

# When You Lose Someone You Love

Every woman must come to realize that true happiness comes not from a relationship with a man but from an intimate relationship with God.

It was 4:10 a.m., and the phone was ringing. I knew it was “the call.” A dispassionate female voice announced mechanically, “Mr. LeSourd expired shortly after 4 a.m. I’m very sorry.”

I lay in our bed, stunned at what I’d just learned. Len had been very ill for several weeks. But he wasn’t supposed to die so soon—or at all.

We’d been blessed with 10 beautiful years of marriage and an extraordinary partnership as editor-author, conference speakers and prayer ministers. We were a team, working and playing together. A friend’s remark about us never failed to rouse a chuckle: “Len taught Sandy how to work, and Sandy taught Len how to play.”

Our world started to crumble in late summer of 1995 when a routine colonoscopy revealed a large, cancerous tumor in Len’s intestines. He had ignored all the symptoms. The cancer had spread to his liver.

We prayed and believed for a healing miracle. Chemo was to no avail. The cancer continued to ravage Len’s increasingly fragile body. Through it all, Len remained unflappable. “We’re going to beat this, Sweetheart, with God’s help,” he’d say.

But we hadn’t beat it. My beloved husband who was everything to me had been called home. My body felt like a shell of smoldering embers.

Intellectually I knew the Scripture that says, "Your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is His name" (Is. 54:5, NKJV). I had read Isaiah 54 countless times, but never as a widow. It wasn't a reality to me—yet.

Unable to face being alone in our bed, I spent many months sleeping on the living room couch wearing Len's pajamas and eating an entire pint of ice cream each evening.

I gained 20 pounds. The Scriptures were as dry as dust. My prayer life was nonexistent. I couldn't concentrate on anything or anyone but Len.

Slowly I began to realize that I had come to depend on my husband to give me advice and answers instead of God. I had unknowingly put Len on the throne of my life, a place only God should occupy. After Len's death I had to rebuild my relationship with the Lord.

### **Happiness Comes From God**

Recovery from an agonizing loss is not an event. It is a journey that takes time, prayer, soaking in the Word and a sense of humor. When I was able to fill my home with praise and worship music and sincerely praise God, I made dramatic progress.

I made still more when I began setting a place for Him at my kitchen table. It was a constant reminder that I had come home to my "first love." From that point on, I turned an important corner—then another and another.

Many widows wrestle, as I did, through dark nights of grief and loneliness. But when they emerge into the light of a new day, they find that God never left them. Neither did He forsake them. God cares about what happens to us and has made provision for all our needs in the person of Jesus Christ.

This is a message for women everywhere, whether married or

single—the same message given to Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany and Jesus' own mother. Our happiness does not stem from a relationship with a man but from a relationship with the living God. He alone loves us completely and offers us everlasting union with Him.

Sarah, a dear friend of mine, discovered this truth after she became widowed. Married more than 50 years to her high school sweetheart, John, she found herself adrift in paralyzing grief. She'd lost her best friend.

But Sarah had a strong faith that carried her through the agonizing time of readjustment to life without John. She felt prompted to make a "Love Diary" of God's promises of love and encouragement.

Carefully she went through the Word and recorded each scripture that pertained to God's great love for His people or to His provision for and faithfulness to widows. Whenever she was overcome by insomnia, she propped herself up in bed and read from her "Love Diary" aloud.

As she poured out her gratitude and thanksgiving, her heart found peace and rest. Sleep's healing blessings bathed her, night after night. She is now comforting others with the comfort with which she was comforted by God (1 Cor. 1:4).

Another friend, Marie, didn't develop a close relationship with the Lord until 14 years after a bitter divorce. She had always known about God but wasn't sure how to get to know Him personally. As she sought Him, He began to reveal Himself to her through His Word.

Marie had a difficult life, but she learned to depend on God rather than on other people for strength, comfort, companionship and provision. The Lord showed Himself faithful in every way, even restoring Marie's teen-age children, who had turned away from Him, to Himself, their mother and one

another. In addition, He allowed Marie to help bring healing to the lives of other people.

### **Satisfied With God Alone**

Every woman longs to give herself completely to someone—to have a deep, soul relationship with another, to be loved thoroughly and exclusively. But God wants us to be satisfied, fulfilled and content being loved by Him alone and giving ourselves totally and unreservedly to Him. His message to us is that until we find complete satisfaction in Him, we will not be truly happy with another.

My friend Jackie found this to be true. Having been delivered from a lesbian lifestyle, she had a lot to learn about allowing God, her Maker, to be her husband.

First she had to come before God on her knees and repent for her sins and rebellion. As she tearfully poured out her heart to Him, the warmth of His love and forgiveness poured over her like warm, fragrant oil. His sovereign deliverance flooded her with a peace that had eluded her all her life.

Under the discipleship of a mature couple in her local church, Jackie learned to focus her attention on the Lord rather than on the things of this world. After two years, God brought a godly man into her life who eventually became her husband.

When Jackie met her husband, he had a serious health issue that developed into a fatal disease. After 18 months of marriage she found herself a widow, single again—but not alone. Jackie stood on Isaiah 62:4-5: “You [Judah] shall no more be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land be called Desolate any more. But you shall be called Hephzibah [My delight is in her], and your land be called Beulah [married]; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married ... and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you” (AMP).

Through all the stages of her life—single, married, widow—Jackie learned that Jesus was her all in all. As she explained to me, “It was coming to know Him as Creator, Father, Comforter, Healer, Provider and Husband that allowed me to see Jesus for who He really is.”

Mother Basilea Schlink, founder of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary in Darmstadt, Germany, has never been married. Yet she makes it clear in her book *My All for Him* that her heavenly Bridegroom has been, and still is, enough—and the only one who makes her truly happy.

“Even if I have everything I’ve always wanted in this life—but not Him,” she writes, “then I am without the most precious of all. There is only one who satisfies the deepest longing in my soul. Without Him, I drift, lonely, aimlessly in darkness, in a spiritual desert with no one to return to. He was the one who always welcomed me home.”

### **An Ever-Present Help in Trouble**

When bowed down with trouble and distress, the bridal soul soon discovers that only her heavenly Bridegroom can bring her relief. Not only is He quick to see what’s weighing her down, but also He is strong and able to carry her burden. She knows beyond all doubt: If I lose Him, there is no one else to whom I can turn, no one else who really understands me in my innermost being.

Our heavenly Bridegroom is the only one who is able to help us. He knows and understands us because He made us. His loving eye penetrates the depths of our beings, noticing even the slightest emotion. He knows what stirs our souls, what makes our hearts ache, what fills us with yearning.

He sees and understands it all, and He alone can touch us at our place of deepest need. He waits longingly for the day when His bride will be united with Him forever in heavenly glory.

For me, it's been a long journey from losing Len to embracing my Maker as my husband, and it's not over. The unflagging love and support of family and friends have helped sustain me through difficult times. But my heavenly bridegroom God is the one who has really brought me through.

He has stayed closer than a heartbeat. His awesome faithfulness, provision and unconditional love rescued me from the depression and self-pity I was tempted to indulge in. And gradually He has taught me that He alone is sufficient for me.

Through the years, I have learned to reach out confidently to His open, outstretched arms. My heart is at peace; I've come home to my Maker, my Husband—who is also our Healer, our Provider, our Shepherd, our Banner, our Righteousness and the Lover of our souls.

Read a companion devotional.

**Sandra LeSourd** *is an author and popular conference speaker and lecturer on topics of interest to Christian women, including addictions, compulsions and relational issues.*