

*Quick*  
SCRIPTURE  
REFERENCE  
for  
Counseling  
Women

PATRICIA A. MILLER

UPDATED *and* REVISED

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Heavenly Father,  
This is for your honor  
and glory.  
May your Word  
rescue and restore.



# Subject Guide

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# With a Grateful Heart

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When I began the first edition of this book, the sorting and writing was a solo project. When asked to do this revision, I wanted a “choir.” As a result, I asked other women to share their ideas and read over the topics. I am grateful for each of you.

I teach at Calvary Bible College and Theological Seminary. Thank you for cheering me on! I had some wonderful seminary women in my classes who helped brainstorm the practical steps.

My children and their spouses always make me feel like “of course you can do this.” I am grateful to you beyond words.

My husband and partner, Keith, has my greatest appreciation. The man worked tirelessly, keeping me afloat and pushing me forward—actually breaking it down to how many topics I should complete in a week. He helped with research; lived with writing, sorting, and file folders all over the table; and had long discussions with me about topics and their relationship to women. I am forever grateful to God for the blessed partnership we have.

I cannot imagine better people to work with than those at Baker Publishing.

- Thank you for the privilege and hearing my heart and desire to share God’s Word in this way.
- Vicki Crumpton, I so appreciate you. You were the jump start with both editions.
- Chad Allen, you surprised me. Whenever I had an idea, you had two more. You were gentle when I had to give something up and positive and encouraging throughout the project. Thank you.



# Introduction

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## Coming Home

The Bible is the grand story of God's glory manifested in his rescue and restoration of his good but fallen and broken creation. This story is woven through every book in the Bible.

In *Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling Women*, each of the topics and verses is a window into the grand mansion that is the Bible. As marvelous as the view is through the windows, it is only when we step inside the grand house—rest in its rooms, explore its many passages and balconies, enjoy its beauty and light—that we will be truly transformed.

When we encounter this grand home's Master and Maker—Jesus Christ, whose name is written on every wall and reflected on every surface—we will know at last that we are truly home.

The Bible is not just a reference; it is so much more. Please do not get bogged down in the topics or the references. Take time to read, study, memorize, and meditate on the precious Word of God. Let it saturate your life. Keep exploring this mansion for the rest of your life!

They [God's Words] are not just idle words for you—they are your life.

Deuteronomy 32:47 NIV

## The Purpose of This Book

Scripture knows no boundaries. It is beneficial for men, women, and children. However, each of these groups has special needs and concerns. As a result, counselors, friends, and those who guide women need to be prepared to use Scripture that can encourage and comfort women.

The purpose of this book is to present Scripture that will help women in the areas in which they struggle.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 NIV

Though this book covers needs specific to women, it also covers many general areas. However, even in these general areas, verses were chosen to touch a woman's heart and are studied from a woman's point of view. The desire is that this book will be a tool and at least a beginning point for further study of Scripture. It also contains a pattern that can be used for studying many other topics.

Counseling is a work of the heart and mind. The biblical principles of God's Word affect both the counselor and the one counseled. God's Word is clear. How do people change? People change when their thinking is changed about a difficulty, sin issue, problem, etc.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed [changed] by the renewing of your mind.

Romans 12:2 NIV

God's Word is the tool, measuring stick, and standard to help us see where our thinking does not line up with God's thinking. When biblical thinking is put in place, biblical actions should follow. The goal is to guide troubled individuals, whatever their problem, into confidence in God and his Word. The true value and success of biblical counseling and discipleship rest in God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit in a life.

The world system offers counterfeit theories, programs, steps, and temporary solutions to follow. But again, they belong to the world. They have no solid, God-honoring foundation. We cannot blindly put our confidence in these ideas. Everything we use in our lives and in working with others must line up with God's Word. There is so much confidence, excitement, and freedom when we use the Word. We do not have to wonder, *Will this work?* Scripture is always sufficient for any area of life (2 Pet. 1:3). Every problem, every need, every hurt, and

every desire can be met by Scripture. While Scripture may not specifically address a particular issue, scriptural principles are valid to help an individual in every situation.

Isaiah 61:1–3 summarizes the goal of counseling in a beautiful way. Although given to the prophet for Israel, the principle is relevant for us today.

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,  
and provide for those who grieve in Zion—  
to bestow on them a crown of beauty  
instead of ashes,  
the oil of joy  
instead of mourning,  
and a garment of praise  
instead of a spirit of despair.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
a planting of the LORD  
for the display of his splendor. (NIV)

## Suggestions for Using This Book

Topics in this book are listed in alphabetical order and are also cross-referenced. The first topic is how to share the gospel. It is necessary that we be prepared to lead individuals into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and into a committed relationship with him as Lord of their lives. It is essential to evaluate this issue before any counseling problems are addressed. God's Word can be useful in anyone's life, but when believers use the Word, the Holy Spirit has power in their lives to help them truly understand Scripture and make the changes necessary. Therefore, the first topic, the gospel, is very significant.

The following suggestions will help you in using this book.

- Whenever possible, have the counselees read the Scripture passages for themselves from a Bible.
- The “see also” heading at the beginning of each topic points to other helpful topics in the book that may apply.
- The Bible is a grand “narrative” moving in one direction. The Old Testament points to the New Testament, and the New Testament points to the cross. The purpose of the Bible is to tell of Jesus’s coming and his provision of eternal life (John 20:31). Within this large story are many individual stories that illustrate God’s work in people’s lives. God created us to respond to narrative, and reading biblical narratives helps us to better understand God’s story in our own lives.
- The “practical steps” listed at the conclusion of each topic are homework ideas or growth steps that can be used by counselees. Counselees can also interact with Scripture passages from the topic list throughout the week. (What spoke to them? What applies? What do they want to ignore? What verses would they add? What did God say? What should they do?) These practical steps allow the counseling to move at a more rapid pace because counselees are working on the problem throughout the week and keeping God’s Word before them.
- The “resources” section at the end of each topic provides a list of booklets and books for additional study. Diligence was used in trying to list only resources that have a biblical perspective.

What an amazing God we serve, that he would invite us into his Word to know him. Every time we open the Bible, we are standing at the front door to the Mansion—all that is required is that we cross the threshold and enjoy its delights. My desire is that this book of Scripture, organized by topic, will influence both your life and mine, and that as God brings those in need into our lives, we will be better able to show them the Savior and strengthen their walk with their Lord. For when we open the pages of the Bible it is always . . . *Welcome Home!*

# The Gospel

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The gospel is the place where our relationship with God begins.

A counselor's first task is to determine if an individual has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. If a counselee does not have such a relationship, you can still provide help for the problems and struggles that are faced, but it is only when the individual understands and applies the gospel personally that Scripture will make sense.

When a person has trusted Jesus Christ and him alone for salvation, Scripture, with the power of the Holy Spirit, will then be truly able to do its work.

**Steps in guiding an individual to Christ** (if possible, have counselees read the passages from a Bible).

- 1. Each person is separated from God because of sin and sinful behavior.**

**Romans 3:23** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (NKJV)

**Isaiah 53:6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (NKJV)

- 2. Sin must be punished by separation from God (hell).**

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NKJV)

- 3. There is nothing a person can do to gain status with God or to earn salvation. We cannot earn forgiveness.**

**Ephesians 2:8–9** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.



**Titus 3:5** He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

**Isaiah 64:6** We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

4. **God recognizes this dilemma. From creation, he put a plan into action to give individuals the opportunity to have a personal relationship with him. This plan was based on the death of his Son, Jesus Christ.**

**Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (NKJV)

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (NKJV)

**Romans 10:9** Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

5. **Each person must repent of their sin and personally believe (i.e., trust) in Jesus Christ as the only way to receive God's forgiveness and gain entrance into heaven.**

**John 1:12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. (NASB)

**John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them. (NIV)

**Luke 15:7, 10** In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away! . . . In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents. (NLT)

**6. Salvation is then assured—not a “maybe” or a “hope so”; it is God’s gift.**

**1 John 5:13** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

**John 5:24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

## Biblical Narratives

- Nicodemus, John 3
- Serpent in the wilderness, Numbers 21 with John 3:14
- Woman at the well, John 4:1–5
- Ethiopian, Acts 8:26–39
- Cornelius, Acts 10
- Philippian jailor, Acts 16:25–34

## Practical Steps

- Write out your spiritual journey. Compare it to each area listed in this topic. Do you have an accurate picture according to Scripture?
- Study carefully the Gospel of John.
- Seek out another believer to mentor you in your spiritual growth.
- Write out the gospel in your own words.
- Question to ask: If you were to die soon, why would you expect God to allow you to join him in heaven?

## Resources

- *Assurance* (booklet). Susan Heck. Focus.
- *Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God*. Francis Chan. David Cook.

- *A Gospel Primer for Christians*. Milton Vincent. Focus.
- *The Jesus I Never Knew*. Philip Yancey. Zondervan.
- *The Reason for God*. Timothy Keller. Dutton.
- *What's So Amazing about Grace?* Philip Yancey. Zondervan.

# Abortion

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*See also* Decision Making/Will of God, Hope, Selfishness/Subjectivity

## Choosing Life

1. God is actively and personally involved in the life of every unborn person, including plans for each day of his or her life.

**Psalm 139:16** Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (NIV)

**Genesis 25:21–23**

2. Birth is not the beginning of life; it is the arrival. The baby in the womb is a living human being from conception. Note the frequent use of personal pronouns in reference to an unborn baby.

**Psalm 139:13–15** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

3. The prophets understood that God knew them as persons before they were born.

**Jeremiah 1:5** I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations. (NLT)

**Isaiah 49:1** Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name. (NIV)

4. Elizabeth's unborn baby was aware of Jesus, Mary's unborn baby. Through a unique situation (the God-man in the womb), evidence is provided for personhood in the womb.

**Luke 1:44** As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. (NIV)

5. Following what self desires, rather than God's plan, is sin and leads to heartache and problems.

**Psalms 19:13** Keep your servant from deliberate sins! Don't let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. (NLT)

**Proverbs 14:12** There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

**Proverbs 16:2** People may be pure in their own eyes, but the LORD examines their motives. (NLT)

6. Our actions are not hidden from God.

**Hebrews 4:13** Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (NIV)

7. Children are a gift from God, no matter the circumstances of their conception.

**Psalms 127:3–4** Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. (NASB)

8. Our bodies are not ours—they belong to God

**1 Corinthians 6:19–20** Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. (NLT)

**Romans 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 6:16**

9. **Choose life!** Self may desire to get out of a pregnancy and its consequences, but that is not what God desires. Choosing God's way, no matter how difficult, leads to life and peace.

**Romans 8:5–6** Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. (NIV)

**Philippians 1:9–10** And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ. (NIV)

**Joshua 24:14–15** Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. . . . But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD. (NIV)

10. **Think—present-day gods.**

Joshua 1:9

## Biblical Narratives

- Mary and Elizabeth, Luke 1:26–45
- Job, how God's hands fashioned him, Job 10:8–12
- Proverbs 24:11–12 on the need to rescue from death
- Exodus 21:22–23 (NET Bible) where the death of a mother and baby are seen as of equal standing

## Practical Steps

- A must—have an ultrasound. Study your baby's development.
- Consider adoption—visit a pregnancy center.

- Memorize Psalm 139:16; say it daily.
- Memorize Isaiah 43:1–2.

## Resource

- *Pro-life Answers to Pro-choice Arguments*. Randy Alcorn. Multnomah.

## After an Abortion

*See also Confession/Repentance, Forgiveness from God, Grief, Past Memories*

### 1. When forgiveness is requested, it is given freely.

**Psalm 32:3–5** When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, “I will confess my rebellion to the LORD.” And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. (NLT)

### 2. God can take a broken spirit and produce joy.

**Psalm 51:12–17** Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

### 3. God offers restoration and freedom.

**Psalms 40:1–3** I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him. (NIV)

**John 8:32, 36** Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. . . . So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (NIV)

### 4. God understands the women of Israel weeping for children they would never see again. He understands sorrow for the loss of children.

**Jeremiah 31:15** Thus says the LORD: A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. (NKJV)

### 5. As the Israelites in captivity were not to dwell on past mistakes, we also should not dwell on the past once it is forgiven.

**Isaiah 43:18–19** Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. (NIV)

### 6. God is the only one who can save us from our sorrow.

**Psalms 18:1–6** I love you, LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears. (NIV)



**Isaiah 25:8** He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

## Practical Steps

- As a reminder of God's forgiveness, purchase a special piece of jewelry (perhaps a birthstone) that can be worn in memory of the baby.
- Join a Bible study with other post-abortive women. Go beyond sharing experiences to how God meets you in your need and how he can use you now.
- Get involved with a crisis pregnancy center and/or the Pro-life Movement.
- Plant a memorial tree or conduct a memorial service.

## Resources

- *Forgiven and Set Free: A Post-Abortion Bible Study for Women*. Linda Cochrane. Baker.
- *Healing After Abortion* (booklet). David Powlison. New Growth.
- "How Can I Get Rid of Guilt Over my Abortion?" in *Intimate Issues*. Linda Dillow. WaterBrook.
- *Living in His Forgiveness*. Sandy Day. Focus.
- *When the Pain Won't Go Away: Dealing with the Effects of Abortion* (booklet). RBC Ministries.

# Abuse

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*See also Fear, Past Memories, Purpose for Living, Rape, Suffering/Trials*

Abuse does not define a person. Our identity is who we are in Christ.

## Help for the Abused

### 1. The Lord Jesus himself experienced/suffered great abuse.

**Isaiah 53:5–6** But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

**Psalm 22:7–8** Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads, saying, “Is this the one who relies on the LORD? Then let the LORD save him!” (NLT)

**Psalm 22:16** My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet. (NLT) See **Luke 23:33–37**.

### 2. When we feel alone, God is there, and we can call on him.

**Zephaniah 3:17** The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. (NKJV)

**Psalm 142:1–7** I cry out to the LORD; I plead for the LORD’s mercy. I pour out my complaints before him and tell him all my troubles. When I am overwhelmed, you alone know the way I should turn. Wherever I go, my enemies have set traps for me. I

look for someone to come and help me, but no one gives me a passing thought! No one will help me; no one cares a bit what happens to me. Then I pray to you, O LORD. I say, “You are my place of refuge. You are all I really want in life.” Hear my cry, for I am very low. Rescue me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me. Bring me out of prison so I can thank you. The godly will crowd around me, for you are good to me. (NLT)

**Psalm 59:1** Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; protect me from those who rise up against me.

### 3. Although we do not know when or how God will rescue us, we do know he will provide the strength we need.

**Psalm 31:4** You will pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, for You are my strength. (NASB)

**Psalm 61:3** For You have been a refuge for me, a tower of strength against the enemy. (NASB)

**Psalm 62:7** My victory and honor come from God alone. He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me. (NLT)

### 4. David prayed for safety from evil men; we can do the same.

**Psalm 140:1–6** O LORD, rescue me from evil people. Protect me from those who are violent, those who plot evil in their hearts and stir up trouble all day long. Their tongues sting like a snake; the venom of a viper drips from their lips. O LORD, keep me out of the hands of the wicked. Protect me from those who are violent, for they are plotting against me. The proud have set a trap to catch me; they have stretched out a net; they have placed traps all along the way. I said to the LORD, “You are my God!” Listen, O LORD, to my cries for mercy! (NLT)

**Psalm 61:1–4** O God, listen to my cry! Hear my prayer! From the ends of the earth, I cry to you for help when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the towering rock of safety, for you are my safe refuge, a fortress where my enemies cannot reach me. Let me live forever in your sanctuary, safe beneath the shelter of your wings! (NLT)

5. **Do not allow past fears to control the present. When there is nothing we can do to correct the past, we must trust it to God's care.**

**Isaiah 43:18–19** Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do. It is happening already—you can see it now! I will make a road through the wilderness and give you streams of water there. (GNT)

**Philippians 3:13** Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead. (NASB)

**Matthew 10:26** But don't be afraid of those who threaten you. For the time is coming when everything that is covered will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. (NLT)

**Psalms 27:1; 118:6**

## Comfort for the Abused

1. **Our God, who is sovereign over our past, can help us today.**

**Psalms 103:3–11** He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's! The LORD gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated unfairly. He revealed his character to Moses and his deeds to the people of Israel. The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. (NLT)

2. **Although the Thessalonian Christians were suffering, they had joy and set an example for other believers.**

**1 Thessalonians 1:6–7** You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe

suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. (NIV)

### 3. We can always talk to God about the problem.

**Hebrews 4:16** Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Philippians 4:6–7** Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (NLT)

### 4. God is sufficient to give us strength in our trials.

**2 Corinthians 12:9–10** But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (NIV)

### 5. God is our refuge, our strong protector.

**Psalms 17:8–9** Guard me as you would guard your own eyes. Hide me in the shadow of your wings. Protect me from wicked people who attack me, from murderous enemies who surround me. (NLT)

**Isaiah 25:4** But you are a tower of refuge to the poor, O LORD, a tower of refuge to the needy in distress. You are a refuge from the storm and a shelter from the heat. For the oppressive acts of ruthless people are like a storm beating against a wall. (NLT)

**Psalms 46**

### 6. We can hope in a future day when God will redeem all things and there will be no more pain.

**Revelation 21:1–4** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming

down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

## Biblical Narratives

- Joseph, Genesis 37:12–36
- Hagar, Genesis 16

## Practical Steps

- Create a safety plan with a trusted individual (emergency phone numbers, safe house, money, etc.).
- Keep a record of events and what was said and done.
- Separate yourself from the situation. Seek out a shelter or a friend’s home; get a restraining order.
- Start a healing journal of prayers, Scripture, and forgiveness.
- It would be beneficial to have the counselee see a physician.

## Resources

- *Abused*. Richard and Lois Klempel. Fairway.
- *Dorie: The Girl Nobody Loved*. Dorie Van Stone. Moody.
- *Emotionally Destructive Relationships*. Leslie Vernick. Harvest House.
- *Rid of My Disgrace*. Justin and Lindsey Holcomb. Crossway.
- *They Meant It for Evil*. Lucinda Pennington. Tate Publishing.

# Adoption

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*See also* Decision Making/Will of God, Orphan

1. **God has a special interest in individuals who have been left without biological parents.**

**Psalm 27:10** For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me up. (NASB)

**Psalm 82:3–4** Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. (NIV)

**Isaiah 49:15** Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. (NASB)

2. **God is pleased with those who care for orphans.**

**James 1:27** Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (NIV)

**Matthew 25:34–40**

3. **At salvation, God delightfully adopts us into his family with full rights as his children.**

**Ephesians 1:5** God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. (NLT)

**Romans 8:23** We believers also groan, . . . for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. (NLT)

#### 4. Whether someone is with a biological family or an adopted family, God is intimately involved in that life.

**Jeremiah 29:11** For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

**Psalms 139:16** Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (NIV)

**Psalms 10:14** But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless. (NIV)

### Biblical Narrative

- Esther, Esther 2:5–7, 15; 4:14

### Practical Steps

- Consult with others who have adopted and learn from them.
- Celebrate the birth date as well as the adoption date. Create memory books.
- Study the beautiful picture of how God has adopted us (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:5).
- Be creative in making adoption the beautiful gift it is to parents and child.

### Resources

- *Adopted for Life*. Russell Moore. Crossway.
- “Counseling Women Considering Adoption” in *Women Helping Women*. Elyse Fitzpatrick and Carol Cornish. Harvest House.
- *Helping Your Adopted Child* (booklet). Paul Tripp. New Growth.
- *Loved by Choice—True Stories That Celebrate Adoption*. Susan Horner and Kelly Martindale. Revell.



# Adultery

*See also* Confession/Repentance, Forgiveness from God, Forgiving Others, Sexual Purity, Temptation

1. Adultery is any sexual involvement with someone outside the bonds of marriage and is a sin against God.

**Proverbs 5:20** Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?

**Genesis 39:9–10** “He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.

2. God commands no adultery—it is his law!

**Exodus 20:14** You shall not commit adultery. (NKJV)

**Romans 13:9** For the commandments say, “You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet.” These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (NLT)

3. You must not take what belongs to another—including another’s spouse.

**Exodus 20:15** You shall not steal. (NKJV)

**Exodus 20:17** You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.

**1 Thessalonians 4:6–7** Never harm or cheat a Christian brother in this matter by violating his wife, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before. God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives. (NLT)

4. Lustful thinking—imagining what it would be like to be with someone else—is mental and emotional adultery—sin. Like Job, a woman needs a commitment to not look with lust.

**Job 31:1** I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman. (NLT)

**Matthew 5:28** But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

5. Adultery, like all sin, separates us from God. Only Jesus Christ offers us freedom.

**1 Corinthians 6:9–11** Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

6. Adultery is caused when a person's inner compass is not focused on God.

**Matthew 15:19** For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. (NASB)

7. Adultery is stopped by changing our thinking and seeing it as sin, as God does.

**Romans 8:5–6** Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. (NLT)

**Romans 12:1–2** Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (NIV)

## 8. Adultery always has real consequences leading to destruction.

**Proverbs 6:27–29, 32** Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? So is he who goes in to his neighbor’s wife; none who touches her will go unpunished. . . . He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself.

**Proverbs 5:20–23** Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man’s wife? Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman? For your ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all your paths. The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them; the cords of their sins hold them fast. For lack of discipline they will die, led astray by their own great folly. (NIV)

## 9. An individual has no right to separate what God has placed together.

**Mark 10:8–9** And the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

## 10. Steps for preventing adultery.

### SELF-CONTROL

**1 Thessalonians 4:3–5** God’s will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor—not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways. (NLT)

### GOD’S WISDOM, HIS WORD

**Proverbs 2:16–18** Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman, from the wayward wife with her seductive words,

who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. Surely her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. (NIV)

#### A HEALTHY SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP WITHIN MARRIAGE

**1 Corinthians 7:2–5** But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. The husband should fulfill his wife’s sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband’s needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won’t be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (NLT)

- 11. If you fall into this sin, you must confess, repent, and seek God’s forgiveness and restoration with your spouse.**

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (NKJV)

**Psalms 32:1–5** Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

- 12. If your spouse has failed in this area, and responds with confession and repentance, forgiveness and restoration are now your responsibility.**

**Colossians 3:12–13** Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness,

and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

**Ephesians 4:32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

## Biblical Narratives

- David, 2 Samuel 11:2–5 with Psalm 51
- Wayward Israelites, 1 Corinthians 10:6–8, 11; Exodus 32:1–10
- Joseph resisting, Genesis 39
- Two unnamed women, Luke 7:37–47; John 8:1–11
- Proverbs 5–7

## Practical Steps

- Consider the possibility of how you might have contributed to the infidelity (your own or your spouse's). Follow the steps of repentance, forgiveness, and restoration.
- Create a plan. How do you protect your faithfulness and avoid this situation in the future?
- Restore. Sever past relationships. Date your spouse. Seek accountability. Pray daily for each other. Write letters to your spouse.

## Resources

- *After Adultery* (booklet). Robert Jones. New Growth.
- *Heart Broken and Healing* (workbook). Mary Asher. Focus.
- *Help! My Spouse Committed Adultery* (booklet). Winston Smith. CCEF.
- *How to Act Right When Your Spouse Acts Wrong*. Leslie Vernick. WaterBrook.
- *How to Save Your Marriage Alone*. Ed Wheat. Zondervan.

# Aging/Menopause

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*See also* Contentment, Empty Nest, Purpose for Living, Trust, Widow

While menopause is not mentioned directly in Scripture, these principles of aging apply.

## 1. Life is brief and needs to be lived for the glory of God.

**Psalm 90:3–4, 10, 12** You return man to dust and say, “Return, O children of man!” For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. . . . The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. . . . So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

**James 4:14** Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

**1 Corinthians 10:31** So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

**2 Corinthians 5:9** More than anything else, however, we want to please him, whether in our home here or there. (GNT)

**Psalm 72:19** Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. (NIV)

**Psalm 79:9**

## 2. God understands every stage of life and is worthy of our trust.

**Psalm 31:14–15** But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, “You are my God. My times are in your hand.”

**Proverbs 20:29** The glory of young men is their strength, gray hair the splendor of the old. (NIV)

**Psalm 91:11–12** For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

### 3. God provides for every season of life.

**Isaiah 46:4** Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. (NIV)

**Isaiah 35:3–4** Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”

**Isaiah 58:11** The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. (NKJV)

**Proverbs 16:31** Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained in the ways of righteousness. (NIV)

### 4. Our senior years should be a productive time.

**Job 12:12** Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days.

**Psalm 71:18** So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come.

**Psalm 92:12–14** But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon. For they are transplanted to the LORD’s own house. They flourish in the courts of our God. Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green. (NLT)

**Titus 2:3–5**

## Biblical Narratives

- Abraham and Sarah, Genesis 17–18
- Jacob, Genesis 48–49

- Naomi, Ruth 4
- Anna, Luke 2:36–38

## Practical Steps

- See your physician for a physical. Ask about blood tests that check vitamin D, vitamin B12, thyroid, etc.
- Engage in frequent physical exercise. Stay active. This is essential for mental and emotional health.
- Minister to others (at a nursing home or hospital). Reach out to others (through phone calls or letters). Invest in the lives of younger women (Titus 2:3–5).
- Keep your mind active and sharp through word and number games. Limit television and movies.
- Make a time line of important life events and thank God for his care.
- Research menopause. God planned this, so have a positive attitude. Consider natural ways to relieve symptoms.
- Know that mood and hormone swings are not excuses for sinful speech, actions, and attitudes.
- Write Isaiah 46:4 on a card. Post it or carry it. Review it often.

## Resources

- *Afternoon of Life*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. P&R.
- *The Joys of Successful Aging*. George Sweeting. Moody.
- *Jump Off the Hormone Swing*. Lorraine Pintus. Moody.
- *Lost in the Middle: Midlife and the Grace of God*. Paul Tripp. Shepherd.
- *Sunsets: Reflections for Life's Final Journey*. Deborah Howard. Crossway.
- *Wrinkled but Not Ruined*. Jay Adams. Timeless Texts.



# Anger

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*See also* Bitterness, Confession/Repentance, Forgiving Others, Selfishness/Subjectivity, Thought Life

## Righteous Anger

Righteous/justified anger is appropriate when, according to Scripture, sin is being committed.

### 1. God himself expresses righteous anger against sin.

**Deuteronomy 9:8** Even at Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, and the LORD was so angry with you that he was ready to destroy you.

**Exodus 32:10**

### 2. Jesus expressed righteous anger.

**Mark 11:15; Matthew 21:12–13** (In the temple)

**Mark 3:5** He looked around at them angrily and was deeply saddened by their hard hearts. (NLT)

### 3. A believer can also express righteous anger.

**Ephesians 4:26** Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger. (NASB)

## Unrighteous Anger

Unrighteous/sinful anger is inappropriate when we choose an angry response because we are personally affronted in some way.

**1. Anger is included in a list of disturbing sins.**

**Galatians 5:19–21** What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies and they fight; they become jealous, angry, and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; they are envious, get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these. I warn you now as I have before: those who do these things will not possess the Kingdom of God. (GNT)

**Proverbs 29:22** An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression. (NKJV)

**2. Anger is not an option—Scripture is clear that anger must be removed.**

**Colossians 3:8** But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

**Ephesians 4:31–32** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

**3. Anger is loss of control.**

**Proverbs 29:11** A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back. (NASB)

**Jonah 4:4, 9** The LORD replied, “Is it right for you to be angry about this?” . . . Then God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?” “Yes,” Jonah retorted, “even angry enough to die!” (NLT)

**4. Avoiding anger requires proceeding slowly and not reacting (i.e., listening more, talking less).**

**James 1:19–20** Remember this, my dear friends! Everyone must be quick to listen, but slow to speak and slow to become angry. Human anger does not achieve God’s righteous purpose. (GNT)

**Proverbs 14:17** People with a hot temper do foolish things; wiser people remain calm. (GNT)

**Proverbs 20:3** It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel. (NIV)

## Responding to Anger

1. The practice of answering gently will, for the most part, reduce the occurrence of anger.

**Proverbs 15:1** A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (NASB)

2. Do not respond to anger with anger.

**Romans 12:19** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

**Proverbs 20:22** Don't say, "I will get even for this wrong." Wait for the LORD to handle the matter. (NLT)

3. If anger is experienced, it must be taken care of that day between those involved. At the very least, a conscious plan must be made for a soon resolution.

**Ephesians 4:26–27** And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. (NLT)

**Psalms 4:4** Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent.

4. Patience is the opposite of anger.

**Proverbs 14:29** Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly. (NIV)

**Proverbs 15:18** A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel. (NIV)

**Proverbs 16:32** Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city. (NIV)

## 5. When choosing friends or a spouse, avoid those with anger issues.

**Proverbs 22:24–25** Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.

**Proverbs 19:9; 25:24**

## Biblical Narratives

- Cain and Abel, Genesis 4
- Asa, 2 Chronicles 16:10

## Practical Steps

- Evaluate and write down the kind of situations that push you toward anger. Then seek biblical solutions to help.
- Do not attempt to reason with someone when he or she is angry. Wait until you both can communicate with reason.
- Every time you confess your anger to God (and others you have affected), redirect your energy toward a solution to the problem.

## Resources

- *Anger: Escaping the Maze* (booklet). David Powlison. P&R.
- *Anger and Stress Management God's Way*. Wayne Mack. Calvary Press.
- *Every Woman's Guide to Managing Your Anger*. Gregory Jantz. Baker.
- *Living with an Angry Spouse* (booklet). Ed Welch. New Growth.
- *Uprooting Anger* (booklet). Robert Jones. P&R.

## Anxiety/Worry

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*See also Fear, Thought Life, Trust*

1. Anxiety grabs us when we fail to focus on God's love and care for us, when we fear what might be rather than what is real and true.

**Job 23:8–9** Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I do not perceive him; on the left hand when he is working, I do not behold him; he turns to the right hand, but I do not see him.

**Psalms 73:2–3** But I had nearly lost confidence; my faith was almost gone because I was jealous of the proud when I saw that things go well for the wicked. (GNT)

**Psalms 142:4** Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. (NIV)

**Philippians 4:8** And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. (NLT)

2. The result of anxiety is heaviness of heart. It is a negative response and not helpful to the situation.

**Proverbs 12:25** Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.

**Job 6:1–3** Then Job spoke again: "If my misery could be weighed and my troubles be put on the scales, they would outweigh all the sands of the sea. That is why I spoke impulsively. (NLT)

**3. The proper response to anxiety is right thinking—trusting God with our concerns.**

**1 Peter 5:7** Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. (NLT)

**Philippians 4:6–7** Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (NLT)

**Isaiah 41:10** Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. (NASB)

**4. God's sufficient resources are enough for our every concern.**

**2 Corinthians 12:9–10** But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

**Philippians 4:13, 19**

**5. God is in control. Our lives were planned by him for our best. Trust puts anxiety to rest.**

**Psalms 139:16** Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.

**Isaiah 45:5–7** I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting people may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things. (NIV)

**James 4:15** What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." (NLT)

## 6. Anxiety about the future is sheltered in God's ultimate plan.

**Isaiah 26:3–4** You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal. (NIV)

**Matthew 6:33–34** But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (NKJV)

**John 14:1–3**

### Biblical Narratives

- Hannah, 1 Samuel 1
- Jeremiah, 32:24–27
- David, Psalm 13

### Practical Steps

- Memorize Isaiah 41:10.
- Read chapter 22 in *The Knowledge of the Holy* by A. W. Tozer.
- Spend a minimum of five minutes a day in prayer, giving God your concerns.
- Listen to Christian music that speaks of God's provision, strength, and guidance.
- Make a list of what God has done to supply past concerns.
- Exercise at least three times a week for thirty minutes.

### Resources

- *Anger, Anxiety, and Fear* (booklet). Stuart Scott. Focus.
- *Anxious for Nothing*. John MacArthur. Victor.
- *Calm My Anxious Heart*. Linda Dillow. NavPress.
- *Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.

# Birth Control

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*See also Decision Making/Will of God, Marriage, Mothering*

Scripture does not specifically speak to this issue; however, these principles apply.

## 1. Children are gifts, blessings from God.

**Psalms 127:3–5** Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate. (NASB)

**Proverbs 17:6** Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children. (NIV)

**Psalms 128:3–4** Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD. (NKJV)

**Matthew 18:5** And whoever receives one such child in my name receives Me. (NASB)

## 2. We need to make decisions prayerfully and seek God's guidance.

**James 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. (NIV)

**Ephesians 5:15–17** Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.



**Proverbs 3:5–6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (NLT)

**James 3:17** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

**Proverbs 2:6–7**

**3. God is sovereign; he will do what he wants to do, birth control or no birth control.**

**Job 42:2** I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

**Isaiah 43:13** Even from eternity I am He, and there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it? (NASB)

**Isaiah 14:27** For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back? (NASB)

**Ephesians 1:11** In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will. (NIV)

**Jeremiah 32:17, 27**

**4. Any birth control that destroys a newly conceived embryo is wrong and is unacceptable. An embryo is a real person from the instant of conception as God forms it in the womb.**

**Isaiah 44:24** Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: “I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself.”

**Psalms 139:13–16**

## Practical Steps

- If possible, see a Christian physician (pro-life) for answers to your questions.

- Discuss birth control openly with your spouse and pray together regarding its use.
- Research types of birth control. Look for conception blocking (does not allow a baby to begin). Stay away from implantation blocking (the baby is alive but not allowed to continue).
- Evaluate your reasons for birth control.
- If pregnancy does occur while on birth control, take joy in God's sovereignty.

## Resources

- *Does the Birth Control Pill Cause Abortions?* Randy Alcorn. EPM.
- *God's Guidance: A Slow and Certain Light*. Elisabeth Elliot. Revell.
- *God's Will: Guidance for Everyday Decisions*. J. I. Packer. Baker.

# Bitterness

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*See also Anger, Forgiving Others, Selfishness/Subjectivity, Thought Life*

Bitterness is an unwillingness to forgive when wronged, hurt, or mistreated. If not removed, it becomes an emotional cancer that eats at the soul.

**1. Bitterness is sin and adversely affects us and others in our lives.**

**Hebrews 12:15** See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled. (NASB)

**James 3:14–16** But if in your heart you are jealous, bitter, and selfish, don't sin against the truth by boasting of your wisdom. Such wisdom does not come down from heaven; it belongs to the world, it is unspiritual and demonic. Where there is jealousy and selfishness, there is also disorder and every kind of evil. (GNT)

**2. Bitterness is a characteristic of the unsaved and is an unacceptable emotion for a believer.**

**James 3:10–12** Words of thanksgiving and cursing pour out from the same mouth. My friends, this should not happen! No spring of water pours out sweet water and bitter water from the same opening. A fig tree, my friends, cannot bear olives; a grapevine cannot bear figs, nor can a salty spring produce sweet water. (GNT)

**Romans 3:14** Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. (NLT)

**Acts 8:23** For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin. (NIV)

### 3. Each believer has her own areas of bitterness to work on.

**Proverbs 14:10** Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can fully share its joy. (NLT)

### 4. Kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness are the tools used to remove bitterness.

**Ephesians 4:31–32** Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (NLT)

### 5. Trusting God's perfect plan is key, since he is sovereign over everything that has taken place.

**Psalm 37:1–2** Don't be worried on account of the wicked; don't be jealous of those who do wrong. They will soon disappear like grass that dries up; they will die like plants that wither. (GNT)

**Romans 12:17–19** Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

**Romans 8:28–29**

## Biblical Narratives

- Naomi, Ruth 1:20
- Esau with Jacob, Genesis 32–33
- David, Psalm 37

## Practical Steps

- Write out your area of bitterness. Talk to God about the injustice you feel. Write steps to help you move toward forgiveness and freedom.

- Study Matthew 18:15–20. What steps do you need to take to move toward reconciliation?
- Commit to pray for those who have hurt you.
- God’s Word says, “Put off all bitterness” (Eph. 4:31–32). Practice what you are to “put on” in its place.
- Pray for God to soften your heart so you are willing to give up bitterness.

## Resources

- *Bitterness* (booklet). Lou Priolo. P&R.
- *Freedom from Resentment* (booklet). Robert Jones. New Growth.
- *Overcoming Emotions That Destroy*. Chip Ingram. Baker.
- *When You’ve Been Wronged*. Erwin Lutzer. Moody.

# Caregiving

*See also Aging/Menopause, Health/Illness, Widow*

- 1. Honor and respect do not have an age limit. Each person bears the image of God.**

**Exodus 20:12** Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

**1 Timothy 5:1–2** Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers. Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters. (NLT)

**Genesis 1:27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

- 2. Live at peace with everyone. This includes in-laws and parents.**

**Ephesians 4:2–3** Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. (NLT)

**Romans 12:18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

**Proverbs 12:20** Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but counselors of peace have joy. (NASB)

- 3. Elderly people can still make positive contributions to family and society. They must be valued and affirmed.**

**Psalms 71:17–18** You have taught me ever since I was young, and I still tell of your wonderful acts. Now that I am old and

my hair is gray, do not abandon me, O God! Be with me while I proclaim your power and might to all generations to come. (GNT)

**Psalms 92:14–15** Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green. They will declare, “The LORD is just! He is my rock! There is no evil in him!” (NLT)

**Proverbs 13:22** A good person leaves an inheritance for their children’s children, but a sinner’s wealth is stored up for the righteous. (NIV)

#### 4. Providing care for family members is our responsibility.

**1 Timothy 5:8** But if any do not take care of their relatives, especially the members of their own family, they have denied the faith and are worse than an unbeliever. (GNT)

**Psalms 71:9** Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent.

#### 5. God is concerned for the elderly, and we should be too.

**Isaiah 46:4** Even to your old age I will be the same, and even to your graying years I will bear you! I have done it, and I will carry you; and I will bear you and I will deliver you. (NASB)

**Philippians 2:3–4** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. (NASB)

### Biblical Narratives

- Ruth, Ruth 1:16–17
- David, 1 Samuel 22:3–4
- Joseph, Genesis 46–47
- Jesus for Mary, John 19:26–27

## Practical Steps

- Write down ten ways you want to be treated when you are old. Use these as guidelines for your relationships with your parents and the elderly.
- Spend time with the seniors in your life with no distractions (texting, work, etc.).
- Ask the elderly to tell stories from their childhood.
- While giving care to someone, sing his or her favorite hymns and songs.
- When the chores become tedious, remember your purpose: you are doing this to please God.
- Ask God for strength, patience, and wisdom to offer quality care.
- Pray with the one you are caring for, especially regarding the details of life that generate anxiety.

## Resources

- *Help for the Caregiver* (booklet). Michael Emlet. CCEF.
- *Help! Someone I Love Has Alzheimer's*. Deborah Howard. DayOne.
- *Help! Someone I Love Has Cancer*. Deborah Howard. DayOne.
- “Hope for Caregivers of the Elderly” in *Women Counseling Women*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.
- *When Is It Right to Die?* (booklet). Joni Eareckson Tada. Rose.



# Clothing

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*See also* Contentment, Flirting, Materialism, Sexual Purity

- 1. Our focus must be on pleasing God rather than our selfish desires. He will provide.**

**Matthew 6:28–33** And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear for clothing?” For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (NASB)

- 2. Dress must be modest and comfortable, not elaborate or to draw attention.**

**1 Timothy 2:9–10** And I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes. For women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do. (NLT)

- 3. Women of Israel were corrected for dressing inappropriately.**

**Isaiah 3:16–23** The LORD said: Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks, glancing wantonly with their eyes, mincing along as they go, tinkling with their feet, therefore the LORD will strike with a scab the heads of the

daughters of Zion, and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts. In that day the LORD will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves; the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; the signet rings and nose rings; the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; the mirrors, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils.

#### 4. Our outward beauty does not last.

**Proverbs 31:30** Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised. (NLT)

**2 Corinthians 4:16–18** For this reason we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day after day. And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble. For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever. (GNT)

**Psalms 103:15–18; Job 14:1–2** (NLT)

#### 5. Concentrate on inner beauty rather than outer beauty.

**1 Peter 3:3–4** Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. (NIV)

#### 6. God evaluates the heart.

**1 Samuel 16:7** The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. (NIV)

#### 7. While observance of the above scriptural principles is necessary, we should not go to the opposite extremes (not caring how we look, dressing out of style or sloppily).

**Proverbs 31:10–31**, especially verses 13, 19–23

## Biblical Narrative

- The excellent wife, Proverbs 31:10–31

## Practical Steps

- Evaluate your clothes; remove anything immodest. If unmarried, ask your parents or a mentor for input. If married, seek your husband's input.
- Check a mirror. Look at yourself from the front and the back. Bend over to make sure clothes are not too short or tight.
- Evaluate your motives for clothing purchases. What do you hope to gain by wearing a particular article of clothing?
- Read chapter 5 of *Sex Is Not the Problem, Lust Is* by Joshua Harris. Write your reactions. What did you learn? Of what were you reminded?
- Study Colossians 3, where Paul teaches about our new calling in Christ.
- Be willing to learn about modest styles and clothes. Don't equate old-fashioned with modest.
- Stylish, classy, and age-appropriate clothing are good as long as they are modest and affordable.

## Resources

- *Feminine Appeal*. Carol Mahaney. Crossway.
- *The Lost Art of True Beauty*. Leslie Ludy. Harvest House.
- "Vanity" in *Damsels in Distress*. Martha Peace. P&R.

# Codependency

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*See also Self-worth*

Codependency is excessive reliance on others or the encouragement for them to rely on us, so as to receive emotional satisfaction and security.

- 1. Those who have come to faith in Christ already have God's complete acceptance; seeking others' approval is not needed.**

**Colossians 1:22–23** But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. (NIV)

**Ephesians 1:3–8**

- 2. Our ultimate dependency needs to be on God alone; he is always with us and completely faithful (although God does use others for our benefit).**

**Psalms 118:8–9** It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes. (NKJV)

**Deuteronomy 31:6** Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. (NASB)

**Psalms 62:7–8** On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.

**Psalm 20:7–8** Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.

**Jeremiah 17:5; Zechariah 4:6–7**

**3. God does not change and is always accessible to us.**

**Hebrews 4:16** Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (NASB)

**Malachi 3:6** For I, the LORD, do not change. (NASB)

**4. The Israelites met failure by depending on self. Do not follow their example.**

**Hosea 10:13** You have plowed iniquity; you have reaped injustice; you have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your own way and in the multitude of your warriors. . . .

**5. Depending on self is foolish.**

**Proverbs 28:26** He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered. (NKJV)

**2 Corinthians 1:9** Indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead. (NASB)

**6. Our goal should be not to depend on others in an unhealthy way (emotionally, financially, socially, etc.).**

**1 Thessalonians 4:11–12** Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. Then people who are not Christians will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others. (NLT)

**7. Marriage must involve a healthy, mutual dependence between husband and wife.**

**Proverbs 31:10–12** An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in

her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.

**1 Corinthians 11:11–12** But among the Lord's people, women are not independent of men, and men are not independent of women. For although the first woman came from man, every other man was born from a woman, and everything comes from God. (NLT)

**1 Corinthians 7:3–4**

8. God's work encourages a healthy balance between trusting him and doing (e.g., prayer and godly action).

**Nehemiah 4:8–9** All of them conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it. But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night. (NASB)

## Practical Steps

- When problems begin in your life, to whom do you run first—others or God?
- If someone is becoming overly dependent on you, don't push them away. Guide them, involve others, and bring God regularly into the conversation so they see their need of him.
- Be aware of constantly seeking praise from others.
- Write down a list of all the things for which you currently depend on others. Evaluate the need for change.
- Memorize Psalm 62:7–8.

## Resources

- *How People Change*. Timothy Lane. Punch Press.
- *I Want to Change . . . So, Help Me, God*. James MacDonald. Moody.
- *Pleasing People*. Lou Priolo. P&R.
- *When People Are Big and God Is Small*. Ed Welch. P&R.

# Communication/Speech

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*See also Gossip, Lying*

## 1. Positive qualities to develop in speech.

### ENCOURAGING OTHERS

**Ephesians 4:29** Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

**Colossians 4:6** Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (NIV)

### BEING GENTLE

**Proverbs 15:1** A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (NASB)

**Galatians 6:1** Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. (NIV)

### PRACTICING PATIENCE

**Proverbs 25:15** With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.

### SPEAKING TRUTH

**Ephesians 4:25** Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

### THINKING BEFORE SPEAKING

**James 1:19–20** Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

**Proverbs 18:13** If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.

**Proverbs 15:28**

### SPEAKING WITH KNOWLEDGE

**Proverbs 20:15** There is gold, and an abundance of jewels; but the lips of knowledge are a more precious thing. (NASB)

### USING APPROPRIATE WORDS

**Proverbs 10:19** When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise. (NASB)

**Proverbs 25:11** A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.

**1 Timothy 4:12** Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. (NASB)

**Proverbs 15:23**

### PRACTICING KINDNESS

**Proverbs 16:24** Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body. (NLT)

**Proverbs 12:25** Worry can rob you of happiness, but kind words will cheer you up. (GNT)

## 2. Negative qualities to avoid in speech.

### MISUSING GOD'S NAME (VAIN OR WASTEFUL)

**Exodus 20:7** You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. (NIV)



### OBSCENE, FOOLISH, AND RAW HUMOR

**Ephesians 5:4** Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

**Ephesians 4:29**

### FALSEHOOD, LYING

**Colossians 3:9–10** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

**Ephesians 4:25; Zechariah 8:16**

### ANSWERING BEFORE LISTENING

**Proverbs 18:13** If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.

**Proverbs 18:17** The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him. (NKJV)

### FOOLISH, IGNORANT ARGUMENTS

**2 Timothy 2:23–24** But keep away from foolish and ignorant arguments; you know that they end up in quarrels. As the Lord's servant, you must not quarrel. You must be kind toward all, a good and patient teacher. (GNT)

### SLANDER, GOSSIP

**Proverbs 20:19** He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with a gossip. (NASB)

**Ephesians 4:31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

**1 Timothy 5:13** At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. (NASB)

**Titus 3:1–2**

## LACK OF CONTROL

**James 1:26** If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. (NLT)

## COMPLAINING

**Philippians 2:14** Do everything without grumbling or arguing. (NIV)

**1 Corinthians 10:10**

### 3. Speech can either grieve or please the Holy Spirit.

**Ephesians 4:29–30** Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (NIV)

### 4. Summary of the tongue's negative potential.

**James 3:5–10** So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

### 5. As creation gives glory to God, so should our speech.

**Psalms 19:1–4** The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet

their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. (NIV)

## Biblical Narrative

- Ananias and Sapphira (lying), Acts 5:1–11

## Practical Steps

- Evaluate speech habits from your early home life. List godly and negative speech patterns.
- Practice not using speech to accuse others.
- Be aware of your body language/nonverbal communication habits.
- Journal past speech errors/sins. How could applying Scripture have changed those situations?
- Pray before you go into social situations, before calling or writing someone, or before posting on a social media site.
- If you “over talk” because of nervousness, evaluate if that is caused by fear of others.
- Practice not responding to or laughing at rude or cruel speech or off-color humor.

## Resources

- *Communication and Conflict Resolution* (booklet). Stuart Scott. Focus.
- *War of Words*. Paul Tripp. P&R.
- *Your Family God's Way*. Wayne Mack. P&R.

# Confession/Repentence

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*See also Forgiveness from God, Guilt*

## 1. Without confession/repentance of sin there is no freedom.

**Psalm 32:3–4** When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. (NIV)

**Malachi 3:7** “Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts. (NASB)

**Hosea 14:1–2** Return, Israel, to the LORD your God. Your sins have been your downfall! Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: “Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips.” (NIV)

**Joel 2:12–13** “But even now,” says the LORD, “repent sincerely and return to me with fasting and weeping and mourning. Let your broken heart show your sorrow; tearing your clothes is not enough.” Come back to the LORD your God. He is kind and full of mercy; he is patient and keeps his promise; he is always ready to forgive and not punish.

## 2. Confession of sin is what God desires. It leads us away from sin.

**2 Corinthians 7:10** For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death. (NLT)

**Ezra 10:11** Now then make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers and do his will.

**Isaiah 38:17** Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back. (NIV)

### 3. Confession of sin cleanses and restores fellowship with the Father.

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**Psalms 66:18** If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. (NLT)

**Jeremiah 24:7** I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart. (NASB)

### 4. Confession leads to healing and freedom.

**Psalms 32:5** I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”; and You forgave the guilt of my sin. (NASB)

**Proverbs 28:13** Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

### 5. If we have sinned against someone, confession to them is necessary.

**Matthew 5:23–24** So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift to God. (GNT)

**James 5:16** Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. (NLT)

## Biblical Narrative

- David, Psalms 32; 51

## Practical Steps

- Make a list of what God does with confessed sin (see Ps. 103:12; Isa. 1:18; 38:17; 44:22; Mic. 7:18–20; Heb. 8:12).

- When we confess sin, what is God's response (see Pss. 32:1; 51:12; 103:10, 13; Isa. 55:7; Rom. 8:1–2; 2 Cor. 5:17)?
- If other people are involved, seek forgiveness by confessing to them also.

## Resource

- *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate*. Jerry Bridges. NavPress.

# Contentment

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*See also Finances/Money, Materialism, Purpose for Living, Temptation*

## 1. Contentment is trusting God no matter the circumstances.

**2 Corinthians 12:9–10** And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (NASB)

**Isaiah 26:3–4** You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.

**Exodus 33:14** And He said, “My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.” (NASB)

**Psalms 118:24** This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (NASB)

**Psalms 37:7, 16** Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices. . . . Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked.

**Psalms 16:6; Romans 8:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:18**

## 2. We should be content with our material possessions.

**Hebrews 13:5** Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, “I will never leave you; I will never abandon you.” (GNT)

**1 Timothy 6:6–8** Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when

we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. (NLT)

**Proverbs 16:8** Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice.

**Proverbs 17:1** Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it than a house full of feasting with strife. (NASB)

**Ecclesiastes 2:24–25** A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? (NIV)

**Philippians 4:11–13** And I am not saying this because I feel neglected, for I have learned to be satisfied with what I have. I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough. I have learned this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me. (GNT)

### 3. We should be content with who we are in Christ.

**Ephesians 1:3–4** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. (NIV)

**Ephesians 2:4–6** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

**Jeremiah 9:23–24** Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the LORD. (NKJV)



## Biblical Narratives

- Lot's choices lead to great tragedy, Genesis 13, 18–19
- Paul, Philippians 4:11–13

## Practical Steps

- Read the words of the hymn “It Is Well with My Soul.”
- Study the word *blessing* in the psalms. The meaning of the word is essentially “contentment.”
- Volunteer at a mission, homeless shelter, orphanage, hospital, or nursing home. Work at bringing joy to others.
- Keep a “thankful list”—write the big and small blessings. Keep this in your Bible, and when discontentment settles in, review your list.
- To prevent impulse buying, pause, think, and ask, “Do I really need this now? Will this bring glory to God?”
- Every time you complain or become discontented, replace each thought with two thankful thoughts.
- Memorize Psalm 29:11.

## Resources

- *Choosing Gratitude*. Nancy Leigh DeMoss. Moody.
- *Discontentment*. Lou Priolo. P&R.
- *Living the Cross Centered Life*. C. J. Mahaney. Multnomah.
- *One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are*. Ann Voskamp. Moody.
- *The Secret of Contentment*. William J. Barclay. P&R.

# Dating

*See also* Decision Making/Will of God, Sexual Purity, Singleness, Trust

In biblical times, parents selected a spouse for their children. Today, most Western cultures involve the young adult in the decision.

- 1. Knowing God's will must be first and foremost in finding the right person.**

**Proverbs 3:5–6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (NLT)

**Psalms 37:3–5** Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. (NKJV)

**Genesis 24:14; Ecclesiastes 12:1–2**

- 2. There should be parental involvement and support in the selection of a spouse. Your family knows you better than anyone.**

**Proverbs 6:20–25** My son, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life, keeping you from your neighbor's wife, from the smooth talk of a wayward woman. (NIV)

**Ephesians 6:2–3** Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.

**Proverbs 4:20–22; 5:1–2**

**3. Dating/courtship should only be with another believer.**

**2 Corinthians 6:14–15** Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? (NIV)

**4. Marriage with unbelievers was a major problem in the Old Testament and provides an example of what to avoid today.**

**Judges 3:6–7** And they took their [the foreigners'] daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their [the foreigners'] sons, and served their gods. The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth. (NASB)

**1 Corinthians 10:11** Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (NASB)

**Genesis 24:1–4; Nehemiah 13:26–27**

**5. High standards and guidelines for behavior need to be in place to maintain sexual purity.**

**Job 31:1** I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman. (NLT)

**2 Timothy 2:22** Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts. (NLT)

**1 Thessalonians 4:3–4** It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable. (NIV)

## Biblical Narratives

- Rebekah's character qualities, Genesis 24
- Boaz and Ruth, Ruth 2–4

## Practical Steps

- Honor the guidelines of your parents. Have an open dialogue with them. Even if they live a distance away, keep them involved.
- Stay away from serious dating until you are ready to consider marriage.
- Write down a list of guidelines/standards for dating.
- Enjoy dating in groups and fun with your families.
- Avoid secluded areas. Use public places; attend church together.
- Focus on being a godly woman and building God-honoring qualities in your life.

## Resources

- *And the Bride Wore White: Seven Secrets to Sexual Purity*. Danah Geresh. Moody.
- *Boy Meets Girl*. Joshua Harris. Multnomah.
- *We're Just Friends and Other Dating Lies*. Chuck Milian. New Growth.
- *When God Writes Your Love Story*. Eric and Leslie Ludy. Doubleday.

# Death

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*See also* Anxiety/Worry, Fear, Grief, Suffering/Trials, Trust

## Fear of Death

### 1. Death does not separate us from God and his love.

**Psalm 23:4** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

**Psalm 116:15** Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

**Romans 8:38–39** For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### 2. Death for the believer means being in the presence of Christ.

**Philippians 1:21–23** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. (NIV)

**2 Corinthians 5:6–8** Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. (NIV)

### 3. Death for a believer means receiving a new and glorious body.

**Philippians 3:21** He will change our weak mortal bodies and make them like his own glorious body, using that power by which he is able to bring all things under his rule. (GNT)

**1 Corinthians 15:52–53** It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. (NLT)

**1 John 3:2** Dear friends, we are already God’s children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. (NLT)

**1 Thessalonians 4:13–18**

### 4. Jesus’s death removes all fear of death.

**Hebrews 2:9–10, 14–15** But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. . . . Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. (NIV)

### 5. God’s strength is always available.

**Deuteronomy 31:6** Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. (NASB)

**Isaiah 41:10** Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. (NASB)

**Lamentations 3:21–24** This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. The LORD’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I have hope in Him.” (NASB)

## 6. Death is inevitable for all unless Christ returns.

**Hebrews 9:27–28** And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment, so also Christ died once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him. (NLT)

## Loss by Death

### 1. Like David, we can express our grief to God.

**Psalms 31:9–10** Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in trouble; my eyes are tired from so much crying; I am completely worn out. I am exhausted by sorrow, and weeping has shortened my life. I am weak from all my troubles; even my bones are wasting away. (GNT)

**Psalms 145:18–19** The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.

### 2. God cares for and understands the brokenhearted. He can use our loss to bring us closer to him.

**Psalms 34:18** The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

**Psalms 147:3** He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

**Matthew 5:4** Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

**John 14:27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

**John 14:1**

### 3. There is hope for the future after death.

**1 Corinthians 15:51–53** But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. (NLT)

**Revelation 21:3–4** I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.” (NLT)

### 4. God can restore our lost joy.

**Isaiah 51:11** Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return. They will enter Jerusalem singing, crowned with everlasting joy. Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be filled with joy and gladness. (NLT)

**Isaiah 61:1–3** The Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

## Biblical Narratives

- Mary and Martha, John 11:1–44
- Christ’s death, John 19:17–30



## Practical Steps

- Read psalms of comfort (Pss. 34; 42; 46; 139; 143; 145). Select special verses, write them down, and place them in strategic places around your house.
- Keep a list of memories you treasure; add to it often.
- If you are facing death, give direction to your family in areas in which they will need your counsel after you are gone.
- Find one person who will commit to calling you each day to encourage you. Call that person when you need to talk.
- Reach out to others who have experienced loss through death.
- Plan special family times on birthdays and holidays.

## Resources

- “Counseling Women Facing Dying and Death” in *Women Helping Women*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.
- *Facing Death with Hope* (booklet). David Powlison. CCEF.
- *The Glory of Heaven*. John MacArthur. Crossway.
- *One Minute after You Die*. Erwin Lutzer. Moody.

# Decision Making/Will of God

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*See also Anxiety/Worry, Purpose for Living, Trust*

## 1. Never make a decision that goes against the Word of God.

**Deuteronomy 5:29** Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever! (NASB)

**Psalms 25:4–5** Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. (NIV)

**Proverbs 4:25–27** Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. Watch the path of your feet and all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil. (NASB)

**Isaiah 55:8** “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. (NASB)

**James 3:17** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

## 2. Determining God’s will for your life requires personal prayer as well as others praying for you.

**Colossians 1:9–11** For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience. (NASB)

**James 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. (NIV)

**3. Determining God's will includes seeking the advice of wise believers.**

**Proverbs 11:14** Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.

**Proverbs 15:22** Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.

**Proverbs 14:15** The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps.

**4. Choosing not to sin is always the will of God.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:3–5** It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God. (NIV)

**Ephesians 5:15–17** Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. (NIV)

**2 Timothy 2:22** Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (NIV)

**Joshua 24:14–15**

**5. Determining God's will involves thankfulness as God leads.**

**Psalms 20:4–5** May He grant you your heart's desire and fulfill all your counsel! We will sing for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May the LORD fulfill all your petitions. (NASB)

**1 Thessalonians 5:16–18** Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (NASB)

## 6. A yielded heart is required to determine the will of God.

**Psalm 40:8** I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart. (NIV)

**Proverbs 3:5–6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. (NASB)

**Psalm 37:4–5** Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

**Jeremiah 6:16** This is what the LORD says: “Stop at the cross-roads and look around. Ask for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls.” (NLT)

**James 4:13–15** Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the LORD wills, we will live and do this or that.”

**Romans 12:1–2**

## 7. God is sovereign and has a plan in which we can have full confidence.

**Job 42:2** I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. (NIV)

**Isaiah 25:1** O LORD, You are my God; I will exalt you, I will give thanks to Your name; for you have worked wonders, plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness. (NASB)

**Isaiah 42:16** I will lead the blind by a way they do not know, in paths they do not know I will guide them. I will make darkness into light before them and rugged places into plains. These are the things I will do, and I will not leave them undone. (NASB)

**Jeremiah 29:11** “For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.” (NASB)

**Psalm 138:8** The LORD will vindicate me; your love, LORD, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands. (NIV)

**Jeremiah 10:23–24** I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps. Correct me, O LORD, but with justice; not with Your anger, or You will bring me to nothing. (NASB)

#### 8. Remember God's past faithfulness.

**Isaiah 14:24, 27** The LORD Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will happen." . . . For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back? (NIV)

**Isaiah 43:13** Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it? (NIV)

### Biblical Narratives

- Joshua, Joshua 24
- Lot, who made bad choices, Genesis 13–14, 18–19
- Abraham's servant, Genesis 24:12–15
- Early church choosing leaders, Acts 6:1–6

### Practical Steps

- Write down decisions you must make and evaluate them according to Scripture.
- Spend time in fasting, prayer, and meditation. Pray for wisdom and discernment.
- Involve spiritual friends who will counsel and pray for you.
- Ask yourself if your decision will bring glory to God.
- Take time. Do not rush; wait on God.
- To maintain a clean conscience throughout the decision-making process, seek to trust God in each small step.

## Resources

- *Designing a Life Style That Pleases God*. Patricia Ennis and Lisa C. Tatlock. Moody.
- *Finding God When You Need Him the Most*. Chip Ingram. Baker.
- *God's Guidance: A Slow and Certain Light*. Elisabeth Elliot. Revell.
- *God's Will: Guidance for Everyday Decisions*. J. I. Packer. Baker.

# Depression

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*See also* Anxiety/Worry, Confession/Repentance, Grief, Past Memories, Suffering/Trials, Trust

## 1. Depression is a heavy burden and feels insurmountable.

**Proverbs 18:14** The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, but as for a broken spirit who can bear it? (NASB)

**Psalms 69:1–3** Save me, O God, for the waters have threatened my life. I have sunk in deep mire, and there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and a flood overflows me. I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched; my eyes fail while I wait for my God. (NASB)

**Psalms 6:6–7** I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping. My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes.

**Psalms 5:1–3** Listen to my words, LORD, consider my lament. Hear my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray. In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly. (NIV)

## 2. Our Lord understands and is the answer to a life in despair.

**Psalms 38:9** O LORD, all my longing is before you; my sighing is not hidden from you.

**Psalms 9:12** God remembers those who suffer; he does not forget their cry. (GNT)

**Job 23:10** But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

### 3. There is hope in God.

**Psalms 43:5** Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God. (NASB)

**Jeremiah 29:11–12** For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.

**Psalms 16:8** I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

**Psalms 73:25–26** Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (NASB)

**Ephesians 1:17–19** I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (NIV)

### 4. God has not forgotten us and will help us move forward and beyond depression.

**Isaiah 44:21** Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant, O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me. (NASB)

**Psalms 9:18** For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever.

**Psalms 37:23–24** The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way; though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the LORD upholds his hand.

**2 Corinthians 4:16** Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. (NIV)



**Psalms 138:8** You will do everything you have promised; LORD, your love is eternal. Complete the work that you have begun. (GNT)

**Psalms 18:28–29** You, LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light. With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall. (NIV)

**Psalms 55:22; Isaiah 43:1–2; Hebrews 12:2**

5. A major part of our recovery is prayer and the monitoring of our thinking. Right theology leads to right thinking.

**Philippians 4:6–8** Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. (NLT)

6. Is sin involved in this depression? Cain was depressed because of sin in his life.

**Genesis 4:6–7** Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it." (NIV)

7. When sin is the cause of depression, full confession to God is paramount.

**Psalms 32; 51**

## Biblical Narratives

- Elijah, 1 Kings 19
- Job, Job 19:7–27
- Jeremiah, Jeremiah 20:7–18

## Practical Steps

- See your physician for a physical. Ask about blood tests that check vitamin D, vitamin B12, thyroid, etc.
- Begin an exercise regimen. Plan for thirty minutes at least three times a week. Begin by walking.
- Monitor your sleep habits.
- Make a list of lies you are believing; contrast these with the truth of Scripture.
- Track depressed days, looking for patterns or hormonal swings. Record what triggers sadness.
- Read daily Psalms 27 and 37.
- Share struggles with strong believers who can provide objectivity.

## Resources

- *Blame It on the Brain*. Ed Welch. P&R.
- *Depression: Looking Up from the Stubborn Darkness*. Edward T. Welch. New Growth.
- *Getting Over the Blues: A Woman's Guide to Fighting Depression*. Leslie Vernick. Harvest House.
- *Out of the Blues*. Wayne Mack. Focus.

# Disappointment/Broken Heart

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*See also Bitterness, Suffering/Trials, Trust*

## 1. God knows and cares about the brokenhearted.

**Psalm 56:8** You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. (NLT)

**Isaiah 61:1** The Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.

**Job 23:8–10** Behold, I go forward but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; when He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him. But He knows the way I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. (NASB)

## 2. God is in charge of the events of our lives and only allows what is for our ultimate good.

**Proverbs 19:21** Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.

**Isaiah 25:1** LORD, you are my God; I will honor you and praise your name. You have done amazing things; you have faithfully carried out the plans you made long ago. (GNT)

**Jeremiah 29:11–13** “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.” (NLT)

**James 1:2–5** Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (NLT)

3. **God encourages believers to bear one another's burdens. When you face disappointment, seek out support from fellow believers.**

**Galatians 6:2** Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (NIV)

**Romans 15:1–2** We who are strong in the faith ought to help the weak to carry their burdens. We should not please ourselves. Instead, we should all please our brothers for their own good, in order to build them up in the faith. (GNT)

4. **Do not let Satan use disappointment to defeat you.**

**1 Peter 5:7–9** Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. (NASB)

5. **God will provide relief from disappointment. He is the only one who can truly meet our needs.**

**Psalms 34:18** The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (NASB)

**Psalms 147:3** He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (NASB)

**Ecclesiastes 3:11** Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. (NLT)

**John 14:1, 27** Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. . . . Peace I leave with you; my peace I

give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (NIV)

**6. God can use our disappointments to help others who are hurting.**

**2 Corinthians 1:3–4** Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God from whom all help comes! He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God. (GNT)

## **Biblical Narratives**

- Mary and Martha, John 11
- Hagar, Genesis 21:14–21

## **Practical Steps**

- Write down aspects of God's character you are inclined to doubt. Research definitions for these from a theology textbook. Write them down.
- Make a poster or mobile with words that describe God's faithfulness.
- Memorize Psalm 34:18 and 147:3.
- Concentrate on God's faithful love, giving him praise through music.

## **Resources**

- *Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest*. Ed Welch. New Growth.
- *When Bad Things Happen* (booklet). William Smith. New Growth.
- *When I Lay My Isaac Down*. Carol Kent. NavPress.
- *When Your World Falls Apart*. David Jeremiah. Thomas Nelson.

# Discipling/Mentoring

## 1. It is God's plan that we make disciples.

**Matthew 28:19–20** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

**Colossians 1:28** We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. (NASB)

## 2. God has requirements for discipleship.

**2 Timothy 2:1–2** Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others. (NLT)

**Titus 2:3–5** Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. (NIV)

## 3. Those who mentor have certain character qualities.

COMMITTED TO LEARN, OBEY, AND TEACH

**Ezra 7:10** For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel. (NASB)

### PREPARED, GENTLE, AND RESPECTFUL

**1 Peter 3:15** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. (NIV)

### ENCOURAGING

**Isaiah 35:3–4** With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands, and encourage those who have weak knees. Say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you.” (NLT)

**Hebrews 12:12–13** So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong. (NLT)

### PRAYERFUL

**Philippians 1:9–11** And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

### SELF-SACRIFICING AND DEVOTED

**2 Corinthians 11:28–29** Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? (NASB)

**Galatians 6:2** Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. (NASB)

**Psalms 78:72** So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them with his skillful hands. (NASB)

## Biblical Narratives

- Paul and Timothy, 2 Timothy
- Ruth and Naomi, Ruth 1–4.

## Practical Steps

- Realize that discipleship is relational—both informal (a walk, coffee) as well as formal (planned study).
- Search for someone to mentor you as well as someone for you to mentor.
- Be cautious and respectful of the schedules of others, not demanding too much time or allowing others to take advantage of your time. Think—“Blessed are the balanced!”
- Be involved with a variety of women and age groups.
- Pray daily for the person you mentor; keep the focus of conversation on God and teach by example.
- Be creative; utilize a variety of methods—email, texting, Skype, etc.
- Look for solid biblical resources for planned studies.

## Resources

- *Becoming a Titus 2 Woman*. Martha Peace. Focus.
- *Counsel One Another: A Theology of Personal Discipleship*. Paul Tautges. DayOne.
- *Feminine Appeal*. Carolyn Mahaney. Crossway.
- *How People Change*. Tim Lane. Punch Press.
- *Spiritual Leadership*. J. Oswald Sanders. Moody.



# Divorce

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*See also Adultery, Forgiving Others, Grief, Marriage*

This topic is controversial. Bible scholars have different conclusions.

## 1. God created marriage to last.

**Genesis 2:22–25** The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (NASB)

**Matthew 19:6** So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate. (NASB)

## 2. God expects faithful commitment within marriage.

**Malachi 2:14–16** You cry out, “Why doesn’t the LORD accept my worship?” I’ll tell you why! Because the LORD witnessed the vows you and your wife made when you were young. But you have been unfaithful to her, though she remained your faithful partner, the wife of your marriage vows. Didn’t the LORD make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. And what does he want? Godly children from your union. So guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth. “For I hate divorce!” says the LORD, the God of Israel. “To divorce your wife is to overwhelm her with cruelty,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. “So guard your heart; do not be unfaithful to your wife.” (NLT)

**3. Having a spouse who is an unbeliever is not a reason for divorce.**

**1 Corinthians 7:12–13** To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. (NIV)

**4. Whatever the problems in a marriage, reconciliation and restoration are always the goal.**

**1 Corinthians 7:10–11** To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. (NIV)

**Galatians 6:1–2** Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. (NASB)

**Hebrews 12:14–15** Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. (NIV)

**5. God allowed divorce because of the hardness of the Israelites' hearts.**

**Matthew 19:3–8** And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart

Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.”

**Mark 10:3–5**

6. **God allows divorce when there has been unfaithfulness and/or desertion by an unbelieving spouse. However, seeking reconciliation should be the goal.**

**Matthew 5:31–32** It has been said, “Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.” But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (NIV)

**1 Corinthians 7:15** But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. (NIV)

7. **If divorce does happen, remarriage after divorce is biblically acceptable in three situations.**

**IF THE DIVORCE TOOK PLACE BEFORE THE PERSON BECAME A BELIEVER**

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (NKJV)

**IF THE DIVORCE HAPPENED BECAUSE OF THE UNREPENTANT UNFAITHFULNESS OF THE SPOUSE**

**Matthew 19:9** I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery. (NIV)

**IF AN UNBELIEVING SPOUSE DESERTED A BELIEVING SPOUSE**

**1 Corinthians 7:15** But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. (NIV)

## Practical Steps

- Research the top reasons why people divorce. Construct a plan to prevent these in your marriage.
- If your spouse is sinning, make sure you do not fall into the trap of anger, bitterness, ungodly living, gossip, lack of self-control, or hurtful speech. Whatever is happening, do not permit it to cause you to choose sin.
- Seek intensive, biblical counseling to reconcile and restore your marriage when possible.

## Resources

- *Divorce*. Charles Swindoll. Multnomah. (grace view)
- *The Divorce Dilemma*. John MacArthur. DayOne. (grace view)
- *The Divorce Myth*. J. Carl Laney. Bethany House. (restrictive view)
- *Divorce Recovery* (booklet). Winston T. Smith. New Growth.
- *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*. Jay Adams. P&R. (grace view)

# Eating Struggles

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*See also Anxiety/Worry, Fear, Forgiveness from God, Self-harm, Self-worth*

## 1. Our trust, success, and security are not in our bodies but in God.

**Jeremiah 17:5–7** Thus says the LORD: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.

**Zechariah 4:6** “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the LORD Almighty. (NIV)

**Philippians 3:7–9** But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. (NIV)

## 2. Trying to control what belongs to God is sin. Obsessing about self is idolatry.

**Colossians 3:5** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

**Psalms 103:2–3, 12–13** Let all that I am praise the LORD; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. . . . He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The LORD is like a father to

his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. (NLT)

**1 John 1:8–9** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

### **3. Our bodies belong to God and exist for his glory.**

**Jeremiah 18:3–6** So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the LORD came to me. He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel." (NIV)

**Psalms 139:13–14** You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. (NLT)

**1 Corinthians 6:19–20** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (NASB)

**1 Corinthians 10:31** Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (NASB)

### **4. We are to choose to give our bodies back to God and follow his way, not our own.**

**Romans 12:1–2** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

### **5. To overcome eating issues, we must change our thinking.**

**Isaiah 55:8–9** For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens

are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**Philippians 4:8** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

**6. Pray before eating, and give thanks for the food God has provided.**

**1 Timothy 4:4–5** Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks. For we know it is made acceptable by the word of God and prayer. (NLT)

**1 Timothy 6:17** Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. (NASB)

**Ephesians 5:29** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church.

**Psalms 22:26** The afflicted will eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever! (NASB)

**7. There is hope for overcoming this struggle.**

**Psalms 107:18–21** They couldn't stand the thought of food, and they were knocking on death's door. "LORD, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them, snatching them from the door of death. Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. (NLT)

**Jeremiah 29:11**

**8. Gluttony is not seen favorably in Scripture.**

**Proverbs 23:20–21** Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags. (NIV)

**Proverbs 28:7** The one who keeps the law is a son with understanding, but a companion of gluttons shames his father.

**Deuteronomy 21:20; Philippians 3:19**

## Practical Steps

- Eating struggles are symptoms of heart struggles and not really about food. Ask, “What am I trying to control? Why am I anxious? What do I fear?”
- Practice honesty. Seek accountability. Do not hide laxatives, diuretics, or food. Do not lie about eating.
- Keep a food journal that can be reviewed by a mentor. Include water and supplements.
- Talk often with a trusted Christian or counselor.
- Eat healthy food. Meet with a nutritionist.
- Be evaluated by your physician.

## Resources

- *Eating Disorders* (booklet). Ed Welch. CCEF.
- “Help for Habitual Overeaters” in *Women Counseling Women*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.
- *Love to Eat; Hate to Eat*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.
- *Uncommon Vessels: A Program for Developing Godly Eating Habits*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.



# Empty Nest

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*See also Aging/Menopause, Contentment, Loneliness, Purpose for Living*

1. **The goal of raising children is to have them leave home as mature, God-dependent adults, prepared to establish their own homes.**

**Genesis 2:24** For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. (NASB)

**Proverbs 17:6** Grandchildren are the crowning glory of the aged; parents are the pride of their children. (NLT)

**Psalms 78:5–6** For he issued his laws to Jacob; he gave his instructions to Israel. He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children, so the next generation might know them—even the children not yet born—and they in turn will teach their own children. (NLT)

**Joel 1:3** Tell your children about it in the years to come, and let your children tell their children. Pass the story down from generation to generation. (NLT)

2. **Develop an unselfish biblical attitude for this concern.**

**Philippians 2:3–4** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. (NASB)

**Philippians 4:8** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

**Philippians 4:11–13** Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know

how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (NASB)

### 3. Use this time to build a stronger relationship with your spouse.

**Proverbs 21:19** Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife. (NIV)

**1 Corinthians 7:3–5** The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (NLT)

**Proverbs 5:18** May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. (NIV)

### 4. An empty nest brings more opportunity for ministry and service.

**Psalms 71:18** So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come.

**Psalms 92:12–14** The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green.

**Titus 2:3–5** Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that honors God. They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what is good. These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God. (NLT)

## 5. God provides for us as we go through life's seasons.

**Isaiah 46:4** Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. (NIV)

**Psalms 55:22** Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall. (NLT)

**Philippians 4:6–7** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

## Practical Steps

- Write down your fears/anxieties about your children being gone. Research Scripture passages to combat each struggle.
- Parenting has taken a new focus. Provide encouragement without hovering, plan times to reconnect, keep lines of communication open. Encourage strong marriages. Celebrate new family members (babies, sons- or daughters-in-law).
- Communicate with your spouse about joint interests.
- Find new activities you and your spouse can do together (take walks, get a gym membership, go on a mission trip, volunteer at a shelter, read a book out loud).
- Get a camper, take a vacation, or go on a cruise.
- Join a couples Bible study.
- Guard against becoming harsh, perfectionistic, opinionated, and controlling. Give advice when asked. Pray daily for your children and their spouses.
- Develop interests that you longed to try when your house was full (painting, writing, cooking, taking classes).

## Resources

- *Empty Nest* (booklet). Elyse Fitzpatrick. Faith Resources.
- *Sweethearts for a Lifetime*. Wayne Mack. P&R.
- *When Your Children Have Grown . . . It's Time*. Diane Noble. Baker.
- *When You're Facing the Empty Nest*. Mary Ann Froehlich. Bethany House.

# Entertainment

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## *Movies, TV, Internet, Music, Reading, Art*

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*See also* Decision Making/Will of God, Sexual Purity, Temptation

1. When God created mankind in his image, he included his creativity and love for beauty. We express that image through creative, cultural representations.

**1 Chronicles 29:11** Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all.

**Psalms 8:1, 3–4** O LORD, our LORD, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. . . . When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

**Genesis 1:27, 31** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them . . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

**Revelation 4:11** Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

2. Satan attempts to corrupt and degrade all that God has created for good, including our cultural expressions, by replacing them with counterfeits.

**Ezekiel 28:17** Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you.

**John 8:44** For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. (NLT)

**1 John 5:19** We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. (NASB)

**2 Corinthians 11:14** No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. (NASB)

3. We must not accept the worldly standards and corruptions of Satan. We must recognize them as false and reject them as immoral and inappropriate.

**3 John 11** Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. (NASB)

**Psalms 101:3–4** I will not look with approval on anything that is vile. I hate what faithless people do; I will have no part in it. The perverse of heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with what is evil. (NIV)

**Galatians 5:19–21** The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (NIV)

**Ephesians 5:4** Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. (NIV)

**Colossians 2:8** See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human

tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. (NIV)

**Romans 8:5–6** Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. (NLT)

**1 John 2:15–17** Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (NASB)

**Isaiah 5:20**

#### 4. We must actively pursue what is right by making careful, godly decisions.

**Colossians 3:1–5** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

**Colossians 2:6** And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. (NLT)

**Romans 12:1–2** And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (NLT)

**Philippians 4:8**

## Practical Steps

- Add accountability software or filters to your computer.
- Look over your movie library and evaluate what is God honoring. Remove what is not.
- Visit Christian websites to evaluate movies before viewing them.
- Turn off the TV during meals, especially with young children present.
- Monitor time spent on entertainment. Keep a log so you can evaluate.
- Keep your computer password a secret from children.
- Consider community offerings for art, museums, concerts, and theater. Choose the positive, godly presentations.

## Resources

- *Breaking the Addictive Cycle* (booklet). David Powlison. New Growth.
- *Hope and Help for Video Game, TV, and Internet Addiction* (booklet). Mark Shaw. Focus.
- *Living a Cross Centered Life*. C. J. Mahaney. Multnomah.



# Fear

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*See also Anxiety/Worry, Trust*

## 1. A God-centered heart is the answer to a fearful heart.

**Psalm 34:4** I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. (NLT)

**Psalm 73:25–26** Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth. My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever. (NLT)

**Psalm 13**

## 2. Do not allow fear to control your mind; instead, focus on what is true and real.

**Psalm 33:13–14, 18–19** The LORD looks down from heaven and sees the whole human race. From his throne he observes all who live on the earth. . . . But the LORD watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love. He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine. (NLT)

**Philippians 4:8–9** And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you. (NLT)

### 3. God is present with us in every situation; there is no reason for fear.

**Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

**Isaiah 41:10** Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

**Isaiah 41:13** For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you."

**Psalms 73:23–24** Yet I still belong to you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny. (NLT)

**Isaiah 43:1–2; Haggai 2:4**

### 4. A fear problem is really a love problem.

**1 John 4:18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. (NASB)

**Jeremiah 31:3** The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness." (NASB)

### 5. We need not fear the past.

**Isaiah 43:18–19** Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

### 6. We need not fear the future.

**Proverbs 3:5–6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. (NASB)

**Matthew 6:34** So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (NASB)

**Philippians 4:19** And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (NASB)

## 7. We can trust God to know what we need for daily life.

**Matthew 6:26–33** Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

## 8. God provides protection.

**Psalms 61:1–4** Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I, for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!

**Psalms 91:4** He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; his truth shall be your shield and buckler. (NKJV)

## Biblical Narratives

- David, 1 Samuel 27; Psalm 27
- Disciples in the storm, Mark 4:35–41

## Practical Steps

- Find five instances in Scripture where fear is mentioned and explain its context and God’s response.

- Memorize Isaiah 43:1–2. Review the passage several times each day.
- Make a list of seven ways God loves you.
- Set up a bird feeder in your yard. Keep Matthew 6:26–33 in your thoughts as you reflect on God’s care for those little birds.
- Pray with others.
- Read Psalm 18 out loud daily.

## Resources

- “Christ, God’s Answer to Your Fear” in *Women Counseling Women*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.
- *Fear: Breaking Its Grip*. Lou Priolo. P&R.
- *Fear Factor—What Satan Doesn’t Want You to Know*. Wayne Mack. Hensley Publications.
- *Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest* (booklet). Ed Welch. CCEF.

# Finances/Money

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*See also* Anxiety/Worry, Fear, Materialism, Trust

## 1. Part of what we earn needs to be given back to God.

**Proverbs 3:9–10** Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine. (NKJV)

**2 Corinthians 9:7** Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

## 2. Those who are wealthy should share with others.

**1 Timothy 6:17** As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

**Proverbs 11:25** The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. (NLT)

## 3. Debt to the government and others must be paid.

**Romans 13:6–8** This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. (NIV)

#### 4. We must choose what will be our priority—God or money.

**Matthew 6:24** No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. (NIV)

**Hebrews 13:5** Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (NIV)

#### 5. Ultimately, everything belongs to God. It is only by his provision we have anything.

**1 Chronicles 29:11–12** Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

**Deuteronomy 8:18** And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (NKJV)

**Proverbs 10:22** The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, without painful toil for it. (NIV)

#### 6. Guard your heart against greed and jealousy.

**Exodus 20:17** You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. (NIV)

**Proverbs 15:16** Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it.

**1 Timothy 6:9–10** People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have

wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.  
(NIV)

**Matthew 6:19–21** Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (NASB)

## Biblical Narratives

- Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1–11
- Paul, Philippians 4:10–13

## Practical Steps

- Always tithe first. Then save. Then buy.
- If credit card use is out of control, stop using them, pay them off, and cut them up.
- Maintain a budget plan with financial goals. Plan for purchases.
- Use caution when donating. Critique organizations carefully for financial accountability.
- Sign up for a Financial Peace University course.

## Resources

- *Debt Free Living*. Larry Burkett. Moody
- *Family Finances*. John Temple. DayOne.
- *Help, I'm Drowning in Debt* (booklet). John Temple. DayOne.
- *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*. Randy Alcorn. Tyndale.

# Flirting

*See also Communication/Speech, Manipulation, Self-worth, Sexual Purity*

## 1. Seductive words and actions are not appropriate in the life of a godly woman.

**Proverbs 7:4–5** Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,” and call insight your intimate friend, to keep you from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words.

**Proverbs 6:23–25** For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life, to preserve you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress. Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes.

**Matthew 12:36** But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. (NIV)

**Ephesians 5:4** Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

**Proverbs 21:23**

## 2. Beware of being a beautiful woman without discretion.

**Proverbs 11:22** As a ring of gold in a swine’s snout so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion. (NASB)

## 3. Seductive women, in the prophets’ time, faced God’s discipline.

**Isaiah 3:16–17** The LORD says, “The women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, strutting along with swaying hips, with ornaments jingling on their ankles. Therefore the LORD will bring sores



on the heads of the women of Zion; the LORD will make their scalps bald.” (NIV)

#### **4. We should desire God’s love and approval, not attention from men.**

**Jeremiah 31:3** The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.” (NASB)

**Proverbs 31:30** Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. (NASB)

#### **5. A godly woman maintains a godly example.**

**1 Peter 3:3–5** Don’t be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. (NLT)

**1 Peter 2:11–12** Dear friends, I warn you as “temporary residents and foreigners” to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world. (NLT)

### **Biblical Narratives**

- Seductive woman, Proverbs 7:10–27
- Godly woman, Proverbs 31:10–31

### **Practical Steps**

- Evaluate why you feel the need to dress or to use your body or your speech to gain attention. For what are you searching?

- Compare your actions to the women in Proverbs 7 and 31.
- You are free to flirt with your spouse, but other men are off-limits. Consider them as brothers.
- Seek accountability with another woman who knows you well to evaluate whether you are manipulating with flirtation.
- If married, ask your husband how he feels when you flirt with others. Seek forgiveness and accountability from him.

## Resources

- *Lies Women Believe*. Nancy DeMoss. Moody.
- *Not Even a Hint: Guarding Your Heart*. Shannon and Joshua Harris. Multnomah.
- *Respectable Sins*. Jerry Bridges. NavPress.
- *Temptation* (booklet). Timothy Lane. CCEF.

# Forgiveness from God

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*See also Confession/Repentance, Forgiving Others*

## 1. God's forgiveness is available for any sin.

**Psalms 130:3–4** If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, LORD, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. (NIV)

**Lamentations 3:22** The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. (NASB)

**Daniel 9:9** The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him. (NIV)

## 2. Receiving forgiveness begins with confession and repentance.

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**Proverbs 28:13** Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (NIV)

**Psalms 38:18** I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin. (NIV)

**Psalms 32:5** Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin. (NIV)

**Acts 3:19** Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. (NIV)

**Psalms 66:18–19** If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

### 3. Ask for God's forgiveness.

**Psalm 25:7** Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good. (NIV)

**Psalm 51:1–2** Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. (NIV)

**Isaiah 55:6–7** Turn to the LORD and pray to him, now that he is near. Let the wicked leave their way of life and change their way of thinking. Let them turn to the LORD, our God; he is merciful and quick to forgive. (GNT)

### 4. What God does with forgiven sin is a beautiful picture of what Christ's death on the cross accomplished.

**Isaiah 43:25** I—yes, I alone—will blot out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again. (NLT)

**Psalm 32:1–2** How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! (NASB)

**Psalm 103:12** As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (NASB)

**Isaiah 44:22** I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud and your sins like a heavy mist. (NASB)

**Psalm 51:7** Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. (NIV)

**Isaiah 1:18** Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

**Isaiah 38:17** Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back.

**Micah 7:19** He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

**Hebrews 8:12** For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.

**5. When God forgives, he restores.**

**Psalms 103:10–11** He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. (NKJV)

**Colossians 1:13–14** For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. (NLT)

**Romans 8:1–2** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

**Psalms 51:12** Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

**Psalms 130:7** Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. (NIV)

**6. Nowhere in Scripture is it taught that we are to forgive ourselves. We must accept what we have done and take steps to make it right, but our sin was against God. Christ paid the price for all our sins and offers forgiveness.**

## **Biblical Narratives**

- David, 2 Samuel 12; Psalms 51
- Christ's crucifixion—he paid it all—he says "I forgive!"

## **Practical Steps**

- Reflect on Christ's forgiveness. Read the crucifixion account in all four Gospels. Write down details and reflect on how he forgave you.

- Write down on a card what God does with forgiven sin (see point 4 above).
- Honor God by believing the truth of his forgiveness. When doubts arise, realize they come from the enemy.
- Practice gratitude. Make a list of blessings.
- Read Psalms 32 and 130.

## Resources

- *How People Change*. Timothy Lane. New Growth.
- *The Knowledge of the Holy*. A. W. Tozer. HarperCollins.
- *Our Sufficiency in Christ*. John MacArthur. Word.
- *What's So Amazing about Grace?* Philip Yancey. Zondervan.

# Forgiving Others

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*See also* Bitterness, Disappointment/Broken Heart, Forgiveness from God, Past Memories

## 1. Forgiving others is not an option; it is a step of obedience.

**Colossians 3:13–14** Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (NIV)

**Ephesians 4:32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (NIV)

**Matthew 5:23–24** So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

**Luke 23:34** And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

**Matthew 6:9–15**

## 2. Do not keep a record of how many times you have forgiven.

**Matthew 18:21–22** Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

## 3. Nowhere in Scripture is it taught that we are to forgive ourselves.

### Biblical Narrative

- Joseph, Genesis 50:15–21

## Practical Steps

- Contemplate what it would be like if God did not forgive you. Does that change your heart for forgiving others?
- Write these statements on cards and post them: 1) Forgiveness is not a feeling but an action; (2) Forgiveness is a choice of obedience to God; and (3) Forgiveness does not mean the other person was right, but forgiving provides freedom.
- Every time a past wrong is remembered, do not hold it against the offender. It is forgiven.
- How was Joseph wronged? What was his response? Reread Genesis 50.

## Resources

- *Freedom from Resentment: Stopping Hurts from Turning Bitter* (booklet). Robert Jones. CCEF.
- *From Forgiving to Forgiven*. Jay Adams. Calvary Press.
- *Help, I Can't Forgive* (booklet). Jim Newcomer. DayOne.
- *Unpacking Forgiveness*. Chris Brauns. Crossway.



# Friendship

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## 1. It is important to establish and maintain friendships that honor God.

**Proverbs 12:26** The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray. (NKJV)

**Proverbs 22:24–25** Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul. (NKJV)

**Psalms 119:63** I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts. (NIV)

**Exodus 23:2** You must not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you are called to testify in a dispute, do not be swayed by the crowd to twist justice. (NLT)

**Proverbs 18:24** One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (NIV)

## 2. Godly friends will be a positive influence and should be our best friends.

**Proverbs 13:20** Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble. (NLT)

**Proverbs 23:20** Don't associate with people who drink too much wine or stuff themselves with food. (GNT)

**Ecclesiastes 4:10** If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. (NLT)

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. (NASB)

**Hebrews 10:24** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.

## 3. Loyalty is a mark of a good friend. What kind of a friend are you?

**Psalms 15:1–3** O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does

what is right and speaks truth in his heart; who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend.

**Ecclesiastes 4:12** A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken. (NLT)

**Romans 15:7** Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. (NIV)

**Galatians 6:2** Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. (NASB)

#### 4. There will be times when earthly friends fail us.

**Psalms 55:12–14** For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear it; nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend; we who had sweet fellowship together walked in the house of God in the throng. (NASB)

**Psalms 41:9** Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

**Jeremiah 20:10** For I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side! “Denounce him! Let us denounce him!” say all my close friends, watching for my fall.

#### 5. Our heavenly Father will never fail us.

**Deuteronomy 31:6** Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.

**Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

**Joshua 21:45** Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass. (NASB)

## 6. Friendships should not be made for personal advancement or gain.

**Proverbs 19:4–7** Wealth adds many friends, but a poor man is separated from his friend. A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will not escape. Many will seek the favor of a generous man, and every man is a friend to him who gives gifts. All the brothers of a poor man hate him; how much more do his friends abandon him! He pursues them with words, but they are gone. (NASB)

**Proverbs 14:20** The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends. (NIV)

**Romans 12:10** Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. (NIV)

## 7. Restore lost friendships.

**Romans 12:18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. (NASB)

**Proverbs 19:11** Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

**Ephesians 4:32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

**Matthew 5:23–24** Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. (NIV)

**Ephesians 4:3** Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (NIV)

**Philippians 2:1–2**

## Biblical Narratives

- Job's friends/critics, Job 2:11; 12:4; 16:20; 19:14
- God and Abraham, 2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23
- David and Jonathan (multiple references)
- Paul and Timothy (multiple references)

## Practical Steps

- Be proactive about being a good, godly friend (pray together, serve together, worship together, enjoy time together).
- Write down qualities you look for in friends. Are these qualities in your own life?
- Pray for opportunities to show yourself a faithful friend.
- Read the book of Ruth. In what ways was Ruth a steadfast friend to Naomi?
- Write encouraging notes to your friends. Even use snail mail.
- Take the initiative to befriend someone. Invite her to do something with you or offer to serve her in some way.

## Resources

- *Getting to the Heart of Friendships*. Amy Baker. Focus.
- *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Conflicts*. Ken Sande. Baker.
- *Picking Up the Pieces: Recovering Broken Relationships*. Lou Priolo. P&R.
- *Relationships* (booklet). Paul Tripp. CCEF.

# Gossip

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*See also Communication/Speech, Lying*

## 1. Gossip is included in lists of disturbing sins.

**2 Timothy 3:2–3** For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal. (NASB)

**Romans 1:28–29** And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips. (NASB)

## 2. Gossip can cause deep hurt to others and ourselves.

**Proverbs 26:20–22** Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down. As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife. The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts. (NIV)

**Proverbs 13:3** Those who control their tongue will have a long life; opening your mouth can ruin everything. (NLT)

**Obadiah 1:12** But do not gloat over the day of your brother in the day of his misfortune; do not rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin; do not boast in the day of distress.

**James 3:5–6** Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets

the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. (NIV)

### 3. Choose not to gossip or associate with others who gossip.

**Proverbs 20:19** He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with a gossip. (NASB)

**Proverbs 17:28** Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is considered prudent. (NASB)

**1 Peter 3:10–11** For whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.

**James 1:26** Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. (NIV)

### 4. Gossip and unwholesome speech produce ungodly results.

**Proverbs 18:21** The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences. (NLT)

**James 3:11** Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?

**Proverbs 21:23** He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles. (NASB)

**Galatians 5:15** But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another. (NLT)

**2 Timothy 2:16–17** Avoid worthless, foolish talk that only leads to more godless behavior. This kind of talk spreads like cancer. (NLT)

### 5. Gossip must be replaced with love and encouragement.

**Ephesians 4:29** Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (NIV)

**Psalms 141:3–4** Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not let my heart be drawn to what

is evil so that I take part in wicked deeds along with those who are evildoers; do not let me eat their delicacies. (NIV)

**Proverbs 17:9** Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

**Proverbs 16:24** Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

**Colossians 4:6** Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. (NASB)

**6. Principle: Be very careful what you say because you never know how it will come back to affect you.**

**Matthew 12:36** And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. (NLT)

**Ecclesiastes 10:20** Don't criticize the king, even silently, and don't criticize the rich, even in the privacy of your bedroom. A bird might carry the message and tell them what you said. (GNT)

## Practical Steps

- Examine your heart. What is behind gossiping? Jealousy? Envy? Revenge? Fear?
- To help break this sinful pattern, write the following on a card: What is my motivation for sharing this? Keep the card close at hand to help you evaluate your conversations throughout the day.
- Avoid places where gossip often occurs (break rooms at work, etc.).
- Have friends keep you accountable.
- If gossiping on the phone is a temptation, keep a card close with verses written on it (e.g., Prov. 21:23; 16:24; Eph. 4:29).
- If someone begins to gossip, have the courage to explain that you prefer not to listen.
- Make a list of how gossip destroys. Review it often.

## Resources

- *Communication and Conflict Resolution* (booklet). Stewart Scott. Focus.
- “The Heart That Wags the Tongue” in *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, vol. 123. Brenda Payne.
- *Putting Off Life-Dominating Sins* (booklet). Susan Heck. Focus.
- *War of Words*. Paul Tripp. P&R.



# Grief

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*See also* Death, Disappointment/Broken Heart, Fear, Hope, Past Memories, Trust

## 1. God understands when grief overwhelms. We are not alone.

**Psalm 28:7** The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him. (NKJV)

**Psalm 55:22** Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you; he shall never permit the righteous to be moved. (NKJV)

**Psalm 30:5** For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. (NKJV)

**Isaiah 43:2** When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. (NKJV)

## 2. God in his goodness is our refuge in grief.

**Psalm 31:1–3** In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily! Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me! For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me.

**Psalm 31:9** Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also.

**Psalm 31:19** Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind!

### 3. Knowing God is in control of future events comforts us in our loss of loved ones.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13, 18** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. . . . Therefore encourage one another with these words.

**Psalm 116:15** Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

### 4. God understands our tears and gives strength.

**Psalm 6:8** For the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.

**Psalm 56:8** You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?

**Psalm 119:28** My soul weeps because of grief; strengthen me according to Your word. (NASB)

**Psalm 126:5–6** Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

**Isaiah 25:8** He will swallow up death forever; and the LORD GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

## Biblical Narratives

- Isaac and Rebekah over Esau, Genesis 26:34–35
- Builders of the second temple, Ezra 3:12–13; Haggai 2
- Parents, Proverbs 10:1; 17:25
- Mary and Martha, John 11:1–44
- Disciples over Jesus's departure, John 16:16–22

## Practical Steps

- Be aware of the time of day when grief is the most intense. Find others who can support you during this time.
- Spend time in the book of Psalms, especially 32; 34; 37; 42; 46; 91; 145.
- Claim God's sovereignty. Write his attributes on a card and carry it in your pocket to review daily.
- Force yourself to be consistent in daily Bible reading. Exercise daily; practice healthy eating. Meet with godly encouragers.

## Resources

- *Comforting Those Who Grieve*. Paul Tautges. DayOne.
- *Grief* (booklet). Paul Tripp. New Growth.
- *Grieving with Hope*. Kathy Leonard. Baker.
- *Helping a Friend Who Is Grieving* (booklet). Wally Stephenson. Regular Baptist Press.
- *What Griefers Can Expect*. Wally Stephenson. Regular Baptist Press.

# Guilt

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*See also Confession/Repentance, Forgiveness from God, Past Memories, The Gospel*

## 1. Guilt is the result of sin and continues until confession occurs.

**Psalm 69:5** You, God, know my folly; my guilt is not hidden from you. (NIV)

**Psalm 32:3–5** When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”; and You forgave the guilt of my sin. (NASB)

## 2. We need to admit our sin and seek forgiveness, turning and going in the opposite direction of that sin.

**1 John 1:8–10** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. (NASB)

**Hebrews 10:22–23** Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (NIV)

## 3. God is aware of our shame and willing to help.

**Psalm 69:19** You know how I am scorned, disgraced and shamed; all my enemies are before you. (NIV)

**Psalm 31:17** Do not let me be ashamed, O LORD, for I have called upon You; let the wicked be ashamed; let them be silent in the grave. (NKJV)

**Psalm 71:1–3** In You, O LORD, I put my trust; let me never be put to shame. Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; incline Your ear to me, and save me. Be my strong refuge, to which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress. (NKJV)

**4. Notice how God views our sins once they have been forgiven. This is how we should view them as well.**

**Isaiah 1:18** “Come now, and let us reason together,” says the LORD, “though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.” (NASB)

**Micah 7:18–19** Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. (NASB)

**Psalm 103:12** As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (NASB)

**Isaiah 43:25** I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins. (NASB)

**Isaiah 38:17** Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back. (NIV)

**5. Replace guilt with proper thinking.**

**Psalm 119:80** May my heart be blameless in Your statutes, so that I will not be ashamed. (NASB)

**Philippians 4:8** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely,

whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

## Biblical Narrative

- David, Psalms 32; 51

## Practical Steps

- To help visualize what God has done, write your sins on small rocks and throw them into a lake.
- Write down your understanding of the purpose of Jesus going to the cross. It is for this that he died!
- Understand that if you feel guilty after confessing and repenting, that feeling does not come from God.
- Begin a new habit of confessing sin immediately when it occurs.

## Resources

- *Freedom from Guilt* (booklet). Timothy Lane. New Growth.
- *The Gospel for Real Life*. Jerry Bridges. NavPress.
- *Help, I Feel Ashamed* (booklet). Sue Nicewander. DayOne.
- *Shame Interrupted*. Ed Welch. New Growth.

# Health/Illness

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*See also* Anxiety/Worry, Fear, Suffering/Trials, Trust

## 1. We can improve our spiritual health.

**Proverbs 3:1–2** My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. (NASB)

**Proverbs 3:7–8** Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones. (NASB)

## 2. We can improve our physical health.

**Proverbs 14:30** A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. (NIV)

**Proverbs 18:14** The human spirit can endure a sick body, but who can bear a crushed spirit? (NLT)

**Proverbs 17:22** A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength. (NLT)

## 3. Health problems are a part of life.

**2 Corinthians 5:4** While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. (NLT)

**Romans 8:22–24** For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with

eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. (NLT)

#### **4. Bringing glory to God should be the result of our physical struggles/illness.**

**Psalm 119:71** My suffering was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your decrees. (NLT)

**2 Corinthians 12:9–10** Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (NLT)

**1 Peter 1:6–7** So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (NLT)

#### **5. We never face health problems alone.**

**Isaiah 43:2** When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

**Isaiah 41:10** Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

**Philippians 4:19** And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (NASB)

**2 Corinthians 4:16** Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. (NIV)



**6. God provides strength.**

**2 Samuel 22:33** This God is my strong refuge and has made my way blameless.

**Psalms 73:26** My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

**Psalms 91:4** He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

**2 Corinthians 4:7–9** But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

**Isaiah 40:30–31** Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

**7. Illness, as a trial, develops character.**

**James 1:2–4** Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (NIV)

**Job 23:8–10** Behold, I go forward but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; when He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him. But He knows the way I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. (NASB)

**8. Whatever health issues we face now, perfect health awaits us in heaven.**

**Revelation 22:1–2** Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit

every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (NASB)

**Revelation 21:4** And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away. (NASB)

**Philippians 3:20–21** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

**1 Corinthians 15:51–55**

## Biblical Narrative

- Job, book of Job

## Practical Steps

- Have regular appointments with your physician.
- Post verses about God's care around your home. Read them often.
- Keep all your records and progress reports. Obtain copies of all tests. Do research; educate yourself so you are knowledgeable about treatments, risks, natural alternatives, and nutrition.
- Think prevention. Get regular checkups, exercise, stay hydrated. Include omega 3s in your supplement plan. Get eight to ten hours of sleep each night.
- Memorize Isaiah 43:1–2.
- If confined to home or bed, write and encourage others, memorize Scripture, pray for missions, and invite visitors.
- Have others pray with you.

## Resources

- *Chronic Pain: Living by Faith When Your Body Hurts* (booklet). Michael Emlet. CCEF.
- *Pain: The Plight of Fallen Man*. James Halla. Timeless Texts.
- *The Problem of Pain*. C. S. Lewis. Macmillan.
- *Will Medicine Stop the Pain?* Elyse Fitzpatrick. Moody.

# Homosexual/Lesbian

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*See also Hope, Sexual Purity, Temptation*

## 1. Homosexual activity is sinful and sexually impure.

**Romans 1:24–27** Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. (NIV)

**Jude 7** And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment. (NLT)

**Leviticus 18:22** Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin. (NLT)

**Leviticus 20:13**

## 2. God's love for those who struggle is constant, no matter what the sin.

**John 3:16–17** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (NKJV)

**1 John 4:10** This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (NIV)

**Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (NKJV)

**Ephesians 2:4–5** But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved). (NKJV)

### 3. While homosexual activity is sin and impure, it is possible, with God's help, to change.

**1 Corinthians 6:9–11** Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (NLT)

**Romans 7:23–25** But I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. (NIV)

**Galatians 5:16** So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (NIV)

**1 Peter 4:1–3** Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. (NIV)

#### 4. Moral choices must be made.

**Psalm 141:4** Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in company with men who work iniquity, and let me not eat of their delicacies!

**Romans 6:19–20** I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. (NIV)

**Romans 12:1–2** So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect. (GNT)

**1 Thessalonians 4:1–7** Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.

**Galatians 5:19–23** When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! (NLT)

**Romans 8:5–8** Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will. That’s why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. (NLT)

#### **5. Our responsibility is to love and encourage those who struggle with this issue.**

**Galatians 6:1–2** Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (NIV)

**Mark 1:15–17**

### **Biblical Narrative**

- Lot in Sodom, Genesis 18–19

### **Practical Steps**

- Make sure you understand homosexuality from God’s perspective.
- Remove things from your life that tie you to this struggle (style of dress, mannerisms, certain places, etc.).
- Stay away from chat rooms, blogs, radio stations, movies, etc. that promote the homosexual agenda.
- Be cautious with same-sex friendships that begin to be too emotionally demanding.

- If you have family members who struggle in this area, reach out with Christ's love. Do not be condemning of them. Encourage them in obedience to God.

## Resources

- *Help, My Teen Is Gay* (booklet). Ben Marshall. DayOne.
- *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends*. Mark Yarhouse. Bethany House.
- *Leaving Homosexuality: A Practical Guide for Men and Women Looking for a Way Out*. Alan Chambers. Harvest House.
- *The Truth about Same-Sex Marriage*. Erwin Lutzer. Moody.
- *When Homosexuality Hits Home*. Joe Dallas. Harvest House.



# Hope

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*See also Anxiety/Worry, Depression, Purpose for Living, Suffering/Trials*

**1. Hope is the anticipation that our needs will be met.**

**Psalms 39:7** And now, O LORD, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.

**Romans 15:13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

**2. Hope does not come from human ability or strength.**

**Zechariah 4:6** So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.'" (NKJV)

**2 Chronicles 32:7–8** "Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him. With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah. (NASB)

**3. God is our only true source of hope.**

**Psalms 71:5–6** For you, O LORD, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth. Upon you I have leaned from before my birth; you are he who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you.

#### 4. Hope is provided by our knowledge of God's presence and promises.

**Haggai 2:4–5** But now don't be discouraged, any of you. Do the work, for I am with you. When you came out of Egypt, I promised that I would always be with you. I am still with you, so do not be afraid. (GNT)

#### 5. Hope is a product of walking closely with the Lord.

**John 15:4–5** Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (NKJV)

**Philippians 4:13** I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

#### 6. As believers in Jesus, we have a guaranteed hope that our future in heaven is secure.

**Titus 3:5–7** He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (NIV)

**1 Peter 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

#### 7. Benefits of hope.

**Philippians 1:20**—confidence

**Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:13**—joy through testing

**Colossians 1:4–5**—greater faith and love

**Romans 8:24–25**—perseverance

**1 Thessalonians 1:3**—steadfastness

**1 Timothy 4:10**—increased energy and passion

**1 John 3:3**—purity of life

Hebrews 7:19—closer relationship with the Father

Hebrews 6:19—security

## Practical Steps

- Make a list of God's gifts and faithfulness to you. As you write each, recite, "Will he not continue to be faithful in the future?"
- Study A. W. Tozer's *Attributes of God*. Make a list of those attributes and write down a definition of each in your own words.
- Research the names of God. Each has a meaning that helps you know better the God who gives hope.
- As you speak with others, practice instilling hope with your words.

## Resources

- *From Despair to Hope*. Peter Williams. DayOne.
- *God: As He Longs for You to See Him*. Chip Ingram. Baker.
- *Hope in God*. Kristie Gant. Focus.
- *One-Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are*. Ann Voskamp. Zondervan.

# Hospitality

The word *hospitality* in the New Testament means “love of strangers,” hence, care and concern for others.

## 1. Hospitality is clearly commanded in the Bible.

**Romans 12:13** When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

**1 Peter 4:9** Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

**Hebrews 13:1–2** Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

**Proverbs 3:27** Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. (NASB)

## 2. There are blessings associated with practicing hospitality.

**Proverbs 11:25** The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. (NLT)

**Proverbs 22:9** He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor. (NASB)

**Acts 2:46–47** They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. (NLT)

## 3. Hospitality is among the qualifications for church leaders.

**1 Timothy 3:2** Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.

## Biblical Narratives

- Gaius, 3 John 5–6
- Paul, 2 Timothy 1:16
- Abraham, Genesis 18:1–8
- Rebekah, Genesis 24:45–46
- Job, Job 31:32

## Practical Steps

- List ways you can show warmth and generosity to others outside of a home setting.
- Make a list of reasons why providing hospitality is a challenge for you. Look for fear, perfectionism, pride, selfishness, etc. Compare these with scriptural commands.
- Practice having people in your home who may not always be invited out (a single mom and children, a widow, college-age people, those away from home).
- Bake items or take meals to those who have needs. Enclose a personal note.
- Show hospitality to a variety of age groups.

## Resources

- *Practicing Hospitality*. Pat Ennis. Crossway.
- *The Reluctant Entertainer*. Sandy Coughlin. Bethany House.
- *Untamed Hospitality*. Elizabeth Newman. Brazos.

# Infertility

*See also Bitterness, Fear, Hope, Trust*

## 1. God understands everything, including the pain of barrenness.

**Isaiah 54:1** “Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child; break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; for the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous than the sons of the married woman,” says the LORD. (NASB)

**Psalm 94:19** When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer. (NLT)

**Psalm 69:1–3** Save me, O God, for the waters have threatened my life. I have sunk in deep mire, and there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and a flood overflows me. I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched; my eyes fail while I wait for my God. (NASB)

**Psalm 142:3** When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who watch over my way. (NIV)

**Proverbs 30:15–16** There are three things that are never satisfied—no, four that never say, “Enough!”: the grave, the barren womb, the thirsty desert, the blazing fire. (NLT)

## 2. Those who are infertile need to place their confidence fully in God, trusting him for the possibility of a future without children.

**Habakkuk 3:17–19** Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The LORD GOD is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds’ feet, and makes me walk on my high places. (NASB)

**2 Corinthians 12:9** And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly,

therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (NASB)

**Isaiah 40:29** He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. (NASB)

**Isaiah 55:8–9** “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (NASB)

## Biblical Narratives

- Sarah, Genesis 11:30; 16:1
- Rebekah, Genesis 25:21
- Rachel, Genesis 30:1
- Hannah, 1 Samuel 1
- Elizabeth, Luke 1

## Practical Steps

- Explore the many medical possibilities for infertility treatment.
- How did each of the women mentioned above handle their barrenness? What did God do through their barrenness?
- Research adoption or foster care. Perhaps helping other children is God’s plan for you.
- Be open to encouragement from others—discuss, pray. Avoid keeping your hurt inside and to yourself.

## Resources

- *God: As He Longs for You to See Him*. Chip Ingram. Baker.
- *Moments for Couples Who Long for Children*. Ginger Garrett. NavPress.
- *Morning Will Come*. Sandy Day. Focus.
- *When the Cradle Is Empty*. John and Sylvia Van Regenmorter. Tyndale.

# Laziness

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*See also* Spiritual Disciplines, Work

## 1. Scripture has nothing good to say about laziness.

**Proverbs 10:4** Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth. (NIV)

**Proverbs 12:24** Work hard and become a leader; be lazy and become a slave. (NLT)

**Proverbs 20:4** Those too lazy to plow in the right season will have no food at the harvest. (NLT)

**Proverbs 19:15** Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the shiftless go hungry. (NIV)

**Ecclesiastes 10:18** Because of laziness the building decays, and through idleness of hands the house leaks. (NKJV)

## 2. We are commanded to work hard and not be lazy.

**Ecclesiastes 9:10** Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. (NKJV)

**2 Thessalonians 3:10–12** For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. (NKJV)

**Hebrews 6:12** We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. (NIV)



### 3. Too much sleep equals failure.

**Proverbs 6:9–11** But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep? When will you wake up? A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack you like an armed robber. (NLT)

**Proverbs 10:5** A wise youth harvests in the summer, but one who sleeps during harvest is a disgrace. (NLT)

**Proverbs 20:13** Do not love sleep, or you will become poor; open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with food. (NASB)

**Mark 14:37–38**

### 4. God honors responsibility.

**Romans 12:11** Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. (NLT)

**1 Corinthians 15:58** So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless. (NLT)

**1 Corinthians 10:31** So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (NLT)

**Galatians 6:9** So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. (NLT)

### 5. Proper care of home and family is valued by God.

**Proverbs 31:27** She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

**Proverbs 14:1** The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands. (NASB)

**Titus 2:4–5** So that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. (NASB)

**1 Corinthians 4:2** Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. (NIV)

## 6. Paul offers a model for hard work.

**2 Thessalonians 3:6–9** Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.

## Biblical Narrative

- Jacob, Genesis 29:20

## Practical Steps

- Begin your day with Scripture and prayer so that God, not self, is your focus.
- Do you have life goals? What do you want to accomplish this year? Break down these goals into basic daily tasks so you can reach them.
- For what would you like to be remembered?
- Evaluate why you avoid work, waste time, and shun responsibility.
- Visit your physician to check for physical reasons for your lack of energy.

## Resources

- *Balancing Life's Demands*. Chip Ingram. Living on the Edge.
- *Burned Out* (booklet). Winston Smith. New Growth.
- *Help, I Can't Get Motivated* (booklet). Adam Embry. DayOne.
- *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Morning*. Tom Nelson. Crossway.

# Loneliness

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*See also Fear, Purpose for Living, Trust*

## 1. Loneliness is a reality.

**Psalm 102:7–11** I lie awake, I have become like a lonely bird on a housetop. My enemies have reproached me all day long; those who deride me have used my name as a curse. For I have eaten ashes like bread and mingled my drink with weeping because of Your indignation and Your wrath, for You have lifted me up and cast me away. My days are like a lengthened shadow, and I wither away like grass. (NASB)

**Psalm 38:9–11** O LORD, all my longing is before you; my sighing is not hidden from you. My heart throbs; my strength fails me, and the light of my eyes—it also has gone from me. My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague, and my nearest kin stand far off.

**Job 19:13–14** He has put my brothers far from me, and those who knew me are wholly estranged from me. My relatives have failed me, my close friends have forgotten me.

**Psalm 142:1–4** I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble. When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who watch over my way. In the path where I walk people have hidden a snare for me. Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. (NIV)

## 2. A part of loneliness can be feeling separated from God.

**Job 23:8–9** Behold, I go forward but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; when He acts on the left,

I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him.  
(NASB)

**Psalm 13:1** How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?  
How long will You hide Your face from me? (NASB)

### 3. David turned to God when he was lonely.

**Psalm 25:16** Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely  
and afflicted. (NASB)

**Psalm 143:8–10** Remind me each morning of your constant  
love, for I put my trust in you. My prayers go up to you; show  
me the way I should go. I go to you for protection, LORD; rescue  
me from my enemies. You are my God; teach me to do your will.  
Be good to me, and guide me on a safe path. (GNT)

**Psalm 62:5–8**

### 4. God is always with us—we can never be truly alone.

**Deuteronomy 31:6** Be strong and of good courage, do not  
fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the  
One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.  
(NKJV)

**Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good  
courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your  
God is with you wherever you go. (NKJV)

**Hebrews 13:5** Keep your life free from love of money, and be  
content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave  
you nor forsake you.”

**John 16:32**

### 5. God will provide for us when we feel lonely.

**Zephaniah 3:17** The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty  
One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will  
quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.  
(NKJV)

**Psalm 68:5–6** A father of the fatherless and a judge for the  
widows, is God in His holy habitation. God makes a home for  
the lonely; He leads out the prisoners into prosperity, only the  
rebellious dwell in a parched land. (NASB)

**Psalm 73:25–26** Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (NASB)

## Biblical Narratives

- Adam alone in the garden, Genesis 2:18–23
- Elijah, 1 Kings 19:10
- Jesus on the cross, Matthew 27:46

## Practical Steps

- Memorize Deuteronomy 31:6. Write it on a card and post it.
- Actively engage in group activities that will help you draw out of isolation.
- Anticipate places and times of loneliness so you can be prepared. Remind yourself beforehand of God's character and his presence with you.
- Chart a normal week. How much time are you spending alone? With God? With others? In ministry? In community service? At work? Relaxing?
- Look for others who may be alone and minister to them.
- Monitor self-pity thinking. Practice Philippians 4:8.

## Resources

- *Loneliness* (booklet). Jane V. Clark. New Growth.
- *The Path of Loneliness*. Elisabeth Elliot. Revell.
- *Trusting God*. Jerry Bridges. NavPress.

# Lust/Fantasizing

*See also* Entertainment, Sexual Purity, Thought Life

## 1. Lust is a sinful desire that begins in the mind.

**Matthew 5:28** But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (NLT)

**1 Peter 2:11** Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. (NIV)

## 2. Lust is caused by disobedience to God's Word.

**Psalms 119:9, 11** How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. . . . I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (NLT)

**Mark 4:19** But the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. (NIV)

**Ephesians 4:22** You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires. (NIV)

**2 Timothy 4:3–4** For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (NIV)

## 3. Lust is a part of Satan's plan and attack, using the world system he controls.

**1 John 5:19** We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

**1 John 2:16–17** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (NASB)

**2 Peter 1:4** For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (NASB)

**4. God provides us with the strength to resist lust and live obediently.**

**Ephesians 6:10–11** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

**1 Peter 4:1–2** Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. (NASB)

**5. We must be on guard for what is our own individual area of lusting.**

**James 1:14–15** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (NASB)

**Job 31:1** I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman. (NLT)

**1 Thessalonians 4:3–5** For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God. (NASB)

**6. With God's help, it is possible to avoid lustful thoughts.**

**2 Timothy 2:22** Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (NASB)

**Titus 2:12** It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. (NIV)

**1 Corinthians 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

**Romans 6:12–13** Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (NASB)

## Practical Steps

- Identify triggers for lust (movies, reading material, music, time of day, places, etc.) and work toward minimizing and eliminating them.
- Research the meaning of idol. Locate ten Scripture texts dealing with idolatry.
- Memorize 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 2 Timothy 2:22. Review them each day.
- Write down a plan of action to defeat temptation when it comes. Include someone to keep you accountable.

## Resources

- *Counterfeit Gods*. Timothy Keller. Dutton.
- “I’m Attracted to Another Man! Help!” in *Intimate Issues*. Linda Dillow. WaterBrook.
- *Sex Is Not the Problem*. Joshua Harris. Multnomah.
- *Sexual Addiction* (booklet). David Powlison. New Growth.



# Lying

*See also Communication/Speech, Gossip*

## 1. Lying is always wrong.

**Exodus 20:16** You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (NKJV)

**Leviticus 19:11–12** You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. (NKJV)

**Psalms 34:13** Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies. (NIV)

**Colossians 3:9–10** Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him. (NKJV)

## 2. Lying will be a struggle throughout life.

**Psalms 58:3** Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies. (NIV)

**Romans 3:13** Their words are full of deadly deceit; wicked lies roll off their tongues. (GNT)

## 3. Lying is detestable to God.

**Proverbs 6:16–19** These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren. (NKJV)

**Psalms 5:6** You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. (NKJV)

**Proverbs 12:22** Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight. (NKJV)

#### 4. Telling the truth is God's way.

**Ephesians 4:25** Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. (NKJV)

**1 John 2:21** I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. (NKJV)

**Psalms 15:1–2** Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts. (NLT)

#### 5. Lying has real consequences.

**Proverbs 12:13** The wicked are trapped by their own words, but honest people get themselves out of trouble. (GNT)

**Proverbs 19:5** A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies will not escape. (NKJV)

**Psalms 63:11** For the mouths of liars will be stopped.

**Psalms 24:3–4** Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. (NIV)

**Psalms 31:18** Let their lying lips be silenced, for with pride and contempt they speak arrogantly against the righteous. (NIV)

### Biblical Narratives

- Abraham, Genesis 12:10–20
- Jacob, Genesis 27
- Potiphar's wife, Genesis 39:7–18
- Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1–11

## Practical Steps

- Identify situations in the last week when you were not truthful. Confess these to God and to those harmed by your lies.
- Consider those situations where you lied. Evaluate the reasons—was it fear of others? Fear of being exposed? Fear of losing friends? Fear of rejection? Pride? To promote self? To hide something? Recognize your need to see lying as God sees it.
- Find someone with whom you can be accountable. Share your desire to obey God's character of truth. Have that person regularly evaluate your progress.
- Are you believing lies in your mind? Compare untruthful thoughts to Philippians 4:8.

## Resources

- *Deception: Letting Go of Lying* (booklet). Lou Priolo. P&R.
- *Lies Women Believe: And the Truth That Sets Them Free*. Nancy Leigh DeMoss. Moody.
- *Pursuit of Holiness*. Jerry Bridges. NavPress.

# Manipulation

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*See also* Codependency, Communication/Speech, Lying, Self-worth

## 1. Arranging situations or manipulating people for one's personal advancement or benefit is displeasing to God.

**Psalm 101:7** I will not allow deceivers to serve in my house, and liars will not stay in my presence. (NLT)

**Proverbs 12:2** The LORD approves of those who are good, but he condemns those who plan wickedness. (NLT)

**Proverbs 6:16–19** There are six things the LORD hates—no, seven things he detests: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a family. (NLT)

**Proverbs 24:28**

## 2. Manipulation leads to God's judgment.

**Job 32:21–22** I won't play favorites or try to flatter anyone. For if I tried flattery, my Creator would soon destroy me. (NLT)

**Psalm 7:15–16** He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made. His mischief returns upon his own head, and on his own skull his violence descends.

**Proverbs 10:9** Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.

## 3. Manipulation often begins with selfish thoughts and words.

**Proverbs 16:30** Whoever winks his eyes plans dishonest things; he who purses his lips brings evil to pass.

**Psalm 50:19** You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit.

**4. Watch out for those who use flattery for manipulation.**

**Romans 16:18** For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

**Proverbs 26:28** A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin. (NIV)

**Psalms 12:2–4** Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak. May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts, those who say, “With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?”

**1 Thessalonians 2:5**

**5. Stay away from those who manipulate, for manipulation results in hurt for all involved.**

**Psalms 64:5–6** They encourage each other to do evil and plan how to set their traps in secret. “Who will ever notice?” they ask. As they plot their crimes, they say, “We have devised the perfect plan!” Yes, the human heart and mind are cunning. (NLT)

**Proverbs 14:7** Stay away from a fool, for you will not find knowledge on their lips. (NIV)

**Psalms 56:5–6** All day long they twist my words; all their schemes are for my ruin. They conspire, they lurk, they watch my steps, hoping to take my life. (NIV)

**6. God is pleased with integrity and honesty.**

**Psalms 15:1–3** Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts. Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends. (NLT)

**Psalms 32:2** Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! (NLT)

## Biblical Narratives

- Laban, Genesis 24:28–31
- Rebekah and Jacob, Genesis 27
- Salome with her mother, Herodias, Matthew 14:1–12

## Practical Steps

- Evaluate if you manipulate others. Do you use guilt trips? Do you allow others to say no to your requests? Do friends and family members consider you a controlling person? If so, humble yourself to God's Word and see his solutions for this sin.
- Are you easily manipulated by others? Do you give up your own plans easily? Are you too nice? Do you ever refuse a request? Do you have a sense of fear or dread when you are with others who could pressure you? If these are patterns in your life, you need to work for change. Spend time with a trusted mentor who can assist you in these areas.
- Manipulation struggles often occur with those we love. Is there a spouse, child, or family member from whom you need to seek forgiveness?
- Recognize that broken family relationships can be traced back to pride, manipulation, or a lack of forgiveness.

## Resources

- *The Emotionally Destructive Relationship*. Leslie Vernick. Harvest House.
- *Manipulation* (booklet). Lou Priolo. P&R.
- "Manipulation" in *Damsels in Distress*. Martha Peace. P&R.
- *Motives: Why I Do the Things I Do* (booklet). Ed Welch. P&R.

# Marriage

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*See also Sex Life*

## 1. Marriage was God's idea, his design.

**Genesis 2:18, 21–24** And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” . . . And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (NKJV)

## 2. Marriage is honorable.

**Hebrews 13:4** Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

**Matthew 19:6** So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

**Proverbs 18:22** He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.

## 3. Believers should only marry other believers.

**2 Corinthians 6:14** Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (NKJV)

#### 4. Marriage is a permanent covenant/commitment for life.

**Mark 10:7–9** For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate. (NKJV)

**Malachi 2:14** You ask, “Why?” It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. (NIV)

#### 5. Marriage operates best when God’s plan is followed.

##### HUSBAND—LOVING LEADER

**Colossians 3:19** Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

**1 Corinthians 7:2** But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

**Ephesians 5:25–33** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (NKJV)

##### WIFE—RESPECTFUL COMPLETER

**Ephesians 5:22–24** Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore,



just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. (NKJV)

**1 Peter 3:5–6** For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. (NIV)

**Proverbs 19:13–14** A foolish child is a father’s ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like the constant dripping of a leaky roof. Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD. (NIV)

**Proverbs 31:10–11** A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. (NIV)

**6. Submission should be mutual; it is for all believers.**

**Ephesians 5:21** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (NIV)

**Philippians 2:3–4**

**7. When submission is in response to a loving husband’s leadership, it is not difficult.**

**Ephesians 5:25, 28–29** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. . . . In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church. (NIV)

**CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUBMISSIVE HEART**

**Honoring to God** Ephesians 5:2; Colossians 3:18

**To your own husband** 1 Peter 3:5

**Without fear** 1 Peter 3:6

**Does not mean you can’t speak up/contribute** Genesis 21:11–12

**Can be a means of drawing an unbelieving husband to faith**

1 Peter 3:1

**Is to be taught** Titus 2:3–5

**8. Submitting to God has priority. If asked to do something against his Word, we must choose to obey God.**

**Acts 5:29** But Peter and the apostles answered, we must obey God rather than men. (NASB)

## **Biblical Narratives**

- Song of Solomon
- Sarah, 1 Peter 3

## **Practical Steps**

- Make sure you are both practicing the “leaving your parents” concept and making your new home your priority.
- Study Wayne Mack’s list of what submission is and is not in *Strengthening Your Marriage*.
- Plan dates with your spouse.
- Pray with your spouse on a regular basis.
- Always work on communication. Don’t permit conflicts to build. Handle them biblically.
- Read books out loud together.
- Show affection with loving touches (hold hands, put arm around waist, etc.).
- Share your happiest and saddest moments of the day.
- As a couple, write down goals for how you want your marriage to honor God.
- Have a Bible in each room of your home to remind you both of the principles you desire to follow.

## Resources

- *Excellent Wife*. Martha Peace. Focus.
- *The Meaning of Marriage*. Tim Keller. Hodder & Stoughton.
- *What Did You Expect? Redeeming the Realities of Marriage*. Paul Tripp. Crossway.
- *When Sinners Say "I Do."* Dave Harvey. Shepherd.

# Masturbation

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*See also Sexual Purity, Temptation, Thought Life*

1. While there is no direct mention of this in Scripture, certain truths do apply.

## SELFISHNESS

**Romans 13:14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. (NASB)

**Colossians 3:5** Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (NASB)

**James 1:14–15** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (NASB)

**Exodus 20:3–4**

## MENTAL IMAGES

**2 Corinthians 10:5** We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

**Ephesians 5:3** But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

**Matthew 5:28** But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

## HEART ISSUES

**Psalm 51:10** Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. (NIV)

**Mark 7:20–23** What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.

**Psalm 19:14**

2. **Scripture does teach that when a woman is married, her sexual satisfaction must come from her spouse. Sex with oneself is not sex as God planned.**

**1 Corinthians 7:3–4** The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. (NLT)

3. **Avoid secret activity and isolation.**

**Ephesians 5:11–12** Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

**Ecclesiastes 12:13–14** Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (NKJV)

4. **God offers escape from sin and gives blessing.**

**2 Corinthians 7:1** Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God. (NLT)

**1 Corinthians 10:13** The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. (NLT)

5. One reason God designed marriage was to alleviate problems of lust. We must save our body for the mate whom God will give us.

1 Corinthians 7:1–2, 9 Now for the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. . . . But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. (NIV)

Genesis 2:21–24

## Practical Steps

- Find an older woman with whom you can talk openly and who can help you with accountability.
- Study these passages for instruction: Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 6:13; Galatians 5:16; Colossians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:22; James 1:13–15; 1 John 2:15–17.
- Study Galatians 5:22–25 on the fruit of the Spirit. What does it mean to be self-controlled?

## Resources

- *At the Altar of Sexual Idolatry*. Steve Gallagher. Pure Life Ministry.
- *Dirty Girls Come Clean*. Crystal Renaud. Moody.
- *Hope and Help for Sexual Temptation* (booklet). Mark Shaw. Focus.
- *It's All about Me* (booklet). Winston Smith. CCEF.

# Materialism

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*See also* Contentment, Finances/Money, Pride

## 1. The desire for more possessions leads to a trap of destruction.

**1 Timothy 6:6–9** Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. (NLT)

**James 5:1–3, 5** Look here, you rich people: Weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you. Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. Your gold and silver have become worthless. The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh like fire. This treasure you have accumulated will stand as evidence against you on the day of judgment. . . . You have spent your years on earth in luxury, satisfying your every desire. You have fattened yourselves for the day of slaughter. (NLT)

**Proverbs 28:25** Greed causes fighting; trusting the LORD leads to prosperity. (NLT)

**Proverbs 23:4–5** Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit. In the blink of an eye wealth disappears, for it will sprout wings and fly away like an eagle. (NLT)

## 2. A desire for riches can become more important than our walk with God.

**Proverbs 30:8–9** Keep deception and lies far from me, give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my

portion, that I not be full and deny You and say, “Who is the LORD?” Or that I not be in want and steal, and profane the name of my God. (NASB)

**1 Timothy 6:10** For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (NKJV)

**1 John 2:15** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (NKJV)

### 3. Material possessions do not provide security.

**Jeremiah 9:23–24** Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the LORD. (NKJV)

**Isaiah 58:11** The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. (NKJV)

**Luke 12:15** And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

**1 Timothy 6:17** As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

**Psalms 39:4–6**

### 4. Those blessed materially need to help the less fortunate.

**1 Timothy 6:18–19** They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.



**Proverbs 31:8–9** Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. (NIV)

## 5. There are ways to avoid materialism.

**1 Timothy 6:10–11** For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. (NKJV)

**Colossians 3:12** Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

**Matthew 6:19–21** Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**Philippians 4:11–13** And I am not saying this because I feel neglected, for I have learned to be satisfied with what I have. I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough. I have learned this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me. (GNT)

## Biblical Narrative

- Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1–11

## Practical Steps

- Make a checkbook cover that says, “God owns it all.”
- Evaluate purchases prayerfully.

- If you are clutching too many things, start giving some away.
- Follow a budget. Make goals. Set limits.
- Volunteer at a homeless shelter, nonprofit organization, mission, or crisis pregnancy center.
- Evaluate if status is your reason for buying.
- Always give your offering to God first.

## Resources

- *Counterfeit Gods*. Timothy Keller. Dutton.
- *Real Prosperity: Biblical Principles of Material Possessions*. Gene Getz. Moody.
- *When Money Runs Out* (booklet). James Petty. New Growth.

## Miscarriage/Stillbirth

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*See also* Death, Grief, Hope

**1. God is our anchor and our hope in sadness.**

**Hebrews 6:18–19** So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. (NLT)

**2. God knows the unborn, their life and growth, no matter how brief.**

**Jeremiah 1:4–5** Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

**Psalms 139:13–15** You created every part of me; you put me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because you are to be feared; all you do is strange and wonderful. I know it with all my heart. When my bones were being formed, carefully put together in my mother's womb, when I was growing there in secret, you knew that I was there. (GNT)

**3. God understands our grief, and his heart is tender.**

**Psalms 147:3** He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

**Psalms 40:1–2** I waited patiently for the LORD to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit

of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. (NLT)

**Psalm 18:1–6** I love you, LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies. The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears. (NIV)

**Isaiah 25:8** He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken. (NASB)

**2 Corinthians 1:3–4** All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. (NLT)

#### 4. During difficult times, leaning on God's sovereignty is all we have.

**Psalm 18:30** This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.

**Psalm 69:29–30** I am suffering and in pain. Rescue me, O God, by your saving power. Then I will praise God's name with singing, and I will honor him with thanksgiving. (NLT)

**Psalm 90:1–2** LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. (NASB)

**Psalm 91:1–2** He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!" (NASB)

**Ecclesiastes 11:5** As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.

**Isaiah 44:24** This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer and Creator: “I am the LORD, who made all things. I alone stretched out the heavens. Who was with me when I made the earth?” (NLT)

**Job 42:2** I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. (NIV)

**5. Those who have lost a child can have hope in the future resurrection of their baby.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:13–14, 16–18** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. . . . For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

## Biblical Narrative

- David, 2 Samuel 12:18–23

## Practical Steps

- Honor your baby’s memory with a plaque or painting in your home, a special piece of jewelry, or planting a tree or garden.
- Make a scrapbook or keepsake box of the time you carried the baby (include cards, ultrasounds, the baby’s name), honoring your memories of this little one.

- Make sure you hold the baby for a time after the birth. Depending on the age at delivery, take photos or plan a small funeral or memorial.
- Always seek quality medical care.
- Seek out mentors who have walked this same path. Let them pray with you and encourage you.
- If you have other children, be sure to gently help them through the grief process as well.

## Resources

- *Free to Grieve*. Maureen Park. Bethany House.
- *Help! My Baby Has Died* (booklet). Reggie Weems. DayOne.
- *Morning Will Come*. Sandy Day. Focus.
- *Safe in the Arms of God*. John F. MacArthur. Thomas Nelson.

# Mothering

*See also Empty Nest, Prodigal Children, Single Mother, Training Children*

## 1. Children are a gift and blessing from the Lord.

**Psalm 127:3–5** Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate. (NASB)

**Psalm 128**

## 2. Tender parenting is a frequent theme of Scripture.

**Isaiah 40:11** He will feed His flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young. (NKJV)

**Isaiah 49:15** Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. (NKJV)

**Isaiah 66:13** As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem. (NKJV)

**1 Thessalonians 2:7** But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. (NKJV)

## 3. Mothers are to be honored.

**Exodus 20:12** Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. (NASB)

**Proverbs 23:22** Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old. (NASB)

**Ephesians 6:2**

#### 4. Children need mothers who are engaged—intentional in their mothering.

**Isaiah 66:13** I will comfort you there in Jerusalem as a mother comforts her child. (NLT)

**Deuteronomy 6:4–9** Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (NLT)

**Proverbs 19:18** Discipline your children while there is hope. Otherwise you will ruin their lives. (NLT)

#### 5. Mothers should have the following character qualities.

LOVE FOR HUSBAND AND CHILDREN, PURE, SELF-CONTROLLED, KEEPERS OF HOME, KIND, SUBMISSIVE

**Titus 2:3–5** Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that honors God. They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what is good. These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God. (NLT)

HUMBLE, GENTLE, PATIENT, LOVING

**Ephesians 4:2** Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. (NLT)

MANIFEST THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

**Galatians 5:22–23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (NASB)



### BUILD OTHERS UP, KIND, COMPASSIONATE, FORGIVING

**Ephesians 4:29–32** Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (NASB)

### SYMPATHETIC, LOVING, HUMBLE

**1 Peter 3:8–9** Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

## Biblical Narratives

- Hannah, 1 Samuel 1
- A wife of noble character, Proverbs 31:10–31

## Practical Steps

- Write down ten areas in which you can improve your mothering skills and ten areas in which to strive to be more godly.
- Guard your own daily time with God in his Word and prayer.
- Study mothers in Scripture (Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah, etc.). What were their godly traits? What did they do well? Where did they fail? What were the results?
- Look for ways to make your home a place of refuge.
- Thankfully, God does not show favoritism among believers. Make sure that you value, treat, and love all of your children equally as gifts from God.

## Resources

- *Becoming a Titus 2 Woman*. Martha Peace. Focus.
- *Motherhood: Hope for Discouraged Moms* (booklet). Brenda Payne. Faith Resources.
- “The Perfect Mom Syndrome” in *Women Counseling Women*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.
- *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*. Ted Tripp. Shepherd Press.

# Organization/Time Management

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*See also Laziness, Work/Career*

## 1. God desires that we use our time wisely.

**Psalm 90:12** So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. (NKJV)

**Ephesians 5:15–18** Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. (NASB)

**Psalm 39:4** LORD, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days; let me know how transient I am. (NASB)

## 2. God desires that our lives be managed with order.

**1 Corinthians 14:40** But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. (NIV)

## 3. One of the spiritual gifts is administration.

**1 Corinthians 12:28** And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. (NASB)

## 4. All we do should bring honor to God.

**Colossians 3:17** Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (NASB)

**1 Corinthians 15:58** So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless. (NLT)

**5. Our work should entail doing our best.**

**Ecclesiastes 9:10** Whatever you do, do well. For when you go to the grave, there will be no work or planning or knowledge or wisdom. (NLT)

**6. Completion of a job well done is based not only on skill but also on God's blessing.**

**Psalms 90:17** Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us; and confirm for us the work of our hands; yes, confirm the work of our hands. (NASB)

**Exodus 31:2–3** See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship. (NASB)

**Ezra 8:31** Then we journeyed from the river Ahava on the twelfth of the first month to go to Jerusalem; and the hand of our God was over us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the ambushes by the way. Thus we came to Jerusalem and remained there three days. (NASB)

**7. Staying balanced is crucial for time management.**

**Ecclesiastes 7:18** It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. Whoever fears God will avoid all extremes. (NIV)

**Nehemiah 4:8–9** All of them conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it. But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night. (NASB) (Balance of praying and depending)

**8. Delegation of responsibilities is a biblical concept.**

**Exodus 18:18–22** You're going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself. Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing their disputes to him. Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives. But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint

them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. They should always be available to solve the people's common disputes, but have them bring the major cases to you. Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you. (NLT)

## Biblical Narratives

- Ezra planning, Ezra 7–8
- Nehemiah organizing, Nehemiah 2–6
- Israelites procrastinating, Haggai 1–2
- Joseph organizing Egypt's grain, Genesis 41

## Practical Steps

- Use a planner or application on your cell phone to keep a detailed schedule. Review it. Stick to it.
- For one week, record the amount of time spent on shopping, Facebook, searching the internet, and talking on the phone. Set limits.
- Keep a family calendar for all to see.
- Constantly think “declutter.” Set a timer daily for five minutes and use that time to sort through stacks of papers and mail and to clean up the mess.

## Resources

- *Burned Out: Trusting God with Your To Do List* (booklet). Winston Smith. New Growth.
- *The Get Yourself Organized Project*. Kathi Lipp. Harvest House.
- *Shopping for Time: How to Do It All and NOT Be Overwhelmed*. Carolyn Mahaney. Crossway.

# Orphan

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*See also* Adoption, Grief, Loneliness, Purpose for Living, Self-worth

1. Even if human parents are not able to be part of their child's life, our heavenly Father is certainly actively involved.

**Psalms 27:10** Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close. (NLT)

**2 Corinthians 6:18** And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. (NLT)

**Isaiah 66:13** As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem. (NIV)

**Jeremiah 31:3** The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness." (NIV)

**Isaiah 49:15–16; Job 29:12**

2. God is concerned for those without parents and often instructs others to defend and care for them.

**Psalms 82:3–4** Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

**Proverbs 23:10–11** Do not move an ancient landmark or enter the fields of the fatherless, for their Redeemer is strong; he will plead their cause against you.

**Psalms 10:14, 17–18** But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless. . . . You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the

oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror. (NIV)

**Psalm 146:9; Jeremiah 22:3**

### **3. A personal relationship with God through Christ is the ultimate family relationship.**

**1 John 3:1** See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (NIV)

**Ephesians 1:4–6** Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. (NLT)

**John 3:16** For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (NET)

## **Biblical Narratives**

- Ishmael, Genesis 21:9–20
- Esther, 2:5–7, 15; 4:14

## **Practical Steps**

- Write down your testimony of being an orphan to share with others.
- Visit children's homes/orphanages and read, play, and spend time with those children.
- If you harbor feelings of hurt, pain, and resentment, research the frequent mention of God's care for orphans in the Bible. Have you forgiven those who hurt you?

## Resources

- *Attitudes of a Transformed Heart* (booklet). Martha Peace. Focus.
- *The Path of Loneliness*. Elisabeth Elliot. Revell.
- *The Peace and Joy Principle*. Joe Propri. Focus.
- *Trusting God*. Jerry Bridges. NavPress.



# Past Memories

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*See also Forgiveness from God, Forgiving Others, Thought Life*

1. Past triumphs, failures, or losses can trap us, limiting our ability to enjoy the present or the future.

**Philippians 3:13–15** Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

**Isaiah 43:18–19** Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

**Ephesians 4:22–24** You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (NIV)

2. The battle of dealing with the past takes place in the mind.

**2 Corinthians 10:4–5** For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

**Philippians 4:8** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

**Psalms 13:2** How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

**3. If past memories involve sin, repentance/confession must take place**

**1 John 1:9; Psalms 32; 51**

**4. Focus on God's provision for the past.**

**Psalms 77:11** I shall remember the deeds of the LORD; surely I will remember Your wonders of old. (NASB)

**Psalms 68:19** Praise the LORD; praise God our savior! For each day he carries us in his arms. (NLT)

**Joshua 21:45** Not a single one of all the good promises the LORD had given to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; everything he had spoken came true. (NLT)

**Psalms 34:4–5** I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. (NLT)

**Micah 7:19** Once again you will have compassion on us. You will trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean! (NLT)

**Psalms 25:6–7** Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your mercy remember me, for Your goodness' sake, O LORD. (NKJV)

**5. Concentrate on what God is doing in the present and will do in the future.**

**Isaiah 26:3–4** You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! Trust in the LORD always, for the LORD GOD is the eternal Rock. (NLT)

**Isaiah 42:10** Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them! (NKJV)

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (NKJV)

## Biblical Narratives

- Joseph, Genesis 41:51
- Ruth, book of Ruth

## Practical Steps

- Make a list of God's goodness, provision, and providence. Focus on this list with gratitude and thanksgiving.
- If others have sinned against you, make sure you have forgiven them.
- Prayerfully examine your heart. Consider what past memories come to mind repeatedly. As you dwell on these memories, write down what you value. What do you fear?

## Resources

- "How Can I Get Over the Guilt of Past Sexual Sin?" in *Intimate Issues*. Linda Dillow. WaterBrook.
- *One-Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are*. Ann Voskamp. Zondervan.
- *Putting the Past behind You*. Erwin Lutzer. Moody.
- *Putting the Past in Its Place*. Steve Viars. Harvest House.

# PMS

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*See also Anger, Depression, Health/Illness, Suffering*

1. Even though there is no specific scriptural reference to PMS, God is sufficient to meet our needs in any situation.

**Psalm 91:1–16** He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!” For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day; of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you. You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. For you have made the LORD, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent. For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down. “Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With a long life I will satisfy him and let him see My salvation.” (NASB)

**Matthew 11:28** Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. (NASB)

## 2. God created us; he knows our physical and emotional struggles.

**Isaiah 43:1–2** But now, O Jacob, listen to the LORD who created you. O Israel, the one who formed you says, “Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.” (NLT)

## 3. Hope in God is the solution for a depressed, disturbed heart.

**Psalms 42:11** Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God! (NLT)

**Psalms 46:1** God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. (NLT)

## 4. PMS can cause conflict within of wanting to do one thing but doing the opposite. This conflict can lead to sin in speech or actions. Christ is the answer to weakness of mind and body.

**Romans 7:15, 18, 23–25** I don’t really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do what I hate. . . . And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t. . . . But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin. (NLT)

## Practical Steps

- See a physician.
- Exercise thirty minutes three to five times a week.

- Keep a calendar record so you are aware of PMS symptoms. If you are married, keep track of this time together (not as an excuse for sin but for accountability).
- Plan a lighter commitment schedule during the ten days prior to your period.
- Reduce or eliminate caffeine. Concentrate on healthy eating.
- Memorize Isaiah 43:1–2.

## Resources

- “Are You Sure PMS Is Real?” in *Damsels in Distress*. Martha Peace. P&R.
- *Jump Off the Hormone Swing*. Lorraine Pintus. Moody.
- *PMS* (booklet). Amy Baker. Faith Resources.

# Pornography

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*See also Hope, Lust, Purpose for Living, Selfishness, Sexual Purity, Temptation*

1. **Scripture clearly states that we must protect our eyes from viewing ungodliness.**

**Psalm 101:3–4** I will not look with approval on anything that is vile. I hate what faithless people do; I will have no part in it. The perverse of heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with what is evil. (NIV)

**Matthew 5:28** But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (NASB)

**Isaiah 1:16** Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil. (NASB)

2. **Pornography affects every aspect of a person's life.**

**Luke 11:34–36** Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.

**James 1:14–15** But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

3. **Nothing is hidden from the eyes of God.**

**Psalm 90:8** You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

**Psalms 139:7–12** Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,” even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

**Proverbs 5:21** For a man’s ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths.

**Proverbs 15:3** The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

**2 Chronicles 16:9** For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.

#### 4. There is hope for freedom from this sin.

**Romans 6:12–14** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

**John 8:31–32** So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

**Galatians 5:16–24; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11**

#### 5. You must turn from this sin and remove pornography from your life.

**Psalms 32:3–5** When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with



the fever heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”; and You forgave the guilt of my sin. (NASB)

**Job 31:1** I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman. (NLT)

**Psalms 119:37** Turn my eyes from worthless things, and give me life through your word. (NLT)

**Romans 13:14** Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don’t let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires. (NLT)

**Psalms 139:23–24; 1 Peter 2:24**

## 6. Seek accountability with those who have freedom from this sin.

**2 Timothy 2:21–22** Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

**Galatians 6:1–2** Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

## Practical Steps

- Write the following on a card: I have two choices—obeying God or obeying self. Who will I honor?
- Rid your living space of items that lead to temptation (literature, photos, etc.). Do not go to places where temptation grows. Place safeguards on your computer. Seek accountability.
- To reprogram your mind away from sinful viewing and toward pure thinking, make a list comparing and contrasting the hurt and destruction of pornography with the life and freedom that come with purity.

## Resources

- *Captured by a Better Vision*. Tim Chester. InterVarsity.
- *Dirty Girls Come Clean*. Crystal Renaud. Moody.
- *In the Arena of the Mind*. John Vandegriff. ASK.
- “My Husband Is into Pornography: What Should I Do?” in *Intimate Issues*. Linda Dillow. WaterBrook.
- “The Taboo Topic: Pornography and Women” in *Women Counseling Women*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.
- *What’s Wrong with a Little Porn When You’re Single?* (booklet). R. Nicholas Black. New Growth.
- *When His Secret Sin Breaks Your Heart: Letters to Hurting Wives*. Kathy Gallagher. Pure Life Ministries.

# Pride

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*See also Self-worth, Selfishness/Subjectivity*

## 1. God disapproves of pride but is pleased with humility.

**Proverbs 21:4** Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin.

**Proverbs 8:13** The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.

**James 4:6** But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (NKJV)

**Psalms 138:6** Though the LORD is on high, yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar. (NKJV)

## 2. Sinful pride results in negative consequences.

**Psalms 18:27** You rescue the humble, but you humiliate the proud. (NLT)

**Proverbs 13:10** Pride leads to conflict; those who take advice are wise. (NLT)

**Proverbs 16:18** Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (NKJV)

**Isaiah 2:11** The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

## 3. There is only one boasting that pleases God: praise directed to him.

**Jeremiah 9:23–24** Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the

LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

**Psalms 44:8** In God we have boasted continually, and we will give thanks to your name forever.

**Galatians 6:14** But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

#### 4. We must recognize that God is the source of all we have and all we do.

**John 15:5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

**1 Timothy 6:17** As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

#### 5. Pride should be replaced by humility.

**Philippians 2:3–4** Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. (NLT)

**Romans 12:3** For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

**1 Peter 5:5** Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

#### 6. God has a plan for humility.

**Micah 6:8** He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

**Psalms 51:17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

## Biblical Narratives

- David, Psalm 131
- Jesus, Philippians 2:5–8
- Paul, 2 Corinthians 12; Philippians 3:4–8
- Joseph, Genesis 37:5–8
- Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 4:28–37

## Practical Steps

- Memorize Philippians 2:3–4. Ask, “Why do I feel I am always right or better than others?”
- Practice “breathing grace” to others. Practice not voicing your pride with one-upmanship or needing to have the last word.
- As you confess your pride to God, ask him to reveal your areas of weakness.
- Spend time daily in thanksgiving. Focus on God’s gifts of talent, ability, family, and financial security. God owns it all; give credit to him.

## Resources

- *From Pride to Humility*. Stuart Scott. Focus.
- *Humility: The Forgotten Virtue*. Wayne Mack. P&R.
- *Humility: The True Greatness*. C. J. Mahney. Multnomah.

# Prodigal Children

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*See also Anxiety/Worry, Disappointment, Forgiving Others*

## 1. It hurts deeply to have a child not walk with God.

**Proverbs 17:25** Foolish children bring grief to their father and bitterness to the one who gave them birth. (NLT)

**Proverbs 10:1** A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother. (NKJV)

**Isaiah 65:2** I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in the way which is not good, following their own thoughts. (NASB)

## 2. God understands wayward children and the grief they bring.

**Jeremiah 3:22** “My wayward children,” says the LORD, “come back to me, and I will heal your wayward hearts.” (NLT)

**Isaiah 1:2** Listen, O heavens! Pay attention, earth! This is what the LORD says: “The children I raised and cared for have rebelled against me.” (NLT)

**Jeremiah 6:16** Thus says the LORD: “Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’” (NKJV)

## 3. There are consequences to turning one’s back on God.

**Proverbs 11:21** Be assured, an evil person will not go unpunished, but the offspring of the righteous will be delivered.

**Galatians 6:7** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

**4. The battle with the enemy is not ours but God's.**

**Proverbs 21:31** The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but deliverance is of the LORD. (NKJV)

**Psalms 62:11–12** Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, and that to you, O LORD, belongs steadfast love.

**Isaiah 49:25** For thus says the LORD: “Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children.”

**John 16:33** These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. (NKJV)

**5. As you deal with this pain, make sure your own walk with the Lord remains vital and fresh. Do not lose your confidence in God. Live out your faith before your child.**

**Galatians 6:1** Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. (NIV)

**James 1:2–5** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (NASB)

**6. Work at keeping an open relationship and communication so when God gives the opportunity, your child may listen.**

**1 Corinthians 13:4–7** Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (NKJV)

**James 5:19–20** My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

**Isaiah 58:7** Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. (NLT)

**Proverbs 29:11** Fools vent their anger, but the wise quietly hold it back. (NLT)

**1 Peter 4:8** And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” (NKJV)

**Galatians 5:22–23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (NKJV)

**Psalms 37:8** Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it only causes harm. (NKJV)

**Proverbs 20:3**

## 7. Pray constantly for your child, not necessarily for what is wanted as a parent, but for what God wants to do in your child’s life.

**1 Samuel 1:27–28** For this boy I prayed, and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also dedicated him to the LORD; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the LORD. (NASB)

**Romans 8:26** In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. (NASB)

**Matthew 7:7–11** Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! (NASB)

**2 Corinthians 12:8–10**



**8. Have hope—God desires for your child to be restored. Anticipate what he can do.**

**2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (NASB)

**Jeremiah 32:27** Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me? (NASB)

**Lamentations 3:25–26** The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the LORD. (NASB)

**Luke 15:20** So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. (NASB)

**Romans 15:13** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **Biblical Narratives**

- Lost sheep, Matthew 18:10–14
- Prodigal son, Luke 15:11–32

## **Practical Steps**

- Seek wise counsel. Are you majoring on externals or the hearts of your children?
- Show consistent love. Spend time with your children. Show affection by touching. Send notes. Use words that build them up.
- Use a journal to daily write down your prayers for your children.
- Guard your time with God so you are not brought down by discouragement, depression, defeat, or self-blame.

## Resources

- *Parents with Broken Hearts*. William L. Coleman. BMH.
- *Prodigals and Those Who Love Them*. Ruth Graham. Focus on the Family.
- *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.
- *When Your Kid's in Trouble* (booklet). William Smith. New Growth.

# Prostitution

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*See also Confession/Repentance, Forgiveness from God, Lust, Sexual Purity*

## 1. Prostitution is a sinful way of life and violates God's standards.

**Proverbs 23:27–28** For a prostitute is a deep pit; an adulteress is a narrow well. She lies in wait like a robber and increases the traitors among mankind.

**Proverbs 5:3–5** For the lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But in the end she is as bitter as poison, as dangerous as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. (NLT)

**1 Corinthians 6:15–18** Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "The two shall become one flesh." But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. (NASB)

**Jeremiah 13:27**

## 2. Confession and repentance are the first steps to freedom.

**Matthew 11:28–30** Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (NASB)

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NASB)

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (NASB)

**Proverbs 28:13** He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion. (NASB)

**Romans 6:6–8** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

### 3. Freedom from a life of prostitution requires a right relationship with God and a change in lifestyle.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (NKJV)

**Romans 6:19** I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. (NIV)

**Psalms 141:4** Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice deeds of wickedness with men who do iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies. (NASB)

**Galatians 6:7–8** Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. (NASB)

## Biblical Narratives

- Rahab, Joshua 2:22–25; Hebrews 11:31
- Parable of two sisters, Ezekiel 23
- Gomer, Hosea 1:1–3:5
- Proverbs 5–7

## Practical Steps

- It may be necessary to locate to a new living situation where you will be protected.
- Discuss what brought you to this point in your life with a trusted friend or counselor.
- Make sure you understand your value to God.
- Medical care is necessary. Openness and honesty with your physician are essential so that proper testing for STDs can be done.

## Resources

- “Counseling Women Involved in Sexual Sins” in *Women Helping Women*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.
- *Free at Last*. Tony Evans. Moody.
- “Predator, Prey, and Protector: Helping Victims Think and Act from Psalm 10” in *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, vol. 16. David Powlison.

# Purpose for Living

*See also Self-worth, Spiritual Gifts*

## 1. Our purpose for living is to bring glory to God.

**Isaiah 43:7** Bring all who claim me as their God, for I have made them for my glory. It was I who created them.

**1 Thessalonians 4:1** Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even more. (NLT)

**2 Corinthians 5:9** So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

**Hebrews 13:20–21**

## 2. We bring glory to God when we are conformed to the image of his Son.

**Romans 8:29–30** For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

**Hebrews 13:20–21** Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**3. We show glory to God by serving him with our lives.**

**Haggai 1:8** Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the LORD.

**Colossians 3:23** Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**1 Corinthians 10:31** So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

**Ephesians 5:7–8; 6:5–7; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Hebrews 13:15–16**

**4. God is honored when we serve others.**

**Philippians 2:3–4** Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. (NLT)

**Romans 12:10, 13** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; . . . contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. (NASB)

**Galatians 5:13–14** Use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (NLT)

**5. God is honored when we walk closely with, and in obedience to, our heavenly Father.**

**Micah 6:8** He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (NASB)

**Colossians 1:9–10** For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (NASB)

**John 15:4–5** Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. (NASB)

**Ephesians 5:10**

**6. God is honored when we enjoy the blessings he provides.**

**Ecclesiastes 2:24–26** A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness. (NIV)

**1 Timothy 6:17** Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. (NIV)

**John 10:9–10**

**7. Whatever our circumstances in life, we must accept that God will be glorified through them.**

**Ephesians 3:20–21** Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

**2 Timothy 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Romans 16:27** To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

**Romans 11:36; Philippians 4:19–20; 1 Timothy 1:17; Jude 24–25**

## **Biblical Narrative**

- Paul, Philippians 1:21; Galatians 2:20



## Practical Steps

- Set the alarm on your phone or watch to remind you several times a day to ask, “Am I bringing glory to God right now?”
- Pray each morning before you get out of bed. Give God thanks for the new day and ask him to help you in honoring him this day.
- Evaluate at the end of each day. Are there areas for improvement? What steps can you take to be more honoring of God in word, attitude, thought, and actions?

## Resources

- *Broken-Down House: Living Productively in a World Gone Bad.* Paul Trip. Shepherd.
- *The Cross Centered Life.* C. J. Mahaney. Multnomah.
- *The Gospel for Real Life.* Jerry Bridges. NavPress.

# Rape

*See also Anxiety/Worry, Fear, Grief, Past Memories*

1. When a rape happened in the Bible, God did not place blame on the woman.

**Deuteronomy 22:26** But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no offense punishable by death. For this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor.

2. When evil happens, courts and laws may not always be able to provide punishment or justice, but ultimately God will.

**2 Thessalonians 1:5–7** This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.

**Luke 18:6–8** Then the Lord said, “Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don’t you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?” (NLT)

**Deuteronomy 32:35** I will take revenge; I will pay them back. In due time their feet will slip. Their day of disaster will arrive, and their destiny will overtake them. (NLT)

3. Victims must cling to true peace and comfort in Jesus Christ.

**1 John 4:4** But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit

who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. (NLT)

**Psalm 34:18–19** The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. (NASB)

**Hebrews 12:2–3** Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (NIV)

**Isaiah 41:9–10** You whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, “You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off”; fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

**Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

## Practical Steps

- Seek medical attention.
- Seek legal protection if necessary.
- In time, discuss with a counselor the myths and facts about rape.
- Discuss your fears, the future, and God’s care.
- Set up support that remains in place as long as necessary.

## Resources

- “Predator, Prey, and Protector: Helping Victims Think and Act from Psalm 10” in *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, vol. 16. David Powlison.
- *Trusting God*. Jerry Bridges. NavPress.
- *When Bad Things Happen* (booklet). William Smith. New Growth.

# Self-harm

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*See also* Anxiety/Worry, Guilt, Past Memories, Self-worth, Temptation

1. When life becomes overwhelming, doing something that gives a temporary feeling of freedom is not the answer. These actions always result in guilt. Seeking help from God is the answer.

**Deuteronomy 13:4** You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. (NKJV)

**Titus 2:11–12** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

**Colossians 3:2–3** Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

**Philippians 3:8**

2. If guilt for sin is the problem, there is no need to wound yourself, because Jesus was wounded for you; he took your punishment. The blood has already been shed.

**Isaiah 53:4–5** Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

**Psalms 103:3–5** He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's! (NLT)

**Romans 5:8** But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (NLT)

**3. God does not want us to hurt or damage the body he has given us but to take good care of it.**

**Leviticus 19:28** You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves: I am the LORD.

**Leviticus 20:23** And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I detested them.

**1 Corinthians 6:19–20** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

**Ephesians 4:17–20**

**4. Self-harm is a trap Satan uses to cause us to lose confidence in God and give up God's blessing.**

**2 Corinthians 11:3** But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

**Ephesians 6:11–13**

**5. The false peace that comes from self-injury is momentary. Peace from God is true, lasting, and genuine.**

**Jeremiah 17:5, 7** Thus says the LORD: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. . . . Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.”

**John 14:27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

**Colossians 3:15–17** And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and

spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. (NLT)

**Psalms 34:18** The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed. (NLT)

**Romans 5:1**

## 6. Change happens when we choose to think as God thinks about self-harm.

**Galatians 5:24** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (NIV)

**Romans 12:2** Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (NIV)

**Colossians 3:5** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

## 7. Submission to God and his plan is crucial.

**Ecclesiastes 12:1** Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them."

**Ecclesiastes 12:14** For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

**James 4:7** Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (NASB)

**Ephesians 4:30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

## 8. God is greater than any temptation.

**1 Corinthians 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

**Philippians 1:6** And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

**1 John 4:4** Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

## Practical Steps

- Self-harm is a warning sign that something in life has not been handled with a biblical solution. Spend time analyzing these heart and thinking issues.
- Find positive, constructive, godly ways to replace the self-harm and reduce your tension and anxiety (accountability, removal of tools used to injure, memorization of Scripture, godly relationships, physical exercise, etc.).
- Write the following on a card: It is for this that Jesus died. Read the card whenever temptation comes. Picture yourself placing your pain in Jesus's hands, knowing that he already dealt with it.
- See a physician.

## Resources

- *Cutting* (booklet). Jeremy Lelek. P&R.
- *Help, I Feel Ashamed* (booklet). Sue Nicewander. DayOne.
- *Hope and Help for Self-Injurers and Cutters*. Mark Shaw. Focus.
- "Self-Injury: When Pain Feels Good" in *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, Winter 2004. Ed Welch.

# Selfishness/Subjectivity

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*See also Pride, Purpose for Living*

## 1. God desires to have first place in our lives.

**Matthew 22:37–38** Jesus answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and the most important commandment.” (GNT)

**Luke 9:23–24** And he said to them all, “If you want to come with me, you must forget yourself, take up your cross every day, and follow me. For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it, but if you lose your life for my sake, you will save it.” (GNT)

**Matthew 6:33**

## 2. Selfishness—ourselves first and others second—is sin.

**James 3:14–16** But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. (NIV)

**Romans 2:8** For those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

## 3. God commands that we place others ahead of ourselves.

**Philippians 2:3–4** Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. (NLT)

**1 Corinthians 10:24** Don’t be concerned for your own good but for the good of others. (NLT)



**1 Corinthians 13:4–5** Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. (NLT)

**Romans 15:1–3** We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves. We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. For even Christ didn't live to please himself. As the Scriptures say, "The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me." (NLT)

**4. Subjectivity/selfishness is viewing life from our own point of view (the opposite of Paul's example).**

**Romans 12:10–16** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. (NASB)

## Biblical Narratives

### *Negative*

- Lot, Genesis 13
- Jacob, Genesis 27
- Shepherds of Israel, Ezekiel 34
- James and John, Mark 10:35–45

### *Positive*

- Jonathan, 1 Samuel 19–20
- Paul, Romans 9:1–3

- Jesus, Philippians 2:5–8
- Dorcas, Acts 9:36

## Practical Steps

- Are you easily embarrassed, jealous, suspicious of the motives of others, and unaccepting of criticism? Do you carry grudges? These may be warning signs of too much focus on self.
- Picture your life as a train. The engine that pulls the train should be facts/knowledge. The train is fueled by faith, and the caboose represents feelings. Feelings are God given but should not be in control (the engine). A “subjective” train has feelings as the engine with the facts coming along behind as the caboose. Which is your life pattern?
- Current culture is constantly encouraging us to think subjectively. Do not allow this to influence you.
- Write down the contrasting aspects of subjectivity and objectivity on a card. Review them several times a day. Evaluate your progress.

| Subjectivity      | Objectivity            |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| based on feelings | based on fact          |
| my point of view  | others' points of view |
| illogical         | logical                |
| emotional         | rational               |
| self-absorbed     | concern for others     |

## Resources

- *Feelings and Faith*. Brian Borgman. Crossway.
- *How to Find Selfless Joy in a Me-First World*. Leslie Vernick. WaterBrook.
- *Selfishness*. Lou Priolo. P&R.

# Self-worth

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*See also Pride, Purpose for Living, Selfishness/Subjectivity*

**1. We have self-worth because we are made in God's image.**

**Genesis 1:26–27** Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

**Genesis 2:21–23; 9:6**

**2. Our self-worth is based on God's love for us.**

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

**Ephesians 2:4–7** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (NASB)

**1 John 4:10** This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (NIV)

**Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 1:18–20; Jeremiah 31:3**

**3. Our significance is based on our relationship with God, not on any personal qualities or achievements.**

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

**Micah 6:8** He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

**1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (NIV)

**James 4:10** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (NIV)

**Zephaniah 3:17**

#### 4. Knowing God is what makes life meaningful.

**Ephesians 1:17–19** I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (NIV)

**Ephesians 3:17–20** And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. (NIV)

**Philippians 3:8–9** Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. (NLT)

**Jeremiah 9:23–24** Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

**5. We are not to fall into a trap of relying on self.**

**2 Corinthians 1:8–9** For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.

**2 Corinthians 12:9–10**

**6. Pride must not be allowed to enter into a view of self.**

**Psalms 10:4** In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. (NIV)

**Isaiah 2:11–12** The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low.

**2 Corinthians 10:12** Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.

## Biblical Narrative

- Job, Job 3:11–13; 9:21

## Practical Steps

- What does it mean to be an “image bearer”? Study Scripture and ask knowledgeable Christians about the meaning of the term.
- Memorize Psalm 139:13–16. What does God think about how you are made? Are you useful to him?
- Write the following on a card: Knowing God makes life meaningful. Work on making that statement true in your life.

## Resources

- *Changed into His Image*. Jim Berg. BJU.
- *Christ Esteem: Where the Search for Self-Esteem Ends*. Don Matzat. Harvest House.
- *Free at Last*. Tony Evans. Moody.
- *How to Find Selfless Joy in a Me-First World*. Leslie Vernick. WaterBrook.
- *Jesus Christ: Self Denial or Self Esteem* (booklet). David Tyler. Focus.

## Sex Life

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*See also Lust/Fantasizing, Marriage, Sexual Purity*

1. **Sexual intimacy in marriage is God's design. Creation as male and female was his plan.**

**Genesis 1:27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

**Genesis 2:24–25** For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (NASB)

2. **The husband is responsible to satisfy his wife sexually, and the wife to satisfy her husband.**

**1 Corinthians 7:3–4** The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

3. **Sexual intimacy needs to be constant in marriage, unless both agree to postpone it for a short time for prayer. Otherwise temptation may creep in.**

**1 Corinthians 7:5** Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

#### 4. Sexual relations need to be between a married couple only.

**Proverbs 5:15–17** Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. (NIV)

**Hebrews 13:4** Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

#### 5. Sexual activity is beautiful and is to be delighted in by a couple.

**Proverbs 5:18–19** May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer—may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her love. (NIV)

**Genesis 26:8** When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelek king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. (NIV)

#### 6. While intimacy should be a constant in marriage, there will be times when illness or personal crisis makes having sex inadvisable. Sex is never to be demanded.

**1 Corinthians 13:4–7** Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

**Philippians 2:3–4** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. (NASB)

### Biblical Narrative

- Song of Solomon



## Practical Steps

- Read Song of Solomon out loud in a modern translation, each spouse reading a part. What is God's plan for intimacy?
- You and your spouse need to communicate freely what is pleasing to you. Enjoy what is mutually pleasurable.
- Plan times away from home as a couple, even if it is a weekend retreat.
- For physical problems or pain, see a physician.
- Sexual intimacy is a barometer within marriage. Be sure to practice good communication, forgiveness, resolving of conflicts, and issues regarding children so as not to disrupt sexual intimacy.
- Understand that intimacy is God's design, and he gives no timetable for its ending.

## Resources

- *A Biblical Guide to Love, Sex, and Marriage*. Derek and Rosemary Thomas. Evangelical Press.
- *His Needs—Her Needs: Building an Affair Proof Marriage*. Willard Harley. Revell.
- *Intended for Pleasure*. Ed Wheat. Revell.
- *Intimate Issues*. Linda Dillow. WaterBrook.

# Sexual Purity

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*See also Lust/Fantasizing, Sex Life, Temptation*

## 1. Sexual immorality is sin and must be avoided.

**Romans 13:14** Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires. (NLT)

**James 1:21** Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. (NIV)

**1 Thessalonians 4:3–6** It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. (NIV)

**Galatians 5:19–21** Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (NASB)

## 2. Our bodies belong to God and need to be pure.

**1 Corinthians 6:19–20** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (NASB)

### 3. Do not even get close to sexual impurity.

**Ephesians 5:3** But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. (NIV)

**Proverbs 6:27** Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? (NKJV)

### 4. Be pure and holy, as God commands.

**1 Peter 1:15–16** But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." (NKJV)

**1 Thessalonians 4:7** For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. (NIV)

**James 1:27** Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (NASB)

### 5. Do not submit to pressure sexually or in any other area.

**Isaiah 51:7** Listen to me, you who know right from wrong, you who cherish my law in your hearts. Do not be afraid of people's scorn, nor fear their insults. (NLT)

**James 4:17** Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it. (NLT)

### 6. Choose to stay pure by pursuing what is pure.

**2 Timothy 2:22** Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts. (NLT)

**Colossians 3:5–10** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its

practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

**Romans 8:5–6** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

## 7. Guard purity of the mind as well as the body.

**Job 31:1** I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman. (NIV)

**Matthew 5:28** But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

## 8. Protecting purity in marriage begins long before marriage.

**Psalms 119:9–11** How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. (NIV)

**Hebrews 13:4** Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. (NIV)

## 9. Determine to be obedient with God's help.

**Isaiah 50:7** Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore, I have set my face like a stone, determined to do his will. And I know that I will not be put to shame. (NLT)

**Ephesians 6:10–13** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (NIV)

## Biblical Narrative

- Joseph, Genesis 39

## Practical Steps

- Instead of spending time alone with the opposite sex, build relationships in group situations with family and friends.
- The time to set boundaries is long before a passionate kiss. Think through and write down your guidelines for staying pure.
- Make it your focus and ultimate goal to please and obey God. Avoid the person who pressures you to compromise. See 2 Corinthians 5:9.
- When in a relationship, have someone keep you accountable who asks tough questions.
- Write a letter to your future spouse, sharing your commitment to be pure.
- Lay a ribbon down the center of a table, dividing it in half. On top of the ribbon place a card that says, “With God’s help, this line I will not cross until marriage.” Label the left side “before marriage,” the right side “after marriage.” On 3 x 5 cards, write out thirty or more actions (holding hands, touching over clothes, tickling, kissing, etc.). Place the cards on each side of the line for a visual picture according to biblical standards.

## Resources

- *Gift-Wrapped by God: Secret Answers to the Question “Why Wait?”* Linda Dillow. WaterBrook.
- *Living Together: A Guide to Counseling Unmarried Couples.* Jeff VanGoethem. Kregel.
- *Not Even a Hint: Guarding Your Heart.* Shannon and Joshua Harris. Multnomah.
- *Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God.* C. J. Mahaney. Crossway.

# Single Mother

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*See also* Anxiety/Worry, Decision Making/Will of God, Loneliness, Mothering, Self-worth

1. As a single mother who belongs to Jesus, you are never truly alone.

**Deuteronomy 31:8** It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.

**Isaiah 43:1–2** But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.”

**Hebrews 13:5–6** For he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

2. God has a special plan for you because you are his child.

**Jeremiah 29:11–12** “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen.” (NLT)

**Romans 8:28–29** And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son. (NLT)

**3. Whatever the reason for being a single parent, you and your child are special in the eyes of God.**

**Jeremiah 31:3** The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.” (NASB)

**Psalms 127:3** Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. (NASB)

**Luke 18:15–16** And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. But Jesus called for them, saying, “Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” (NASB)

**4. It is God’s plan for believers to assist other believers with vital needs. Be willing to seek out others for the assistance you need.**

**Romans 12:9–13** Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. (NIV)

**1 Corinthians 12:25–26** This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. (NLT)

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

**Colossians 3:12–14**

**5. God’s peace is possible in every situation.**

**2 Thessalonians 3:16** Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all! (NASB)

**6. God blessed Hagar and her son, Ishmael, in their great need.**

**Genesis 21:15–20** And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. Then she went and

sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, “Let me not see the death of the boy.” So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, “What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation.” Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. (NKJV)

## Biblical Narrative

- Woman and son with Elijah, 1 Kings 17:7–24

## Practical Steps

- For help with finances, see a financial counselor, perhaps a leader in your church.
- Find others to provide your children with a male, fatherly influence. This will reduce the pressure to fill both roles.
- Since it is difficult to avoid second-guessing your decisions, find a trusted mentor to provide guidance and accountability.
- To avoid quick decision making in future relationships, make sure you understand your feelings of rejection, replacement, loneliness, insecurity, or abandonment and have handled them biblically.

## Resources

- *God Loves Single Moms*. Teresa Whitehurst. Revell.
- “Help for Single Moms” in *Women Counseling Women*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.
- *Single Parents*. Robert D. Jones. CCEF.



# Singleness

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*See also Anxiety/Worry, Loneliness, Sexual Purity*

## 1. Singleness is the gift of living undivided before the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 7:25–35** Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this. What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away. I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord. (NIV)

**Matthew 19:11–12** Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have

been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.” (NIV)

## 2. Contentment is possible in singleness.

### GOD’S PERSONAL INTEREST

**Isaiah 41:9–10** I have called you back from the ends of the earth, saying, “You are my servant.” For I have chosen you and will not throw you away. Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand. (NLT)

**Jeremiah 29:11** “For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.” (NASB)

### GOD’S COMMITMENT

**Isaiah 54:5** For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, who is called the God of all the earth. (NASB)

**Isaiah 40:31** Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary. (NASB)

**Haggai 2:4** “But now be strong, Zerubbabel,” declares the LORD. “Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,” declares the LORD, “and work. For I am with you,” declares the LORD Almighty. (NIV)

**Romans 8:38–39** For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NASB)

### CONTENTMENT WITH WHO WE ARE

**Psalms 139:13–14** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am

fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

**1 Peter 3:3–4** Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.

**Philippians 4:12–13** I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

### 3. God will meet all our needs, including our need for intimacy.

**Psalms 17:15** As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake. (NASB)

**Psalms 46:10–11** Cease striving and know that I am GOD; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. (NASB)

**Psalms 103:2–5** Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; Who satisfies your years with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle. (NASB)

**Psalms 4:8** In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety. (NASB)

**2 Corinthians 12:9** And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (NASB)

**Psalms 62:5–8** My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken. On God my salvation and my glory rest; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. (NASB)

**Psalm 84:11** For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. (NASB)

**Jeremiah 31:3** The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.” (NASB)

## Biblical Narratives

- Paul, 1 Corinthians 7
- Philip’s daughters, Acts 21:8–9

## Practical Steps

- List opportunities you have as a single person. Thank God for them and serve God without distraction.
- Evaluate your involvement in your local church and community (Bible studies, mission trips, care giving, etc.). Are you using your singleness to its fullest potential?
- Study God’s sovereignty and love.
- Develop your leadership potential.

## Resources

- *Fine China Is for Single Women Too*. Carolyn Leutwiler. P&R.
- *Single and Lonely* (booklet). Jayne V. Clark. CCEF.
- *Singleness Redefined*. Carolyn Leutwiler. P&R.
- *They Were Single Too: 8 Biblical Role Models*. David Hoffeditz. Kregel.

# Sleep Struggles

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*See also Anxiety/Worry, Fear, Health/Illness, Trust*

## 1. We are never alone when we sleep.

**Deuteronomy 31:8** The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. (NASB)

**Psalms 4:8** In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety. (NASB)

**Psalms 121:3–8** He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. (NIV)

## 2. Even though we face a variety of struggles, we can sleep, resting in God's sovereignty.

**Psalms 3:1–6** O LORD, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me. Many are saying of my soul, "There is no deliverance for him in God." But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the One who lifts my head. I was crying to the LORD with my voice, and He answered me from His holy mountain. I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustains me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me round about. (NASB)

**Proverbs 19:23** The fear of the LORD leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil. (NASB)

**Psalms 74:16** Yours is the day, yours also the night; you have established the heavenly lights and the sun.

**Matthew 6:33–34** But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (NASB)

### 3. Be open to God's teaching and instruction even at night.

**Psalms 16:7–9** I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.

**Isaiah 26:9** My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you. When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness. (NIV)

### 4. When sleep does not come, spend time in prayer and thanksgiving.

**Psalms 42:8** By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.

### 5. When sleep evades, read or quote Scripture.

**Psalms 1:2** But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

### 6. When sleep evades, sing or quote hymns.

**Psalms 63:6–8** I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night. Because you are my helper, I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings. I cling to you; your strong right hand holds me securely. (NLT)

**Psalms 92:1–2** It is good to give thanks to the LORD and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your loving-kindness in the morning and Your faithfulness by night. (NASB)

**Psalms 77:6** I remembered my songs in the night. My heart meditated and my spirit asked. (NIV)

## Practical Steps

- Evaluate physical activity and caffeine, alcohol, and sugar use in the hours before sleep.
- Seek a physician's evaluation to make sure that medications or supplements are not keeping you awake.
- When you can't sleep, review memorized Scripture.
- Be sure that anger and conflicts have been resolved.
- Remember that the Holy Spirit prays for us (Rom. 8:26). Give him your stresses and worries as you go to bed. Ask him to pray for you through the night.

## Resources

- *A Call to Scripture Memory* (booklet). Susan Heck. Focus.
- *Comforts from the Cross*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Crossway.
- *The Knowledge of the Holy*. A. W. Tozer. Harper Collins.

# Social Networking

*See also* Entertainment, Flirting, Gossip, Organization/Time Management, Sexual Purity

1. **Maintain biblical standards; walk in God's way, his path. Don't get caught up in fads, time wasters, or questionable sites.**

**Jeremiah 6:16** Thus says the LORD: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

**Ephesians 4:22–24** Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

**Ephesians 4:1** I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

**1 John 2:15–16** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

**James 1:27**

2. **Make good use of your time. Set time limits and stick to them.**

**Psalms 90:12** So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. (NKJV)

**Ephesians 5:15–17** Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.



### 3. Images are imprinted on your mind in a flash, but do not disappear as easily. Be protected and pure.

**Matthew 6:22–23** The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! (NIV)

**Psalms 101:3–4** I will not look with approval on anything that is vile. I hate what faithless people do; I will have no part in it. The perverse of heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with what is evil. (NIV)

**Psalms 119:37** Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.

### 4. Gossiping is always wrong.

**Proverbs 20:19** He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with a gossip.

**1 Timothy 5:13** At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. (NASB)

**Ephesians 4:31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

### 5. Any boasting must be in God, not self.

**Jeremiah 9:23–24** Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

**Psalms 20:7** Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God. (NASB)

**Galatians 6:14** But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

## Practical Steps

- For one week, write down daily how much time you spend on the computer. Total these hours and consider what you have accomplished with this time.
- If you are married, guard against building relationships with the opposite sex. If you are single, guard against building relationships with married men. The danger is emotional adultery and destruction of marriages.
- How much time are you spending “talking” with people you have never met? Is too much time spent keeping you from meaningful contact with family and friends?
- Do not build an internet relationship or be friends with someone you would not associate with in real life.

## Resources

- *Changing Your Thought Patterns* (booklet). George Sanchez. NavPress.
- *Hope and Help for Video Game, TV, and Internet “Addiction”* (booklet). Mark Shaw. Focus.

# Spiritual Disciplines

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*See also Purpose for Living, Spiritual Gifts*

## 1. Seeking God is at the heart of closeness to God.

**Psalms 42:1–2** As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? (NIV)

**Psalms 63:1** O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. (NASB)

**Jeremiah 29:13** You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. (NASB)

**Proverbs 2:3–6** Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. (NKJV)

**Matthew 6:33** But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (NKJV)

## 2. Spending time daily in God's Word is vital.

**Deuteronomy 32:47** They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess. (NIV)

**Joshua 1:8** This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (NKJV)

**2 Timothy 3:16–17** All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (NKJV)

**Isaiah 40:8** The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever. (NKJV)

### 3. Studying God's Word gives guidance.

**Isaiah 55:11** So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (NKJV)

**Psalms 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (NKJV)

**Psalms 1:2–3** But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. (NKJV)

**Psalms 19:9–11** The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward. (NKJV)

**Ezra 7:10**

### 4. Spend time each day in prayer.

**Psalms 5:3** Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly. (NLT)

#### JESUS'S EXAMPLE

**Mark 1:35** Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. (NLT)

### BATTLE PLAN AGAINST THE ENEMY

**Ephesians 6:18** With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. (NASB)

**Daniel 6:10** Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. (NIV)

**Psalms 37:31**

### 5. Include music, praise, and thanksgiving.

**Colossians 3:16** Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. (NLT)

### 6. Include meditation, solitude, fasting.

**Psalms 63:6** When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. (NKJV)

**Psalms 119:15** I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. (NKJV)

**Psalms 119:97** Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. (NKJV)

**Habakkuk 2:1** I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected. (NKJV) (The prophet in solitude, waiting for God's answer)

**Habakkuk 2:20** But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him. (NKJV)

**Nehemiah 1:4** So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. (NKJV)

### Biblical Narratives

- Daniel, Daniel 6
- Isaac, Genesis 24:63

- David, Psalms 143; 145
- Fasting—Jesus, Matthew 4:2; Early church, Acts 13:2–3; 14:23

## Practical Steps

- Set aside time each day to communicate with God through prayer and his Word.
- Plan weekly times for solitude and biblical meditation.
- If your times with God seem mechanical or weak, make creative changes in your discipline. Always be centered in God's Word. Memorize. Meditate. Journal.

## Resources

- *Disciplines of a Godly Woman*. Barbara Houghes. Crossway.
- *God as He Longs for You to See Him*. Chip Ingram. Baker.
- *Scripture by Heart*. Joshua Kang. InterVarsity.
- *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Donald Whitney. NavPress.
- *A Woman's Call to Prayer*. Elizabeth George. Harvest House.

# Spiritual Gifts

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## 1. Each believer has at least one spiritual gift.

**1 Peter 4:10–11** God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! (NLT)

**1 Corinthians 7:7** Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

## 2. Understanding your spiritual gift helps you to know the best way to serve in the body of Christ.

**Romans 12:6–8** Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (NASB)

**1 Corinthians 12:4–11** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds

of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

**Ephesians 4:7–8, 11–12** But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” . . . And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

### 3. Our priority in the use of spiritual gifts must be love for others.

**1 Corinthians 13:1–3** If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

**1 Thessalonians 4:9–10** Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more.

**Philippians 1:9–11** And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

### 4. The absence of a specific spiritual gift in our lives does not mean that we can ignore biblical commands for ministry (e.g., we must share our faith).

**Acts 1:8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

**Mark 16:15** And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”

**Isaiah 44:8; Matthew 28:19**



## Practical Steps

- Talk with family members and Christian friends who know you well to determine the areas in which you excel.
- Study the list of gifts in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12.
- Take a spiritual gifts inventory test that will identify your strengths.
- Begin serving in various areas of ministry in which you have an interest.
- Be willing to fail at and try a different ministry until you find the one that fits you best.

## Resource

- “The Spirit Gives Gifts” in *The Holy Spirit*. Charles Ryrie. Moody.

# Spiritual Warfare

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*See also Temptation*

## 1. Satan uses demons in an attempt to defeat the Christian.

**Ephesians 6:11–12** Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. (NLT)

## 2. God forbids any dealing with the occult.

**Deuteronomy 18:10–12** There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. (NASB)

**Galatians 5:19–21** The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (NIV)

## 3. Satan is actively seeking our destruction.

**2 Corinthians 11:3** But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. (NASB)

**2 Corinthians 11:14** No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. (NASB)

#### 4. Attempting to contact those who have died is wrong.

**Isaiah 8:19** When they say to you, “Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,” should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? (NASB)

**Leviticus 19:31** Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God. (NASB)

#### 5. Our defense against Satan.

##### BE ON GUARD

**1 Peter 5:8** Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (NASB)

##### TAKE A STAND

**James 4:7–8** Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. (NASB)

##### DO NOT SPEAK CONTEMPTUOUSLY OF SATAN

**Jude 8–9** Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” (NASB)

#### 6. God offers power against evil.

**Psalms 25:1–2** To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in You I trust, do not let me be ashamed; do not let my enemies exult over me. (NASB)

**Ephesians 6:10–18** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you

may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

**1 John 4:4** Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

## Biblical Narratives

- Peter, Luke 22:31–34
- Events at Ephesus, Acts 19:13–20

## Practical Steps

- Remove occultic items from your home (Ouija boards, CDs, books, statues, art, DVDs).
- Replace reading the horoscope with reading James 4:1–10.
- Study Ephesians 6:10–18. Apply the spiritual armor daily.
- Reflect daily on the price Jesus paid to redeem you with his blood. The gospel covers it all!

## Resources

- *The Battle Is the Lord's*. Tony Evans. Moody.
- *Cults and the Occult*. Edmond Gruss. P&R.
- *The Invisible War*. Chip Ingram. Baker.
- *The Ouija Board: A Doorway to the Occult*. Edmond Gruss. P&R.
- *Unmasking Satan*. Richard Mayhue. Kregel.

# Substance Abuse

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*See also* Decision Making/Will of God, Purpose for Living, Temptation

- 1. Alcohol and drugs can damage our bodies. We must remember that God created our bodies, and they belong to him.**

**1 Corinthians 6:19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (NASB)

- 2. Develop a relationship with God, not substances! Have a relationship with your creator.**

**Ephesians 5:18** Do not get drunk with wine, which will only ruin you; instead, be filled with the Spirit. (GNT)

- 3. Drunken behavior is sinful and separates us from God.**

**Galatians 5:19–21** What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies and they fight; they become jealous, angry, and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; they are envious, get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these. I warn you now as I have before: those who do these things will not possess the Kingdom of God. (GNT)

**1 Corinthians 6:9–10** Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. (NLT)

#### 4. Being drunk is not an option for a child of God.

**Romans 13:13–14** Let us conduct ourselves properly, as people who live in the light of day—no orgies or drunkenness, no immorality or indecency, no fighting or jealousy. But take up the weapons of the Lord Jesus Christ, and stop paying attention to your sinful nature and satisfying its desires. (GNT)

**1 Peter 4:1–3** Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

**Isaiah 5:11–12, 22** Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them! They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts, but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD, or see the work of his hands. . . . Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink.

**Habakkuk 2:15–16** Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, who mix in your venom even to make them drunk so as to look on their nakedness! You will be filled with disgrace rather than honor. Now you yourself drink and expose your own nakedness. The cup in the LORD's right hand will come around to you, and utter disgrace will come upon your glory. (NASB)

#### 5. There is escape available from the pattern of substance abuse. These habits can be changed.

**2 Corinthians 5:17–18** This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. (NLT)

**1 Corinthians 6:11** And such [see vv. 9–10] were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

**Colossians 1:13–14** He rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us safe into the kingdom of his dear Son, by whom we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. (GNT)

## 6. Drunkenness disqualifies you from ministry/leadership.

**1 Timothy 3:2–3** A church leader must be without fault; he must have only one wife, be sober, self-controlled, and orderly; he must welcome strangers in his home; he must be able to teach; he must not be a drunkard or a violent man, but gentle and peaceful; he must not love money. (GNT)

**Titus 1:7** For since a church leader is in charge of God’s work, he should be without fault. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered, or a drunkard or violent or greedy for money. (GNT)

## 7. The results of drunkenness are not attractive. (Drug use applies as well.)

**Genesis 9:21**—exposure, nakedness

**Job 12:25**—staggering

**Psalms 107:27**—reeling, staggering, at wits’ end

**Proverbs 23:21**—poverty, drowsiness

**Isaiah 19:14**—staggering in vomit

**Isaiah 24:20**—reeling, swaying, and falling

**Jeremiah 25:27**—vomiting

**Lamentations 4:21**—stripped naked

**Ezekiel 23:33**—ruin, desolation

**Romans 13:13**—indecent behavior

**Ephesians 5:18**—debauchery

## Biblical Narrative

- Noah, Genesis 9:20–24



## Practical Steps

- See a physician.
- Ask family members how your usage has affected them.
- Write down what triggers your choices.
- Ask yourself why you have a relationship with this substance. Why is it so important to you?
- Read Ephesians 5:18. What or who will you allow to control you?
- Relationships may need to change. End negative relationships; replace with the positive. See Ephesians 4.
- Establish a new support network.
- Stay away from places of temptation.
- Read Psalm 107 daily—the goodness of God surpasses all.

## Resources

- *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*. Ed Welch. P&R.
- *Breaking the Addictive Cycle* (booklet). David Powlison. New Growth.
- *Cross Talking: A Devotional for Transforming Addicts*. Mark Shaw. Focus.
- *Divine Intervention: Hope and Help for Families of Addicts*. Mark Shaw. Focus.

# Suffering/Trials

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*See also Anxiety/Worry, Disappointment/Broken Heart, Hope, Purpose for Living, Trust*

## 1. Trials are to be expected and remind us of the suffering Christ endured.

**1 Peter 4:12–13** Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world. (NLT)

**John 16:33** I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

**Job 5:7** People are born for trouble as readily as sparks fly up from a fire. (NLT)

**2 Timothy 2:3** Take your part in suffering, as a loyal soldier of Christ Jesus. (GNT)

## 2. A purpose of trials is to strengthen our faith.

**1 Peter 1:6–7** In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (NIV)

**James 1:2–5** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives

to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (NASB)

**Job 23:8–10** Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I do not perceive him; on the left hand when he is working, I do not behold him; he turns to the right hand, but I do not see him. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

### 3. God is sovereign in trials and will see us safely through them.

**Jeremiah 10:23** LORD, I know that none of us are in charge of our own destiny; none of us have control over our own life. (GNT)

**Psalms 56:8** You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. (NLT)

**Isaiah 43:1–2** But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel, “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you.” (NASB)

**2 Thessalonians 3:16** Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all! (NASB)

**2 Timothy 4:17–18** But the Lord stayed with me and gave me strength, so that I was able to proclaim the full message for all the Gentiles to hear; and I was rescued from being sentenced to death. And the Lord will rescue me from all evil and take me safely into his heavenly Kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever! Amen. (GNT)

**Psalms 23, John 14:27**

### 4. God’s comfort in our trials helps us to encourage others in their trials.

**2 Corinthians 1:3–5** All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort

others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. (NLT)

## 5. God will reward those who endure trials.

**James 1:12** Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

**2 Corinthians 4:16–18** For this reason we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day after day. And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble. For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever. (GNT)

## Biblical Narratives

- Hagar, Genesis 16, 21
- Hannah, 1 Samuel 1
- David, 1 Samuel 19ff.
- Hebrew midwives, Exodus 1:15–21

## Practical Steps

- Spend time in the book of Psalms to see how the authors themselves experienced great trials (13; 34; 46; 55; 73; 91; 121; 143; 145).
- Read 1 Peter 4:12–13. How does sharing in Christ's suffering apply to your current situation?
- Keep a daily prayer journal of your struggles.
- Look for ways your experience of suffering can encourage others.

- Write down Scripture passages about God's care on index cards. Place them strategically around your home.
- Memorize James 1:2–5.
- Record joys God has given you as reminders of his love and presence.
- Pray for others who are suffering.

## Resources

- *How to Live Right When Your Life Goes Wrong*. Leslie Vernick. WaterBrook.
- *A Path through Suffering*. Elisabeth Elliot. Regal.
- *A Shelter in the Time of Storm*. Paul Tripp. Crossway.
- *When I Lay My Isaac Down*. Carol Kent. NavPress.
- *When Life and Beliefs Collide*. Carolyn James. Zondervan.

# Suicide

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*See also* Depression, Fear, Hope, Loneliness, Purpose for Living

1. We belong to God; we are his. Ending the life that belongs to him is not an option.

**Psalm 139:13–16** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.

**1 Corinthians 6:19–20** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

2. God showed how much he loves us by sending his Son to die for us.

**Romans 5:8** But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**Ephesians 2:4–5** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.

**John 3:16; 1 Peter 2:9**

3. **Taking our life because of guilt over sin is unacceptable. There is no sin too great for God to forgive. Jesus took the punishment for all sin.**

**Micah 7:18–19** Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. (NASB)

**Isaiah 43:25** I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins. (NASB)

**1 Corinthians 6:9–11** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (NASB)

**Psalms 145:8; 1 John 1:9; Isaiah 53**

4. **God's presence is guaranteed, even in the darkest of times. He never leaves us.**

**Psalms 139:7–12** Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

**Deuteronomy 31:8** The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. (NASB)

**Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. (NASB)

**5. There is no problem too great for God to handle.**

**Jeremiah 32:17** Ah, LORD GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

**Isaiah 43:18–19** Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

**6. Our future is secure with God on our side.**

**Jeremiah 29:11–13** For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

**7. Becoming strong in the Word of God is vital for relief from this temptation.**

**Joshua 1:8** This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (NASB)

**Deuteronomy 32:46–47** Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess. (NIV)

**Psalms 119:105; Hebrews 4:12**

**8. If suicide does occur, God's grace extends even to that sin. A Christian who takes her own life will still be secure in the love of God.**

**John 10:27–29** My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father



has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. (NLT)

**Romans 8:38–39** And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NLT)

## Practical Steps

- Research Scripture on God's sovereignty and faithfulness. Suicidal thoughts ultimately come because of a lack of hope. Focus on your hope in God.
- Read Psalm 4. Memorize verse 11.
- Develop a contract with a counselor that you will not take action before speaking with him or her.
- Keep a journal. What is God teaching you as you walk through this difficult time of life?
- For the counselor: Pay attention to life-changing situations. Take every threat or call for help seriously. Listen carefully and pray.

## Resources

- *Grieving a Suicide*. Albert Hsu. InterVarsity.
- *Grieving a Suicide* (booklet). David Powlison. CCEF.
- *I Just Want to Die: Replacing Suicidal Thoughts with Hope* (booklet). David Powlison. CCEF.
- *Suicide: Understanding and Intervening* (booklet). Jeffrey Black. P&R.

# Temptation

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*See also Lust/Fantasizing, Spiritual Warfare, Thought Life*

## 1. Temptation comes from our sinful nature/flesh.

**James 1:14** But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. (NKJV)

**Romans 7:18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

## 2. Temptation in itself is not sin; giving in to the temptation is sin.

**1 Corinthians 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

## 3. Christ understands temptation, yet he never sinned.

**Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

## 4. Ask for God's help to avoid temptation.

**Luke 11:4** And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (NKJV)

**Hebrews 4:16** Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (NKJV)

**5. Courage is needed, with God's help, to stand up against temptation.**

**Proverbs 4:14–15** Don't do as the wicked do, and don't follow the path of evildoers. Don't even think about it; don't go that way. Turn away and keep moving. (NLT)

**James 1:12** God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (NLT)

**Hebrews 12:1** Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. (NIV)

**Ephesians 6:10–13** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

**1 John 4:4** You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. (NASB)

**6. Lack of sexual intimacy in a marriage can cause sexual temptation.**

**1 Corinthians 7:5** Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (NLT)

**7. We must use caution in helping others flee temptation. We do not want to be caught ourselves.**

**Galatians 6:1** Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. (NLT)

**Psalms 141:9–10** Keep me safe from the traps set by evildoers, from the snares they have laid for me. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by in safety. (NIV)

## Biblical Narratives

- Joseph, Genesis 39
- Jesus, Matthew 4:1–11
- Disciples in Gethsemane, Luke 22:39–46

## Practical Steps

- Read 1 John 2:15–17. List the three areas of temptation. In which do yours lie?
- Find someone who will keep you accountable.
- Remove temptations from your home, office, car, computer, and cell phone. Evaluate the places you go and commit to staying away from those places that lead to temptation.
- Commit to “no excuse living.” Identify times of day, emotional states, and people most often involved in your temptation. Make necessary changes.
- Memorize 2 Corinthians 10:5. Repeat it several times a day.
- Spend time reading Romans 6–8 out loud.

## Resources

- *Christ and Your Problems* (booklet). Jay Adams. P&R.
- *How to Live Right When Your Life Goes Wrong*. Leslie Vernick. WaterBrook.
- *Temptation: Fighting the Urge* (booklet). Timothy Lane. CCEF.

# Thought Life

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*See also Anxiety/Worry, Flirting, Lust/Fantasizing, Materialism, Past Memories*

## 1. Our thought life reflects who we are.

**Proverbs 23:7** For as he thinks within himself, so he is. (NASB)

**Mark 7:20–23** And He said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” (NKJV)

## 2. We must choose to think biblically.

**Philippians 4:8** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

## 3. No place or thought is hidden from God.

**Jeremiah 23:23–24** “Am I a God who is near,” declares the LORD, “and not a God far off? Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?” declares the LORD. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the LORD. (NASB)

**Psalms 139:2** You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. (NIV)

## 4. We need to change our thinking when our thoughts do not match God’s.

**Isaiah 55:8–9** “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are

higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (NKJV)

**2 Corinthians 10:4–5** For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (NKJV)

**Ephesians 4:22–24** Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. (NLT)

**1 Corinthians 2:16**

**5. We should not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think.**

**Romans 12:3** Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. (NLT)

**Galatians 6:3** For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

**1 Corinthians 10:12**

**6. Our lives must reflect sacrificial thinking.**

**Philippians 2:5–7** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. (NASB)

**7. Mature thinking is an intellectual and spiritual goal.**

**1 Corinthians 13:11** When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. (NLT)

**1 Corinthians 14:20** Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

**Proverbs 22:17**

## 8. We must remove worldly thinking.

**Romans 12:2** Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (NIV)

**1 Corinthians 3:18–19** Stop deceiving yourselves. If you think you are wise by this world's standards, you need to become a fool to be truly wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As the Scriptures say, "He traps the wise in the snare of their own cleverness." (NLT)

## 9. Lustful thinking is sinful and to be avoided.

**Matthew 5:28** But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (NASB)

**1 Thessalonians 4:3–5** For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God. (NASB)

## Practical Steps

- Do a concordance study of the hundreds of uses of "mind," "thinking," and "thoughts" to understand better how God wants us to think.
- Consider your thought patterns, life situations, or physical locations that trigger wrong thinking. Work on changing these to improve your thought life.
- Replace false thinking with truth from God's Word.

## Resources

- *Changing Your Thought Patterns* (booklet). George Sanchez. NavPress.

- *How People Change*. Timothy Lane. New Growth.
- *Lies Women Believe*. Nancy DeMoss. Moody.
- *Loving God with All Your Mind*. Elizabeth George. Harvest House.
- *Right Thinking in a World Gone Wrong*. John MacArthur. Harvest House.
- *Silent Seduction of Self-Talk*. Shelly Beach. Moody.



# Training Children

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*See also* Decision Making/Will of God, Mothering, Single Mother

## Need for Positive Training

1. It is the parents' responsibility to teach their children God's standards from early childhood. Others might be involved—grandparents, family members, nannies, or teachers—but the primary responsibility belongs to the parents.

**Proverbs 1:8** Hear, my son, your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. (NASB)

**Psalms 58:3** Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies. (NIV)

**2 Timothy 3:15** And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (NASB)

**Deuteronomy 11:19** You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. (NASB)

**Psalms 34:11** Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. (NASB)

**Isaiah 54:13** All your sons will be taught of the LORD; and the well-being of your sons will be great. (NASB)

2. God's Word is the basis for training children.

**Psalms 119:9–11** How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. (NKJV)

**Psalm 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (NKJV)

**Psalm 1:1–3** Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. (NKJV)

### 3. Parents need to spend time training children.

**Proverbs 22:6** Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it. (NASB)

**Deuteronomy 6:6–7** These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. (NASB)

**Psalm 78:4** We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD, about his power and his mighty wonders. (NLT)

## Need for Corrective Training

### 1. As parents are to be obedient to God, so children should be obedient to parents.

**1 Peter 1:13–16** Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

**Colossians 3:20** Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

**Ephesians 6:1**

**2. God's discipline is based on love; parents should also discipline out of love.**

**Hebrews 12:5–7** And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

**Proverbs 13:24** He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently. (NASB)

**Psalms 103:13** Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. (NASB)

**3. Discipline helps bring children to maturity.**

**Proverbs 29:15** To discipline a child produces wisdom, but a mother is disgraced by an undisciplined child. (NLT)

**Proverbs 15:31–32** He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise. He who neglects discipline despises himself. (NASB)

**Proverbs 19:18**

**4. Parents are not to push their children to frustration.**

**Ephesians 6:4** Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (NIV)

**Colossians 3:21**

## **Biblical Narratives**

- David did not correct, 1 Kings 1:5–6
- Eli's failure, 1 Samuel 2

## Practical Steps

- Be intentional. Take the time to know each of your children individually. Plan time alone with each of them on a daily/weekly basis.
- Use caution. Do not train or discipline according to fads or trends. Evaluate suggestions and new ideas using Scripture.
- Teach children diligently in every aspect of life. Read quality Christian resources about areas in which you need help (learning about God's design for sex, manners, coping with teens, etc.).
- Fill your child's life with gentleness and softness. Be lavish with hugs, kisses, words of love, and affirmation.
- View situations from a child's perspective. Why are they fearful, embarrassed, insecure, angry, reclusive, etc.? Take time to listen and understand. Apologize when you make a mistake. Guide with God's truth.

## Resources

- *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens*. Paul Tripp. P&R.
- *Give them Grace*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Crossway.
- *Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling Youth*. Pat and Keith Miller. Baker.
- *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. Tedd Tripp. Shepherd.
- *Training Hearts Teaching Minds*. Starr Meade. P&R.

# Trust

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*See also Anxiety/Worry, Fear, Hope, Past Memories*

## 1. Trust is to be placed ultimately in God alone.

**Psalms 91:1–2** He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.” (NKJV). (The writer here uses four different names for God.)

**Jeremiah 17:5, 7–8** This is what the LORD says: “Cursed are those who put their trust in mere humans, who rely on human strength and turn their hearts away from the LORD. . . . But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.” (NLT)

**Psalms 20:7** Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

**John 14:1** Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. (NIV)

## 2. We are to trust in God at all times.

**Psalms 26:1** Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.

**Isaiah 26:4** Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.

**Psalms 33:4–5** For the word of the LORD holds true, and we can trust everything he does. He loves whatever is just and good; the unfailing love of the LORD fills the earth. (NLT)

**Psalms 40:4** Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie!

### 3. We are not to trust ourselves.

**Psalms 49:12–13** People, despite their wealth, do not endure; they are like the beasts that perish. This is the fate of those who trust in themselves, and of their followers, who approve their sayings. (NIV)

**Proverbs 3:5–6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

**Proverbs 28:26; Jeremiah 9:23–24**

### 4. When we are afraid, we are to trust.

**Psalms 56:3–4, 11** When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? . . . In God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?

**Isaiah 44:8**

### 5. Love for God and others includes trust.

**1 Corinthians 13:6–7** Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (NIV)

### 6. Results of trusting God.

#### PROTECTION

**Psalms 5:11** But let all who take refuge in You be glad, let them ever sing for joy; and may You shelter them, that those who love Your name may exult in You. (NASB)

**Proverbs 30:5** Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. (NASB)

**Psalms 36:7** How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. (NASB)

#### GLADNESS

**Psalms 64:10** The righteous man will be glad in the LORD and will take refuge in Him; and all the upright in heart will glory. (NASB)

## TRUST

### PEACE

**Isaiah 26:3** You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. (NKJV)

### BLESSING

**Psalms 84:12** O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You! (NKJV)

**Jeremiah 17:7** Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the Lord. (NKJV)

### CONFIDENCE

**Psalms 112:7** He will not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD. (NKJV)

## Biblical Narratives

- Abraham, Genesis 12; Romans 4:3
- David, Psalm 18

## Practical Steps

- Study the names of God in the Old Testament. What does each mean?
- Make a list of God's attributes with a definition for each.
- Write Psalm 63:8 on a card and memorize it.
- Journal your prayers to God.
- Paraphrase Proverbs 3:5–6 as it applies directly to you.

## Resources

- *The Attributes of God: A Journey into the Father's Heart.* A. W. Tozer. Christian Publications.
- *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts.* Jerry Bridges. NavPress.

# Unbelieving Spouse

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*See also Anxiety/Worry, Marriage*

- 1. Consistent living because of God's grace is required in every believer's life.**

**Titus 2:11–14** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. (NASB)

- 2. Consistent living because of God's grace is a testimony to an unbelieving husband.**

**1 Peter 3:1–6** Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. (NIV)

**1 Corinthians 7:12–17** Now, I will speak to the rest of you, though I do not have a direct command from the Lord. If a



Christian man has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to continue living with him, he must not leave her. And if a Christian woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to continue living with her, she must not leave him. For the Christian wife brings holiness to her marriage, and the Christian husband brings holiness to his marriage. Otherwise, your children would not be holy, but now they are holy. (But if the husband or wife who isn't a believer insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the Christian husband or wife is no longer bound to the other, for God has called you to live in peace.) Don't you wives realize that your husbands might be saved because of you? And don't you husbands realize that your wives might be saved because of you? Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you. This is my rule for all the churches. (NLT)

**3. It is comforting to know that what seems impossible to us is not impossible with God.**

**Jeremiah 32:17** Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

**Matthew 19:26** Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible." (NLT)

**Genesis 18:14; Job 42:2**

## **Biblical Narrative**

- Abigail, 1 Samuel 25

## **Practical Steps**

- Develop accountability with other believing women who can provide wisdom and prayer support.
- Guard against negative thinking, complaining, and bitterness.

- Do not permit church or ministry to come between you and your husband.
- Commit to no nagging, no manipulation, and no critical spirit.

## Resources

- *Beloved Unbeliever*. Jo Berry. Zondervan.
- “Counseling Women Married to Unbelievers” in *Women Helping Women*. Elyse Fitzpatrick. Harvest House.

# Widow

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*See also* Anxiety/Worry, Bitterness, Grief, Purpose for Living, Suffering/Trials, Trust

**1. As seen consistently throughout Scripture, God has a loving concern for widows.**

**Psalms 68:5** Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

**Zechariah 7:10** Do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.

**Exodus 22:22–24** You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

**James 1:27** Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (NASB)

**Deuteronomy 10:18; Jeremiah 22:3**

**2. A widow can trust God for her care.**

**Jeremiah 49:11** Leave your fatherless children; I will keep them alive. Your widows too can depend on me. (NIV)

**Isaiah 46:4** I am your God and will take care of you until you are old and your hair is gray. I made you and will care for you; I will give you help and rescue you. (GNT)

**Psalms 146:9** The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow, but He thwarts the way of the wicked. (NASB)

**Proverbs 15:25** The LORD tears down the house of the proud but maintains the widow's boundaries.

**Isaiah 54:4–5** Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; and do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced; but you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your husband is your maker, whose name is the LORD of hosts; and your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, who is called the God of all the earth. (NASB)

**2 Corinthians 12:9–10**

3. As difficult as it is, a widow must accept death, grief, and widowhood as a part of her life.

**Ecclesiastes 3:1–2, 4** There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven—a time to give birth and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted. . . . A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance. (NASB)

**Hebrews 9:27** Everyone must die once, and after that be judged by God. (GNT)

**Psalms 116:15** Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

**1 Peter 5:10** After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. (NASB)

4. Recovery comes by focusing on the certainty of resurrection when Christ returns. There is life beyond death because of Christ's resurrection.

**Job 19:25–26** For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God. (NKJV)

**1 Thessalonians 4:13–18** Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be unaware about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For 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. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself

will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words. (NIV)

**2 Corinthians 13:4** For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God directed toward you. (NASB)

**1 Corinthians 13:12** Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. (NLT)

**John 11:25–26; 14:1–3; 1 Peter 1:3**

## 5. Instructions for widows.

**1 Timothy 5:3–16; Titus 2:3–5; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 7:35**

## Biblical Narratives

- Naomi and Ruth, Book of Ruth
- Widow of Zarephath, 1 Kings 17
- Widow with two mites, Mark 12:41–44
- Widow of Nain, Luke 7:11–15
- Anna, Luke 2:36–38

## Practical Steps

- Subscribe to *Chera* magazine to gain encouragement from others experiencing grief.
- Find a trustworthy financial advisor.

- Do not quickly pursue marriage. Avoid online relationships.
- Keep a journal recording God's care for you.
- Deepen your hope of heaven with Scripture and books on heaven.
- Find other widows to minister to, giving and receiving encouragement.

## Resources

- *Alone: A Widow's Search for Joy*. Katie Wiebe. Tyndale.
- *God's Care for the Widow*. Austin Walker. DayOne.
- *The Gospel of Ruth*. Carolyn Custis James. Zondervan.
- *Undistracted Widow*. Carol Cornish. Crossway.
- *Where Do I Go from Here? From One Widow to Another*. Miriam Neff. Moody.
- *Widow for a Season*. Kristine Pappas. BMH.

## Work/Career

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*See also* Decision Making/Will of God, Materialism, Mothering, Organization/Time Management

1. **God's plan for work was established with Adam and Eve in the garden and is therefore good.**

**Genesis 2:15** The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

2. **Every believer is called to follow Jesus. Therefore, no matter what type of work we do (vocational Christian or secular), it is of great value to God.**

**Colossians 3:17** Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (NASB)

**Colossians 3:23–24** Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. (NASB)

**1 Corinthians 10:31**

3. **Business cannot be allowed to take over the primary responsibility of home. Balance is crucial.**

**Ecclesiastes 7:18** It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. Whoever fears God will avoid all extremes. (NIV)

4. **The capable woman in Proverbs 31 was involved in business; however, her home did not suffer.**

**Proverbs 31:14–18, 24** She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. She rises while it is yet night and

provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. . . . She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant.

5. If a woman has children, whether she works outside the home or not, her first and foremost responsibility needs to be caring for her home and her children.

**Proverbs 14:1** The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands. (NASB)

**Titus 2:3–5** Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. (NASB)

**1 Timothy 5:14** So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander.

## Biblical Narratives

- Lydia, Acts 16:11–15
- The wife of noble character, Proverbs 31:10–31

## Practical Steps

- Get involved in an internship or volunteer work to get a sense of how you are gifted and what you enjoy.
- Write down ways God can use you and how he can receive glory from your career.



- Evaluate what your job takes out of you physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Does your home life suffer? Do changes need to be made?
- As a mother, write a list of pros and cons for working. Are there ways to change your lifestyle to be home with your children?

## Resources

- *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*. Os Guinness. Thomas Nelson.
- *Life Management for Busy Women*. Elizabeth George. Harvest House.
- *Work Matters*. Tom Nelson. Crossway.