving Process

The word "process" does not imply that grief has any fixed schedule or program. Grief reactions can overlap and take varying lengths of time, depending on the individual. This list is not complete. Other reactions may also be manifested. The following are some of the symptoms of grief that one might experience.

Early reactions: Initial shock; disbelief, denial; emotional numbness; guilt feelings; anger.

Acute grief may include: Memory loss and insomnia; extreme fatigue; abrupt changes of mood; flawed judgment and thinking; bouts of crying; appetite changes, with resultant weight loss or gain; a variety of symptoms of disturbed health; lethargy; reduced work capacity; hallucinations—feeling, hearing, seeing the deceased; in the loss of a child, irrational resentment of your spouse.

Leveling-off period: Sadness with nostalgia; more pleasant memories of the deceased, even tinged with humor.

How Some React

How have some reacted when desolated by the loss of a loved one? For example, consider Juanita. She knows how it feels to lose a baby. She had had five miscarriages. Now she was pregnant again. So when a car accident forced her to be hospitalized, she was understandably worried. Two weeks later she went into labor —prematurely. Shortly afterward little Vanessa was born—weighing just over two pounds. "I was so excited," Juanita recalls. "I was finally a mother!"

But her happiness was short-lived. Four days later Vanessa died. Recalls Juanita: "I felt so empty. My motherhood was taken away from

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* For example, the Yoruba people of Nigeria have a traditional belief in the reincarnation of the soul. So when a mother loses a child, there is intense grief but only for a short period, for as a Yoruba refrain says: "It is the water that is spilled. The calabash is not broken." According to the Yoruba, this means that the water-bearing calabash, the mother, can bear another child —perhaps a reincarnation of the dead one. Jehovah's Witnesses do not follow any traditions based on superstitions that spring from the false ideas of the immortal soul and reincarnation, which have no basis in the Bible.—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Ezekiel 18:4, 20.

Miscarriage and Stillbirth—Mothers Grieve

Though she already had other children, Monna was eagerly looking forward to the birth of her next child. Even before the birth, it was a baby she "played with, talked to, and dreamed of."

The bonding process between mother and unborn child was powerful. She continues: "Rachel Anne was a baby who kicked books off my belly, kept me awake at night. I can still remember the first little kicks, like gentle, loving nudges. Every time she moved, I was filled with such a love. I knew her so well that I knew when she was in pain, when she was sick."

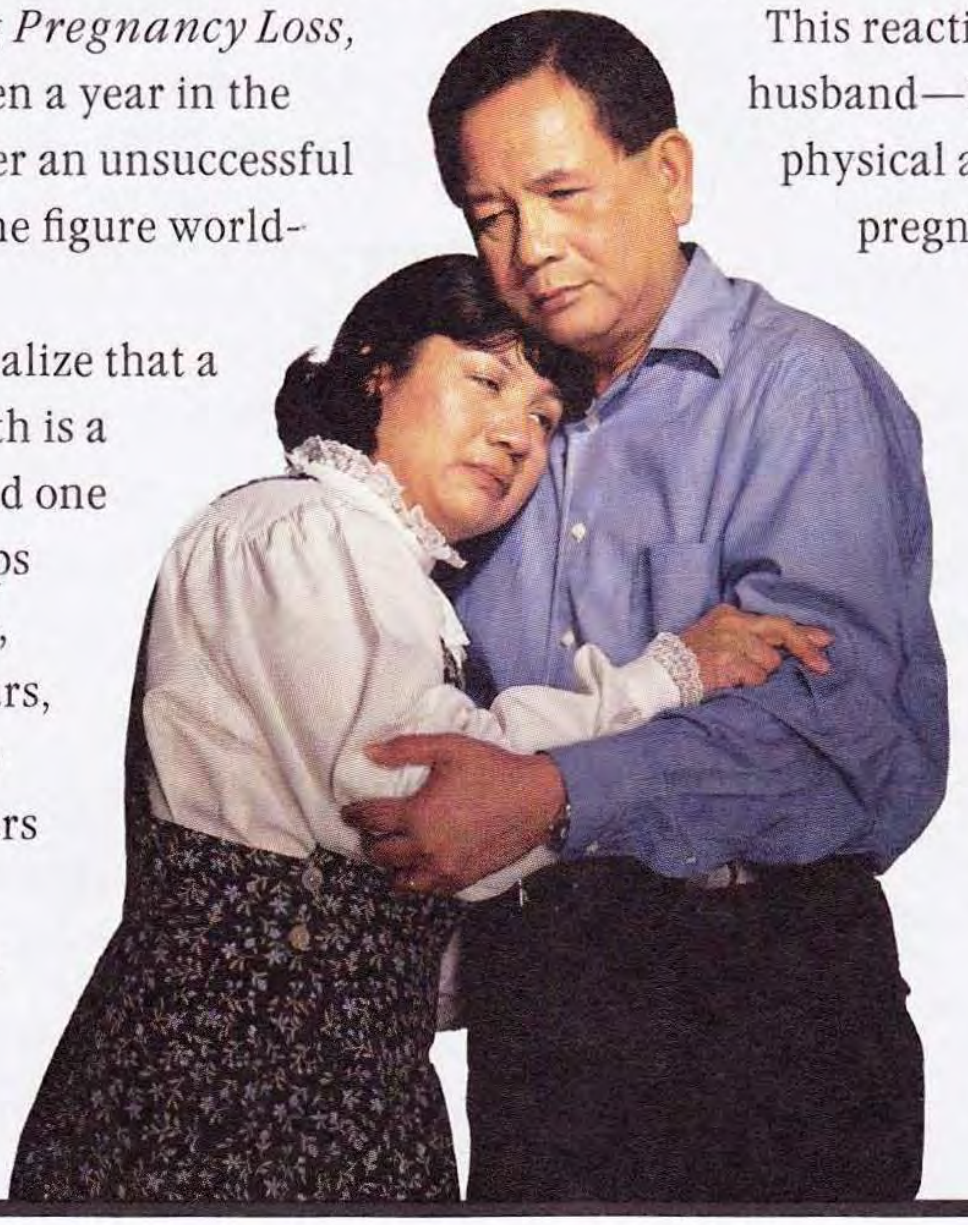
Monna continues her account: "The doctor wouldn't believe me until it was too late. He told me to stop worrying. I believe I felt her die. She just suddenly turned over violently. The next day she was dead."

Monna's experience is no isolated event. According to authors Friedman and Gradstein, in their book *Surviving Pregnancy Loss,* about one million women a year in the United States alone suffer an unsuccessful pregnancy. Of course, the figure worldwide is much greater.

People often fail to realize that a miscarriage or a stillbirth is a tragedy for a woman and one she remembers—perhaps all her life. For example, Veronica, now up in years, recalls her miscarriages and especially remembers the stillborn baby that was alive into the ninth month and was born weighing 13 pounds. She carried it dead inside her for the last two weeks. She said: "To give birth to a dead baby is a terrible thing for a mother."

The reactions of these frustrated mothers is not always understood, even by other women. A woman who lost her child by miscarriage wrote: "What I have learned in a most painful way was that before this happened to me, I really had no idea of what my friends had to bear. I had been as insensitive and ignorant toward them as I now feel people are to me."

Another problem for the grieving mother is the impression that her husband may not feel the loss as she does. One wife expressed it this way: "I was totally disappointed in my husband at the time. As far as he was concerned, there really was no pregnancy. He could not experience the grief that I was going through. He was very sympathetic to my fears but not to my grief."



This reaction is perhaps natural for a husband—he does not undergo the same physical and emotional bonding that his pregnant wife does. Nevertheless, he suffers a loss. And it is vital that husband and wife realize that they are suffering together, although in different ways. They should share their grief. If the husband hides it, his wife may think he is insensitive. So share your tears, thoughts, and embraces. Show you need each other as never before. Yes, husbands, show your empathy.

me. I felt incomplete. It was painful to come home to the room we had prepared for Vanessa and to look at the little undershirts I had bought for her. For the next couple of months, I relived the day of her birth. I didn't want to have anything to do with anyone."

An extreme reaction? It may be hard for others to understand, but those who, like Juanita, have gone through it explain that they grieved for their baby just as they would for someone who had lived for some time. Long before a child is born, they say, it is loved by its parents. There is a special bonding with the mother. When that baby dies, the mother feels that a real person has been lost. And that is what others need to understand.

How Anger and Guilt Can Affect You

Another mother expressed her feelings when told that her six-year-old son had suddenly died because of a congenital heart problem. "I went through a series of reactions —numbness, disbelief, guilt, and anger toward my husband and the doctor for not realizing how serious his condition was."

Anger can be another symptom of grief. It may be anger at doctors and nurses, feeling that they should have done more in caring for the deceased. Or it may be anger at friends and relatives who, it seems, say or do the wrong thing. Some get angry at the departed one for neglecting his health. Stella recalls: "I remember being angry with my husband because I knew it could have been different. He had been very sick, but he had ignored the doctors' warnings." And sometimes there is anger

The loss of a child is a terrible trauma —genuine sympathy and empathy can help the parents

at the departed one because of the burdens that his or her death brings upon the survivor.

Some feel guilty because of anger—that is, they may condemn themselves because they feel angry. Others blame themselves for their loved one's death. "He wouldn't have died," they convince themselves, "if only I had made him go to the doctor sooner" or "made him see another doctor" or "made him take better care of his health."

For others the guilt goes beyond that, especially if their loved one died suddenly,

unexpectedly. They start recalling the times when they had become angry at the departed one or had argued with him. Or they may feel that they were not really all that they should have been to the deceased.

The long grieving process of many mothers supports what many experts say, that the loss of a child leaves a permanent gap in the life of the parents, particularly the mother.

When You Lose a Spouse

The loss of a marriage partner is another kind of trauma, especially if both led a very active life together. It can mean the end of a whole life-style that they shared, of travel, work, entertainment, and interdependence.

Eunice explains what happened when her husband suddenly died of a heart attack. "For the first week, I was in a state of emotional numbness, as if I had stopped functioning. I could not even taste or smell. Yet, my sense of logic continued in a detached way. Because I had been with my husband while they were trying to stabilize him using CPR and medication, I did not suffer the usual denial symp-

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome—Facing the Grief

The sudden death of a baby is a devastating tragedy. One day an apparently normal, healthy baby fails to wake up. This is totally unexpected, for who imagines that any infant or child will die before its parents do? A baby that has become the center of a mother's boundless love is suddenly the focus of her boundless grief.

Guilt feelings begin to flood in. The parents may feel responsible for the death, as if it were due to some neglect. They ask themselves, 'What could we have done to prevent it?'* In some cases the husband, without foundation, might even unconsciously blame his wife. When he went to work, the baby was alive and healthy. When he got home, it had died in its crib! What was his wife doing? Where was she at the time? These plaguing questions have to be cleared up so that they do not put a strain on the marriage.

Unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstances caused the tragedy. The Bible states: "I returned to see under the sun that the swift do not have the race, nor the mighty ones the battle, nor do the wise also have the food, nor do the understanding ones also have the riches, nor do even those having knowledge have the favor; *because time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all.*"—Ecclesiastes 9:11.

How can others help when a family loses a baby? One bereaved mother responded: "One friend came and cleaned up my house without my having to say a word. Others made meals for us. Some just helped by giving me a hug—no words, just a hug. I didn't want to talk about it. I didn't want to have to explain over and over again what had happened. I didn't need prying questions, as if I had failed to do something. I was the mother; I would have done anything to save my baby."

* Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), which usually occurs in babies aged one to six months, is the term used when healthy babies die suddenly without any explicable cause. In some cases it is believed that the possibility can be avoided if the baby is put to sleep on its back or side *but not face down*. However, no sleeping position will prevent every case of SIDS.

toms. Nevertheless, there was an intense feeling of frustration, as if I was watching a car go over a cliff and there was nothing I could do about it."

Did she weep? "Of course I did, especially when I read the hundreds of sympathy cards I had received. I cried with each one. It helped me to face up to the rest of the day. But nothing could help when I was asked repeatedly how I felt. Obviously, I was miserable."

What helped Eunice to live through her grief? "Without realizing it, I unconsciously made the decision to go on with my life," she says. "However, what still hurts me is when I remember that my husband, who loved life so much, is not here to enjoy it."

"Don't Let Others Dictate . . ."

The authors of *Leave-taking—When and How to Say Goodbye* advise: "Don't let others dictate how you should act or feel. The grieving process works differently with everyone. Others may think—and let you know that they think—you are grieving too much or not grieving enough. Forgive them and forget about it. By trying to force yourself into a mold created by others or by society as a whole, you stunt your growth toward restored emotional health."

Of course, different people handle their grief in different ways. We are not trying to suggest that one way is necessarily better than another for every person. However, danger arises when stagnation sets in, when the grief-stricken person is unable to become reconciled to the reality of the situation. Then help might be needed from compassionate friends. The Bible says: "A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress." So do not be afraid to seek help, to talk, and to weep.—Proverbs 17:17.

Grief is a normal reaction to loss, and it is not wrong for your grief to be obvious to others. But further questions need answers: 'How can I live with my grief? Is it normal to experience feelings of guilt and anger? How should I deal with these reactions? What can help me to endure the loss and the grief?' The next section will answer those and other questions.

❖ *Questions to Ponder* ❖

How is the grieving of some people affected by their culture?

What examples do we have in the Bible of those who openly grieved?

How have some reacted to the loss of a loved one? How have you reacted in similar circumstances?

What makes the loss of a spouse a different kind of experience?

How does the grieving process work? Is it wrong to grieve?

What are some aspects of the grieving process? (See box on page 9.)

What special circumstances affect parents in sudden infant death? (See box on page 12.)

How are many mothers affected by a miscarriage or a stillbirth? (See box on page 10.)

How Can I Live With My Grief?

"I FELT a lot of pressure on me to hold in my feelings," explains Mike in recalling his father's death. To Mike, suppressing his grief was the manly thing to do. Yet he later realized that he was wrong. So when Mike's friend lost his grandfather, Mike knew what to do. He says: "A couple of years ago, I would have patted him on the shoulder and said, 'Be a man.' Now I touched his arm and said, 'Feel however you have to feel. It will help you to deal with it. If you want me to go, I'll go. If you want me to stay, I'll stay. But don't be afraid to feel.'"

MaryAnne also felt pressure to hold in her feelings when her husband died. "I was so worried about being a good example to others," she recalls, "that I did not permit myself the normal feelings. But I eventually learned that trying to be a pillar of strength for others wasn't helping me. I began analyzing my situation and saying, 'Cry if you have to cry. Don't try to be too strong. Get it out of your system.'"

So both Mike and MaryAnne recommend: *Let yourself grieve!* And they are correct. Why? Because grieving is a necessary emotional release. Releasing your feelings can relieve the pressure you are under. The natural expression of emotions, if coupled with understanding and accurate information, lets you put your feelings in proper perspective.

Of course, not everyone expresses grief in the same way. And such factors as whether the loved one died suddenly or death came after a long illness might have a bearing on the emotional reaction of the survivors. But one thing appears certain: Repressing your feelings can be harmful both physically and emotionally. It is far healthier to release your grief. How? The Scriptures contain some practical advice.

Releasing Grief—How?

Talking can be a helpful release. Following the death of all ten of his children, as well as some other personal tragedies, the ancient patriarch Job said: "My soul certainly feels a loathing toward my life. I will give vent to [Hebrew, "loose"] my concern about myself. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul!" (Job 1:2, 18, 19; 10:1) Job could no longer restrain his concern. He needed to let it loose; he

had to "speak." Similarly, the English dramatist Shakespeare wrote in *Macbeth:* "Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break."

So talking about your feelings to "a true companion" who will listen patiently and sympathetically can bring a measure of relief. (Proverbs 17:17) Putting experiences and feelings into words often makes it easier to understand them and to deal with them. And if the listener is another bereaved person who has effectively dealt with his or her own loss, you may be able to glean some practical suggestions on how you can cope. When her child died, one mother explained why it helped to talk to another woman who had faced a similar loss: "To know that somebody else had gone through the same thing, had come out whole from it, and that she was still surviving and finding some sort of order in her life again was very strengthening to me."

Bible examples show that writing down your feelings may help you to express your grief

What if you are not comfortable talking about your feelings? Following the death of Saul and Jonathan, David composed a highly emotional dirge in which he poured out his grief. This mournful composition eventually became part of the written record of the Bible book of Second Samuel. (2 Samuel 1:17-27; 2 Chronicles 35:25) Similarly, some find it easier to express themselves in writing. One widow reported that she would write down her feelings and then days later read over what she had written. She found this a helpful release.

Whether by talking or writing, communicating your feelings can help you to release your grief. It can also help to clear up misunderstandings. A bereaved mother explains: "My husband and I heard of other couples that got divorced after losing a child, and we didn't want that to happen to us. So any time we felt angry, wanting to blame each other, we would talk it out. I think we really grew closer together by doing that." Thus, letting your feelings be known can help you to understand that even though you may be sharing the same loss, others may grieve differently—at their own pace and in their own way.

Something else that can facilitate the release of grief is *crying*. There is "a time to weep," says the Bible. (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4) Surely the death of someone we love brings on such a time. Shedding tears of grief appears to be a necessary part of the healing process.

One young woman explains how a close friend helped her to cope when her mother died. She recalls: "My friend was always there

In every culture, grieving people appreciate receiving comfort

for me. She cried with me. She talked with me. I could just be so open with my emotions, and that was important to me. I didn't have to be embarrassed about crying." (See Romans 12:15.) Nor should you feel ashamed of your tears. As we have seen, the Bible is filled with examples of men and women of faith—including Jesus Christ—who openly shed tears of grief without any apparent embarrassment. —Genesis 50:3; 2 Samuel 1:11, 12; John 11: 33, 35.

You may find that for a time your emotions will be somewhat unpredictable. Tears may flow without much advance warning. One widow found that supermarket shopping (something she had often done with her husband) could reduce her to tears, especially when, out of habit, she reached for items that had been her husband's favorites. Be patient with yourself. And do not feel that you have to hold back the tears. Remember, they are a natural and necessary part of grieving.

Dealing With Guilt

As noted previously, some have feelings of guilt after losing a loved one in death. This may help to explain the acute grief of the faithful man Jacob when he was led to believe that his son Joseph had been killed by "a vicious wild beast." Jacob himself had sent Joseph out to check on the welfare of his brothers. So Jacob was likely plagued with guilt feelings, such as 'Why did I send Joseph out alone? Why did I send him out into an area abounding with wild beasts?'—Genesis 37:33-35.

Perhaps you feel that some neglect on your part contributed to your loved one's death. Realizing that guilt—real or imagined—is a normal grief reaction can be helpful in itself. Here again, do not necessarily keep such feelings to yourself. Talking about how guilty you feel can provide a much needed release.

Realize, though, that no matter how much we love another person, we cannot control his or her life, nor can we prevent "time and un-

foreseen occurrence" from befalling those we love. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) Besides, no doubt your motives were not bad. For example, in not making a doctor's appointment sooner, did you *intend* for your loved one to get sick and die? Of course not! Then are you really guilty of causing that one's death? No.

One mother learned to deal with the guilt after her daughter died in a car accident. She explains: "I felt guilty that I had sent her out. But I came to realize that it was ridiculous to feel that way. There was nothing wrong with sending her with her father to run an errand. It was just a terrible accident."

'But there are so many things I wish I had said or done,' you may say. True, but who of us can say that we have been the perfect father, mother, or child? The Bible reminds us: "We all stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man." (James 3:2; Romans 5:12) So accept the fact that you are not perfect. Dwelling upon all kinds of "if onlys" will not change anything, but it may slow down your recovery.

If you have sound reasons to believe that your guilt is real, not imagined, then consider the most important factor of all in allaying guilt—God's forgiveness. The Bible assures us: "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand? For there is the true forgiveness with you." (Psalm 130:3, 4) You cannot return to the past and change anything. You can, though, beg God's forgiveness for past mistakes. Then what? Well, if God promises to wipe the slate clean, should you not also forgive yourself?—Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9.

Dealing With Anger

Do you also feel rather angry, perhaps at doctors, nurses, friends, or even the one who died? Realize that this too is a common reaction to loss. Perhaps your anger is the natural accompaniment of the hurt you feel. One writer said: "Only by becoming aware of the anger —not acting on it but knowing you feel it—can you be free of its destructive effect."

It may also help to express or share the anger. How? Certainly not in uncontrolled outbursts. The Bible warns that prolonged anger is dangerous. (Proverbs 14:29, 30) But you may find comfort in talking about it with an understanding friend. And some find that vigorous exercise when they are angry is a helpful release.—See also Ephesians 4:25, 26.

While it is important to be open and honest about your feelings, a word of caution is in order. There is a big difference between expressing your feelings and dumping them on others. There is no need to blame others for your anger and frustration. So be mindful of talking out your feelings, but not in a hostile way. (Proverbs 18:21) There is one preeminent aid in coping with grief, and we will now discuss it.

Help From God

The Bible assures us: "Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves." (Psalm 34:18) Yes, more than anything else, a relationship

Some Practical Suggestions

Rely on friends: Do not hesitate to let others help if they offer to do so and you can really use some assistance. Understand that it may be their way of showing you how they feel; perhaps they cannot find the right words.—Proverbs 18:24.

Take care of your health: Grieving can wear you out, especially in the beginning. Your body needs sufficient rest, healthful exercise, and proper nourishment more than ever. A periodic checkup by your family doctor might be in order.

Postpone major decisions: If possible, wait for at least some time until you are thinking more clearly before you decide such things as whether to sell your house or to change your job. (Proverbs 21:5) One widow recalled that several days after her husband died, she gave away many of his personal possessions. Later, she realized that she had given away mementos she treasured.

Be patient with yourself: Grief often lasts longer than people in general realize. Yearly reminders of the lost loved one may renew the pangs. Special pictures, songs, or even smells can trigger the tears. One scientific study of bereavement explained the grief process as follows: "The bereaved may swing dramatically and swiftly from one feeling state to another, and avoidance of reminders of the deceased may alternate with deliberate cultivation of memories for some period of time." Keep Jehovah's precious promises in mind.—Philippians 4:8, 9.

Make allowances for others: Try to be patient with others. Realize that it is awkward for them. Not knowing what to say, they may clumsily say the wrong thing.—Colossians 3:12, 13.

Beware of using medication or alcohol to cope with your grief: Any relief offered by drugs or alcohol is temporary at best. Medication should be taken only under a doctor's supervision. But be careful; many substances are addictive. In addition, these may delay the grieving process. A pathologist warns: "The tragedy has to be endured, suffered and eventually rationalised and to retard this unduly by knocking out the [person] with drugs may prolong or distort the process." Lasting relief will come through meditating on Jehovah's grand purposes.—Psalm 1:2; 119:97.

Get back into a regular routine: You may have to push yourself at first to go to work, to go shopping, or to take care of other responsibilities. But you may find that the structure of your normal routine will do you a lot of good. Keep busy in Christian works. —Compare 1 Corinthians 15:58.

Do not be afraid to let go of acute grief: Strange as it may seem, some bereaved ones are afraid to let go of the intense grief, believing that it may indicate their love for the deceased one is diminishing. That simply is not the case. Letting go of the pain makes way for treasured memories that will no doubt always remain with you.—Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4.

Do not be unduly anxious: You may find yourself worrying, 'What will become of me now?' The Bible counsels to take one day at a time. "Living more on a day-to-day basis really helps me," explains one widow. Jesus said to his disciples: "Never be anxious about the next day, for the next day will have its own anxieties." —Matthew 6:25-34.

with God can help you to cope with the death of someone you love. How? All the practical suggestions offered thus far have been based on or are in harmony with God's Word, the Bible. Applying them can help you cope.

In addition, do not underestimate the value of prayer. The Bible urges us: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you." (Psalm 55:22) If talking out your feelings with a sympathetic friend can help, how much more will pouring out your heart to "the God of all comfort" help you!—2 Corinthians 1:3.

It is not that prayer simply makes us feel better. The "Hearer of prayer" promises to give holy spirit to his servants who sincerely ask for it. (Psalm 65:2; Luke 11:13) And God's holy spirit, or active force, can equip you with "power beyond what is normal" to go from one day to the next. (2 Corinthians 4:7) Remember: God can help his faithful servants to endure any and every problem they may face.

One woman who lost a child in death recalls how the power of prayer helped her and her husband through their loss. "If we were home at night and the grief just became insurmountable, we would pray together out loud," she explains. "The first time we had to do anything without her—the first congregation meeting we went to, the first convention we attended—we would pray for strength. When we got up in the morning and the reality of it all seemed unbearable, we would pray to Jehovah to help us. For some reason, it was really traumatic for me to walk into the house by myself. And so every time I came home alone, I would just say a prayer to Jehovah to please help me to maintain some sort of calm." That faithful woman firmly and rightly believes that those prayers made a difference. You too may find that in response to your persistent prayers, 'the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your heart and your mental powers.'—Philippians 4:6, 7; Romans 12:12.

The help that God supplies does make a difference. The Christian apostle Paul stated that God "comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those in any sort of tribulation." True, divine help does not eliminate the pain, but it can make it easier to bear. That does not mean that you will no longer cry or will forget your loved one. But you can recover. And as you do, what you have experienced can make you more understanding and sympathetic in helping others to cope with a similar loss.—2 Corinthians 1:4.

❖ *Questions to Ponder* ❖

Why is it important
to let yourself grieve?

How can you release your grief?

How can the Scriptures
help you to deal with feelings
of guilt and anger?

In what way can a relationship
with God help you to cope with
the death of a loved one?

What are some practical
suggestions for coping
with grief?

How Can Others Help?

"IF THERE'S anything I can do, just let me know." This is what many of us say to the newly bereaved friend or relative. Oh, we sincerely mean it. We would do *anything* to help. But does the bereaved one call us and say: "I've thought of something you can do to help me"? Not usually. Clearly, we may need to take some initiative if we are truly to assist and comfort one who is grieving.

A Bible proverb says: "As apples of gold in silver carvings is a word spoken at the right time for it." (Proverbs 15:23; 25:11) There is wisdom in knowing what to say and what *not* to say, what to do and what *not* to do. Here are a few Scriptural suggestions that some bereaved persons have found helpful.

What to Do . . .

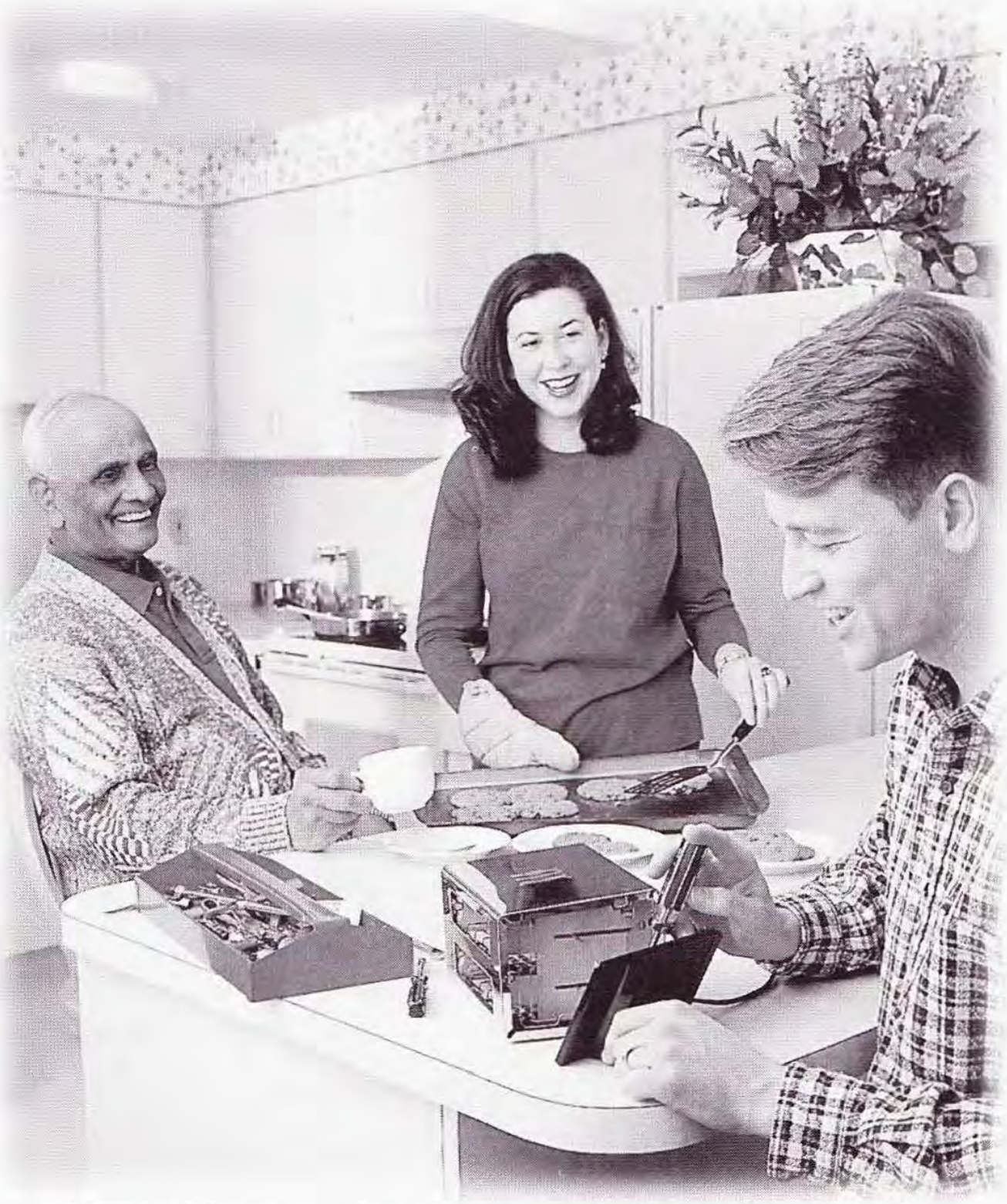
Listen: Be "swift about hearing," says James 1:19. One of the most helpful things you can do is to share the bereaved one's pain by listening. Some bereaved persons may need to talk about their loved one who has died, about the accident or illness that caused the death, or about their feelings since the death. So ask: "Would you care to talk about it?" Let them decide. Recalling when his father died, one young man said: "It really helped me when others asked what happened and then *really listened.*" Listen patiently and sympathetically without necessarily feeling that you have to provide answers or solutions. Allow them to express whatever they want to share.

Provide reassurance: Assure them that they did all that was possible (or whatever else you know to be *true and positive*). Reassure them that what they are feeling—sadness, anger, guilt, or some other emotion—may not be at all uncommon. Tell them about others you know of who successfully recovered from a similar loss. Such "pleasant sayings" are "a healing to the bones," says Proverbs 16:24. —1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14.

Be available: Make yourself available, not just for the first few days when many friends and relatives are present, but even months later when others have returned to their normal routine. In this way you prove yourself to be "a true companion," the kind who stands by a friend in a time of "distress." (Proverbs 17:17) "Our friends made sure that our evenings were taken up so that we didn't have to spend

too much time at home alone," explains Teresea, whose child died in a car accident. "That helped us cope with the empty feeling we had." For years afterward, anniversary dates, such as the wedding anniversary or the date of the death, can be a stressful time for the survivors. Why not mark such dates on your calendar so that when they come around, you can make yourself available, if necessary, for sympathetic support?

Take appropriate initiative: Are there errands that need to be run? Is someone needed to watch the children? Do visiting friends and relatives need a place to stay? Recently bereaved persons are often so stunned that they do not even know what *they* need to do, let alone tell others how they may help. So if you discern a genuine need, do not wait to be asked; take the initiative. (1 Corinthians 10:24; compare 1 John 3:17, 18.) One woman whose husband had died recalled: "Many said, 'If there's anything I can do, let me know.' But one friend did not ask. She went right into the bedroom, stripped the bed, and laundered the linens soiled from his death. Another took a bucket, water, and cleaning supplies and scrubbed the rug where my husband had vomited. A few weeks later, one of the congregation elders came over in his work clothes with his tools and said, 'I know there must be something that needs fixing. What is it?' How dear that man is to my heart for repairing the door that was hanging on a hinge and for fixing an electrical fixture!"—Compare James 1:27.



If you discern a genuine need, do not wait to be asked—take appropriate initiative

Be hospitable: "Do not forget hospitality," the Bible reminds us. (Hebrews 13:2) Especially should we remember to be hospitable to those who are grieving. Instead of a "come anytime" invitation, set a date and time. If they refuse, do not give up too easily. Some gentle

encouragement may be needed. Perhaps they declined your invitation because they are afraid of losing control of their emotions in front of others. Or they may feel guilty about enjoying a meal and fellowship at such a time. Remember the hospitable woman Lydia mentioned in the Bible. After being invited to her home, Luke says, "She just made us come." —Acts 16:15.

Be patient and understanding: Do not be too surprised by what bereaved ones may say at first. Remember, they may be feeling angry and guilty. If emotional outbursts are directed at you, it will take insight and patience on your part not to respond with irritation. "Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering," recommends the Bible.—Colossians 3:12, 13.

Write a letter: Often overlooked is the value of a letter of condolence or a sympathy card. Its advantage? Answers Cindy, who lost her mother to cancer: "One friend wrote me a nice letter. That really helped because I could read it over and over again." Such a letter or card of encouragement may be composed "in few words," but it should give of your heart. (Hebrews 13:22) It can say that you care and that you share a special memory about the deceased, or it can show how your life was touched by the person who died.

Pray with them: Do not underestimate the value of your prayers with and for bereaved ones. The Bible says: "A righteous man's supplication . . . has much force." (James 5:16) For example, hearing you pray in their behalf can help them allay such negative feelings as guilt. —Compare James 5:13-15.

What *Not* to Do . . .

Do not keep away because you do not know what to say or do: 'I'm sure they need to be alone right now,' we may tell ourselves. But perhaps the truth is that we are keeping away because we are afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing. However, being avoided by friends, relatives, or fellow believers may only make the bereaved one feel lonelier, adding to the pain. Remember, the kindest words and actions are often the simplest. (Ephesians 4:32) Your presence alone can be a source of encouragement. (Compare Acts 28:15.) Recalling the day her daughter died, Teresea says: "Within an hour, the lobby of the hospital was filled with our friends; all the elders and their wives were there. Some of the women were in hair curlers, some were in their work clothes. They just dropped everything and came. A lot of them told us that they didn't know what to say, but it didn't matter because they were just there."

Do not pressure them to stop grieving: 'There, there, now, don't cry,' we may want to say. But it may be better to let the tears flow. "I think it's important to allow bereaved ones to show their emotion and really get it out," says Katherine, reflecting on her husband's death. Resist the tendency to tell others how they should feel. And do not assume that you have to hide your feelings in order to protect theirs. Instead, "weep with people who weep," recommends the Bible.—Romans 12:15.

Your presence at the hospital can encourage the bereaved

Do not be quick to advise them to discard clothing or other personal effects of the deceased before they are ready: We may feel that it would be better for them to discard memory-evoking objects because they somehow prolong the grief. But the saying "Out of sight, out of mind" may not apply here. The bereaved person may need to let go of the deceased slowly. Recall the Bible's description of the patriarch Jacob's reaction when he was led to believe that his young son Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. After Joseph's blood-stained long garment was presented to Jacob, he "carried on mourning over his son for many days. And all his sons and all his daughters kept rising up to comfort him, but he kept refusing to take comfort."—Genesis 37:31-35.

Do not say, 'You can have another baby': "I resented people telling me I could have another child," recalls a mother who lost a child in death. They may mean well, but to the grieving parent, words to the effect that the lost child can be replaced can 'stab like a sword.' (Proverbs 12:18) One child can never replace another. Why? Because each is unique.

Do not necessarily avoid mentioning the departed one: "A lot of people wouldn't even mention my son Jimmy's name or talk about him," recalls one mother. "I must admit I felt a little hurt when others did that." So do not necessarily change the subject when the deceased one's name is mentioned. Ask the person whether he needs to talk about his loved one. (Compare Job 1:18, 19 and 10:1.) Some bereaved persons appreciate hearing friends tell of the special qualities that endeared the departed one to them. —Compare Acts 9:36-39.

Do not be too quick to say, 'It was for the best': Trying to find something positive about the death is not always 'consoling to depressed souls' who are grieving. (1 Thessalonians 5:14) Recalling when her mother died, one young woman said: "Others would say, 'She's not suffering' or, 'At least she's in peace.' But I didn't want to hear that." Such comments may imply to the survivors that they should not feel sad or that the loss was not significant. However, they may be feeling very sad because they dearly miss their loved one.

It may be better not to say, 'I know how you feel': Do you really? For example, can you possibly know what a parent feels when a child dies if you have not experienced such a loss yourself? And even if you have, realize that others may not feel precisely as you felt. (Compare Lamentations 1:12.) On the other hand, if it seems appropriate, there may be some benefit in telling how you recovered from the loss of your loved one. One woman whose daughter had been killed found it reassuring when the mother of another girl who had died told of her own return to normal living. She said: "The dead girl's mother didn't preface her story with 'I know how you feel.' She simply told me how things were for *her* and let me relate to them."

❖ *Questions to Ponder* ❖

Why is it helpful to share the bereaved one's pain by listening?

What are some things we can do in order to comfort one who is grieving?

What should we avoid saying or doing to someone who is mourning?

Helping a bereaved person calls for compassion, discernment, and much love on your part. Do not wait for the bereaved one to come to you. Do not simply say, "If there's anything I can do . . ." Find that "anything" yourself, and then take the appropriate initiative.

A few questions remain: What about the Bible's hope of a resurrection? What can it mean for you and your loved one who has died? How can we be sure that it is a reliable hope?

Helping Children Deal With Death

When death strikes a family, parents as well as other relatives and friends are often at a loss as to what to say or do to help children cope with what has happened. Yet, children need adults to help them deal with death. Consider some commonly asked questions about helping children understand death.

How do you explain death to children? It is important to explain matters in simple terms. Keep it truthful too. Do not hesitate to use the real words, such as "dead" and "death." For example, you might sit down with the child, take him in your arms, and say: "A very, very sad thing has happened. Daddy got very sick with a disease that not many people get [or whatever you know to be true], and he died. It isn't anybody's fault that he died. We'll miss him very much because we loved him, and he loved us." However, it may be helpful to explain that the child or his surviving parent is not likely to die simply because that one gets sick at times.

Encourage their questions. 'What's dead?' they may ask. You might answer this way: " 'Dead' means that the body stopped working and can't do any of the things it used to—it can't talk, see, or hear, and it can't feel anything." A parent who believes the Bible's promise of a resurrection can use this opportunity to explain that Jehovah God remembers the departed one and can bring him back to life in the future earthly Paradise. (Luke 23:43; John 5:28, 29)—See the section "A Sure Hope for the Dead."

Is there anything you should *not* say? It is not helpful to say that the deceased has gone on a long journey. Fear of abandonment is a major concern for a child, especially when a parent has died. To be told that the deceased has gone on a trip may only reinforce the child's feeling of abandonment and he may reason: 'Grandma left, and she didn't even say good-bye!' Be careful, too, with young children, about saying that the departed one has gone to sleep. Children tend to be very literal. If a child equates sleep with death, a fear of going to bed at night can result.

Should children attend the funeral services? Parents should take into account the children's feelings. If they do not want to go, do not force them or in any way make them feel guilty for not going. If they want to go, give them a detailed description of what will take place, including whether there will be a casket and whether it will be open or closed. Explain, too, that they may see a lot of people crying because they are sad. Again, let them ask questions. And reassure them that they can leave if they need to.

How do children react to death? Children often feel responsible for the death of a loved one. Because a child may at one time or another have felt angry at the person who died, the child may come to believe that angry thoughts or words caused the death. You might need to offer some comfort: 'Your thoughts and words are not what make people sick, and they don't make people die.' A young child may need such reassurances repeatedly.

Should you hide your grief from children? Crying in front of children is both normal and healthy. Besides, it is almost impossible to hide your feelings from children completely; they tend to be very discerning and can often sense that something is wrong. Being honest about your grief lets them know that it is normal to grieve and at times to show your feelings.

A Sure Hope for the Dead

A 25-year-old woman wrote: "In 1981 my adoptive mother died of cancer. Her death was very hard on me and my adoptive brother. I was 17, and my brother was 11. I missed her so much. Having been taught that she was in heaven, well, I wanted to take my own life to be with her. She was my best friend."

It seems so unfair that death should have the power to take away someone you love. And when it happens, the thought of never again being able to talk to, laugh with, or hold your loved one can be most difficult to bear. That pain is not necessarily erased by being told that your loved one is up in heaven.

The Bible, however, holds out a much different hope. As we have previously noted, the Scriptures indicate that it is possible to be reunited with your dead loved one in the near future, not in an unknown heaven but right here on earth under peaceful, righteous conditions. And at that time humans will have the prospect of enjoying perfect health, and they will never have to die again. 'But surely that is wishful thinking!' some may say.

Jesus' tender feelings when resurrecting Lazarus reflected his intense desire to undo the ravages of death

What would it take to convince you that this is a sure hope? To believe in a promise, you would need to be certain that the one making the promise is both willing and able to fulfill it. Who, then, is it that promises that the dead will live again?

In the spring of 31 C.E., Jesus Christ boldly promised: "Just as the Father raises the dead up and makes them alive, so the Son also makes those alive whom he wants to. Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his [Jesus'] voice and come out." (John 5:21, 28, 29) Yes, Jesus Christ promised that millions now dead will live again on this earth and have the prospect of remaining on it forever under peaceful, paradisaic conditions. (Luke 23:43; John 3:16; 17:3; compare Psalm 37:29 and Matthew 5:5.) Since Jesus made the promise, it is

Texts That Comfort

Time and again, in explaining how they have coped with their grief, faithful Christians have said: "Let me tell you my favorite Bible text." If you are grieving, maybe some of these scriptures will also help you.

"Blessed be . . . the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation."—2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.

"You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing."—Psalm 145:16.

"He [God] has set a day in which he purposes to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, *and he has furnished a guarantee* to all men in that he has resurrected him from the dead."—Acts 17:31.

"I—I myself am the One that is comforting you people."—Isaiah 51:12.

"Like a man whom his own mother keeps comforting, so I myself shall keep comforting you people."—Isaiah 66:13.

"This is my comfort in my affliction, for your own saying has preserved me alive. I have remembered your judicial decisions from time indefinite, O Jehovah, and I find comfort for myself. May your loving-kindness serve, please, to comfort me, according to your saying to your servant."—Psalm 119:50, 52, 76.

"The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life."—John 5:28, 29.

safe to assume that he is willing to fulfill it. But is he able to do so?

Less than two years after making that promise, Jesus demonstrated in a powerful way that he is both willing and able to perform the resurrection.

"Lazarus, Come On Out!"

It was a touching scene. Lazarus was gravely ill. His two sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to Jesus, who was across the Jordan River: "Lord, see! the one for whom you have affection is sick." (John 11:3) They knew that Jesus loved Lazarus. Would not Jesus want to see his sick friend? Curiously, instead of going to Bethany immediately, Jesus stayed where he was for the next two days.—John 11:5, 6.

Lazarus died some time after the message about his sickness was sent. Jesus knew when Lazarus died, and he intended to do something about it. By the time Jesus finally arrived in Bethany, his dear friend had been dead four days. (John 11:17, 39) Could Jesus bring back to life someone who had been dead that long?

On hearing that Jesus was coming, Martha, a woman of action, ran out to meet him. (Compare Luke 10:38-42.) Touched by her sorrow, Jesus assured her: "Your brother will rise." When she indicated her faith in a future resurrection, Jesus plainly told her: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life."—John 11:20-25.

Upon arriving at the tomb, Jesus directed that the stone closing its entrance be taken away. Then, after praying aloud, he commanded: "Lazarus, come on out!"—John 11:38-43.

All eyes were fixed on the tomb. Then, out of the darkness, a figure emerged. His feet and hands were bound with wrappings, and his face was bound with a cloth. "Loose him and let him go," ordered Jesus. The last of the unraveled bandages fell to the ground. Yes, it was Lazarus, the man who had been dead four days!—John 11:44.

Did It Really Happen?

The account of the raising of Lazarus is presented in the Gospel of John as a historical fact. The details are too vivid for it to be a mere allegory. To question its historicity is to question all the miracles of the Bible, including the resurrection of Jesus Christ himself. And to deny the resurrection of Jesus is to deny the Christian faith as a whole.—1 Corinthians 15:13-15.

Actually, if you accept the existence of God, you should have no problem believing in the resurrection. To illustrate: A person can videotape his last will and testament, and after he dies, his relatives and friends can see and hear him, in effect, as he explains how his estate is to be handled. A hundred years ago, such a thing was unthinkable. And to some people now living in remote parts of the world, the technology of video recording is so beyond comprehension as to seem miraculous. If scientific principles established by the Creator can be used by humans to reconstruct such a visible and audible scene, should not the Creator be able to do far more? Is it not reasonable, then, that the One who created life is capable of *re-creating* it?

The miracle of Lazarus' restoration to life served to increase faith in Jesus and the resurrection. (John 11:41, 42; 12:9-11, 17-19) In a touching way, it also reveals the willingness and desire of Jehovah and his Son to perform the resurrection.

'God Will Have a Yearning'

The response of Jesus to Lazarus' death reveals a very tender side of the Son of God. His deep feelings on this occasion clearly indicate his intense desire to resurrect the dead. We read: "Mary, when she arrived where Jesus was and caught sight of him, fell at his feet, saying to him: 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' Jesus, therefore, when he saw her weeping and the Jews that came with her weeping, groaned in the spirit and became troubled; and he said: 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him: 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus gave way to tears. Therefore the Jews began to say: 'See, what affection he used to have for him!'" —John 11:32-36.

Jesus' heartfelt compassion is here indicated by three expressions: "groaned," "became troubled," and "gave way to tears." The original-language words used in recording this touching scene indicate that Jesus was so deeply moved by the death of his dear friend Lazarus and the sight of Lazarus' sister weeping that His eyes brimmed over with tears.*

What is so remarkable is that Jesus had previously brought two others back to life. And he fully intended to do the same with Lazarus. (John

* The Greek word rendered "groaned" is from a verb (*em·brima'o·mai*) that signifies to be painfully, or deeply, moved. One Bible scholar notes: "Here it can only mean that such deep emotion seized Jesus that an involuntary groan was wrung from His heart." The expression translated "troubled" comes from a Greek word (*ta·ras'so*) that indicates agitation. According to a lexicographer, it means "to cause one inward commotion, . . . to affect with great pain or sorrow." The expression "gave way to tears" comes from a Greek verb (*da·kry'o*) that means "to shed tears, weep silently."

11:11, 23, 25) Yet, he "gave way to tears." Restoring humans to life, then, is not a mere procedure for Jesus. His tender and deep feelings as manifested on this occasion clearly indicate his intense desire to undo the ravages of death.

Since Jesus is 'the exact representation of Jehovah God's very being,' we rightly expect no less of our heavenly Father. (Hebrews 1:3) Of Jehovah's own willingness to perform the resurrection, the faithful man Job said: "If an able-bodied man dies can he live again? . . . You will call, and I myself shall answer you. For the work of your hands *you will have a yearning.*" (Job 14:14, 15) Here the original-language word that is rendered "you will have a yearning" denotes God's earnest longing and desire. (Genesis 31:30; Psalm 84:2) Clearly, Jehovah must keenly anticipate the resurrection.

Can we really believe the resurrection promise? Yes, there is no doubt that Jehovah and his Son are both willing and able to fulfill it. What does this mean for you? You have the prospect of being reunited with dead loved ones right here on earth but under very different conditions!

Jehovah God, who started mankind off in a lovely garden, has promised to restore Paradise on this earth under the rule of His heavenly Kingdom in the hands of the now glorified Jesus Christ. (Genesis 2:7-9; Matthew 6:10; Luke 23:42, 43) In that restored Paradise, the human family will have the prospect of enjoying life without end, free from all sickness and disease. (Revelation 21:1-4; compare Job 33:25; Isaiah 35:5-7.) Gone, too, will be all hatred, racial prejudice, ethnic violence, and economic oppression. It will be into such a cleansed earth that Jehovah God through Jesus Christ will resurrect the dead.

The resurrection, based on the ransom sacrifice of Christ Jesus, will bring joy to all the nations

❖ Questions to Ponder ❖

When his friend Lazarus died, how did Jesus demonstrate that He is both willing and able to perform the resurrection?

Why can we accept the Bible's account of the resurrection of Lazarus as a historical fact?

How does the account in John chapter 11 reveal Jesus' intense desire to undo the ravages of death?

What shows that Jehovah God keenly anticipates the resurrection?

That is now the hope of the Christian woman mentioned at the beginning of this section. Several years after her mother died, Jehovah's Witnesses helped her to make a careful study of the Bible. She recalls: "After learning about the resurrection hope, I cried. It was wonderful to know that I will see my mother again."

If your heart similarly yearns to see a loved one again, Jehovah's Witnesses will gladly assist you to learn how you can make this sure hope your very own. Why not contact them at a Kingdom Hall near you, or write to the nearest address listed on page 32.

Would you welcome more information?
Write Jehovah's Witnesses at the appropriate address below.

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