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The Hard Questions

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- There is no quick solution for dealing with death.
- Finding a support group might be helpful. Or if you can't find one, start one.
- Most important ly, give yourself some time.
- When you're ready, find someone you can help. It will help you and bless them.

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Answers to Life's Hard Questions— Are You Ready?

Dear Joy,

My husband of thirty-five years suddenly died of a heart attack. I don't know how to go on. We were best friends, lovers, companions. I have children but they have their own lives. I'm so emotional I can barely be with other people. He's in a better place, but I'm not. Where do I go from here? What do I do now?

Please accept my sympathy in the loss of your dear husband. Losing someone we love is hard; it leaves a person feeling empty, alone and unsure about the future.

You said he's in a better place now so I will assume you are Christians. At least as believers we have hope — hope for a bright future for ourselves one day and the hope we will see our loved one again. But in the meantime you have to deal with the here and now and all that entails.

Loneliness may be the biggest difficulty you have to face. Not the loneliness of being all alone but the empty place beside you. It's so easy to forget he's truly gone and expect him home for dinner or you think, "I'll just call him at work and say 'Hi' and 'I love you.'" Then the realization hits all over again that he won't be home for dinner and you can't call him and say, "Hi".

Bitterness may also be a huge difficulty. We can find ourselves wondering, why did this happen to me? Why did God take someone I loved so much? We weren't

together long enough, this isn't right. When we focus on these negative things, it brings further unhappiness and sometimes resentment towards God. None of us knows why things happen as they do or why God allows someone we loved to die. We can choose to either trust God or question and not find any answers.

Sorry to say there is no quick solution or remedy for dealing with death. I wish there were and if there were I'd tell you what it is. You do have something going for you, though. The Lord says the widow and orphans have a special place in His heart and He watches over them. In the darkest times, focus on Him. He's in your sorrow with you.

Finding a support group might be helpful. Or if you can't find one, start one for anyone who has lost a loved one. The gathering together, sharing good food and with it stories about the ones who are gone can be comforting. Also you are with those who know what you're going through.

I remember when my dearly loved Grampa died. I was thirteen and it was my first encounter with losing someone close. After the funeral the adults sat around and talked about Grampa and laughed and had a good time. I, however, was appalled. How could they even enjoy their stories and ever laugh again? My Grampa was gone and wouldn't be back. As an adult, though, I now understand the comfort and yes, even joy that talking over dear memories can bring.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:4

Most important, give yourself some time and some leeway. It's okay to cry; it's okay to feel all the emotions that assail—these are God-given emotions. But, though it doesn't seem like it now, healing is taking place and one day you will know this as a fact. One day you will truly feel like getting up in the morning and facing the day. One day you will feel like having lunch with a close friend or taking a walk by yourself or even buying some new clothes that he isn't there to help you pick out.

Losing a spouse means you are now single, a hard pill to swallow when you've been married for any length of time. There are two possible reactions to being suddenly single. Some feel the need to mourn for years and years and find it hard to live day by day. Others want to jump right into life again while remembering the loved one but moving on. Both extremes should be avoided. Many mistakes are made when big decisions are made following a loved one's death. We all need time to grieve, time to heal, and time to consider the next move. There's nothing wrong with deciding to remain single, but prolonged grieving leads to a lack of interest in life and looking to others to solve your problems, make your decisions. Trusting in Christ helps us avoid either extreme and find the right balance for what remains of our life on this earth.

A final word: when you are ready, the best thing you can do to get back into life is find someone who is going through a rough place and give them a helping hand. It does two things that are both beneficial. It gets your mind off your problems and blesses someone else as they face their problems.

I AM FREE

Don't grieve for me,
for now I'm free.
I'm following the path
God laid for me.
I took His hand when
I heard Him call.
I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day,
to laugh, to love,
to work or play.
Tasks undone must
stay that way,
I've found that peace at the
close of the day.

If parting has left a void,
then fill it with remembered
joy. A friendship shared,
a laugh, a kiss,
Ah, yes, these things
I too will miss.

Be not burdened
with times of sorrow
I wish for you the
sunshine of tomorrow.
My life's been full,
I savored much
Good friends, good times,
a loved one's touch.

Perhaps my time
seemed all to brief,
Don't lengthen it now
with undue grief.
Lift up your hearts
and share with me,
God wants me now,
He set me free.

By Linda Jo Jackson

RESOURCES & INFO

Web Sites:

Dealing With Death—Help for the Hurting

Books:

The Tender Scar: Life after the Death of a Spouse
by Richard Mabry, MD

HELPING YOU FIND GENUINE JOY!

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QUESTIONS????? Write us.

Sometimes you come up with really hard, tough questions that you don't have the answers to.

At times you're too embarrassed or uncomfortable to ask your friends and family... and when you are brave enough to ask the questions, even they don't always have the answers.

You don't think you have anyone that you can talk to… well now you do.

Genuine Joy Ministries is dedicated to helping you find the answers to life's hardest questions.

Just For Fun

This may come as a surprise to those of you not living in Las Vegas, but there are more Catholic Churches there than casinos.

Not surprisingly, some worshippers at Sunday services will give casino chips rather than cash when the plate is passed.

Since they get chips from many different casinos, the churches have devised a method to collect the offerings.

The churches send all their collected chips to a nearby Franciscan Monastery for sorting and then the chips are taken to the casino of origin and cashed in.

This is done by the Chip Monks.

A human life is a story told by God.

~Hans Christian Andersen

If you know someone who would be interested in or needs to see this newsletter, you can easily add their email address to our mailing list. Just send a quick email to: info@genuinejoyministries.org