

What I Learned About God After My Husband Unexpectedly Died

On New Year's Day 1997, my husband, Brent, went to bed before I did, and that was last time I saw him alive.

When I got to the bedroom a couple hours later, he wasn't breathing. I called 911 and the paramedics came, but he was never revived. He hadn't been sick or anything—he just went to bed and went to heaven at 37 years of age. (You can read more about it in my book *Why God Why: What To Do When Life Doesn't Make Sense*).

As you can imagine, that event rocked my world. I was caught completely by surprise. Our sons were 12 and 13 years old, and the three of us were plunged into a season of grief and bewilderment. As for me, I had to take over parenting teenage sons, pastoring our 4-and-a-half-year-old church and getting over the sudden death of my husband.

That was over 20 years ago now, and looking back, I can see that while it was the worst time of my life, you could say it was also the best time of my life. I know that sounds weird, but it's true. I can say this because I pressed into God like never before, and He met me in a profound and life-changing way. He was right there, a very present help, drawing near to me every time I drew near to Him. It's really the time I fell in love with Him.

I spent hours reading my Bible, running my finger down the page like a 5-year-old learning how to read. I *had to have it*. God's Word is Him talking to us, and I wanted to hear Him every minute during those first days of recovery.

Psalms 119:92-93 says it like this: "Unless Your law had been

my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. I will never forget Your precepts, for with them You have revived me.” That was me. His Word was a lifeline for me—I felt like I would have perished without it. Night after night, I just sat in a quiet place and let His Word wash over me. He gave me life through His Word—it was my delight.

I found God through His Word. I found out He is so faithful, so available for us whenever we call upon Him. Psalm 46:1 (NKJV) says, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” As I found out firsthand, that’s absolutely true! As I drew nearer and nearer to Him, He was such a present help—I could feel Him right there with me each day as I navigated my way through the days and months after my husband’s death.

James 4:8a says, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” I found out He’s always available when we draw near to Him. There’s really no one else you can say that about. Think about it: Even the people you love most can’t be available for you 24/7. There are times you might call on them and get their voicemail, or they’re simply too busy to drop everything and rush to your aid.

But not your Father God. He’s never too busy for you. You’ll never get His voicemail. *Every single time* you draw near to Him, He’ll draw near to you.

Now, I would say that I knew God before my husband died. I would even say I loved Him, yes! I had read all those verses before. I had preached the Word and been a faith girl. But there’s something about pressing in during a time of need—a time of desperation, really—that helped me find out that He really is a very present help in times of trouble. That time period after my husband died is really when I fell in love with God.

Why? Because I spent so much time with Him. {eoa}

Karen Jensen Salisbury has been in ministry over 30 years. Formerly a lead pastor, then an instructor at Rhema Bible College, she is currently an itinerant minister and author of several books. Connect with her on her website, , and on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

This article originally appeared at . It is an excerpt from my new book Closer Than You Ever Imagined: Experiencing the Deep Relationship With God You Always Wanted. Read the first part FREE and/or order your own copy.