

# Divorce Recovery

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Growing and Healing God's Way

Winston T. Smith



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**Y**ou are going through an agonizing experience. God describes marriage as two separate people becoming “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Divorce is the process of taking apart that oneness and turning it back into two. How could being torn apart be anything but painful?

The pain you are experiencing has many different faces: Your hopes and dreams for your marriage were ended by the bitter reality of your divorce; your life is full of unwanted changes; and you struggle every day with a mixture of grief, fear, guilt, and anger. God might seem far away right now, but he is not. He is with you in your day of trouble. The Bible says, “But you, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand” (Psalm 10:14). God sees you. He sees your trouble. He is the one who is able to “take it in hand” and heal your heart. Although your life is full of changes, God does not change. In him you will find understanding and hope as you face your grief and the power to overcome fear, shame, bitterness, and guilt.

### **God Will Restore You**

God recognizes how damaging and painful divorce is. When God created the one-flesh relationship of marriage, it was intended to last a lifetime. That’s why he said, “I hate divorce” (Malachi 2:16). But God also recognizes that in a fallen world sin sometimes destroys a marriage. When Israel left her marriage-like devotion

to God, broke her promise of faithfulness, and pursued relationships with other gods, God described himself as issuing a certificate of divorce to his people (Jeremiah 3:8). Though it grieved him, after years and years of warnings, God could not let their unfaithfulness to him continue, so he sent Israel away, divorcing her.

It may seem odd that God's marriage with his people was broken. But God didn't break the marriage; sin did. Yet sin didn't have the final word; God chose to repair the marriage rather than walk away from it. That tells us something important about God: He delights in restoring what's broken. To God, the repaired is more beautiful than the new. That doesn't mean God will restore your previous marriage, but it does mean God will restore and improve you through the wounds of divorce.

### **Healing Begins with Your Relationship with God**

How does this happen? Your healing begins when you see that your deepest need is for your relationship with God to be repaired. Thankfully, repairing your relationship with God is not up to you. God has made a way for your relationship with him to be restored by sending his Son Jesus to rescue you. Jesus came to this earth, suffered, and died on the cross so you could be forgiven for your unfaithfulness to God. Whatever sins have separated you

from God—and we each have our own list—they were paid for by Jesus’ death on the cross. Jesus’ resurrection guarantees that nothing, not even death, can separate you from God’s love. When you ask God to forgive you for Jesus’ sake, your relationship with him will be healed and restored. God is your faithful spouse who overcomes your wandering heart with his faithfulness to you.

God doesn’t promise to put your marriage back together, but he does promise to put you back together. Even more than that, he promises you that, right in the middle of this painful situation, he will reveal his faithfulness, heal your wounds, and grow you in new and surprising ways. He plans to do far more for you than you can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

### **God Understands Your Grief**

No matter how badly you were wounded by your spouse, you will grieve the end of your marriage. You are facing two painful things: the loss of your spouse and the end of the hopes and dreams you had for your life together. If your marriage was long and difficult, especially if your spouse was abusive, others might not understand your grief. But God does understand, and he is not surprised or offended. Like you, Jesus grieved when he saw the effects of sin on this world. When his friend Lazarus died, Jesus stood outside the tomb and wept,