

Life-Giving Resources for When Your Child Breaks Your Heart

Parents with broken hearts have children who struggle with a wide variety of issues: addiction (drugs, alcohol, pornography and sex, gambling, video games and so on); mental health problems (depression, suicide attempts, PTSD, bipolar, anxiety, schizophrenia and more.); self-harm (cutting or burning, eating disorders and so on); incarcerations; and gender identity/same-sex attraction (SSA) are most common.

As their parents, we did our best. We loved them with all our hearts, gave boundaries with reasonable consequences, were involved in their lives and taught them right from wrong as we understood it. Many of us attempted to pass on our faith, spiritual values and beliefs. There's no guidebook for us to follow—other than the Bible and books that have been written by others who did well—or thought they had something of value to offer. My husband and I tried to follow the examples and teachings of those we admired and respected. We thought we did it all right ...

But our children aren't robots. They have minds and wills of their own. They're forging their own paths, through the forests and valleys they've encountered—their unique set of experiences and challenges. They get to choose, just as we did.

When they veer off the path we thought they should have taken, we convince ourselves it's somehow our fault. We must have failed. We look around and notice our friend's children appear to be doing well in life—but not ours. We're tormented with grief and shame. Beaten down by guilt and pride, we refuse the help we need. We hide and isolate. Anger robs us of peace.

Grief steals our joy. We need help—a special kind.

These are a few favorite Bible passages that soothed my aching heart:

“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isa. 41:10).

“My soul collapses on account of grief; strengthen me according to Your word” (Ps. 119:28).

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13).

These are three of the books I clung to, other than the Bible: (listed on our website resource tab)

The Hope of Homecoming by Brendan O’Rourke and DeEtte Sauer

Parents with Broken Hearts by William Coleman

When I Lay My Isaac Down by Carol Kent

And these are a few songs that breathed back life into my soul:

“Healing Oil” by Crystal Lewis

“Worn” by Tenth Avenue North

“Healing Waters” by Michelle Tumes

“Give Me Jesus” by Fernando Ortega

The Serenity Prayer became a lifeline when I didn’t know how to pray anymore:

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; And wisdom to know the difference.” –Reinhold Niebuhr

It is my prayer that something here will help you. Check out our website for more resources. {eoa}

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