In a heartbeat, you’ve been transported to an alien land. The terrain is barren and strange, and familiar landmarks are nowhere to be found. The ground all around you is parched and dry—you have no idea where refreshment might be found. Yet you have no choice but to travel on, hoping for an oasis.

Where are you? The land of the widowed, where the heart cries to God . . .

“I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.”
(Psalm 143:6)

“Like lightning, grief strikes my life. Its piercing impact momentarily paralyzes my mind, but soon the reality of loss shatters the numbness with torrents of despair.”

—Carolyn Rhea

Characteristics of the Widowed

**MOURING**

- **Marooned**—feeling abandoned and deserted by mate
- **Overwhelmed**—feeling unable to handle life alone
- **Useless**—feeling without purpose in life
- **Resentful**—feeling angry at God for allowing mate to die
- **Numbness**—feeling unable to accept daily reality
- **Isolated**—feeling loss at not being a part of other couples’ activities
- **Neglected**—feeling lonely and feeling misunderstood by others
- **Guilty**—feeling remorse over past attitudes and actions

“The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.”
(Psalm 116:3)
Surface Causes of Pain

Widows and widowers sometimes experience the following:
Loss of companionship
Lonely marriage bed
Lifestyle changes
Low self-worth
Lack of healthy self-sufficiency
Locked into the past
Left to raise children alone
Limited financial resources
Living life through children
Looking for another marriage partner

Do’s and Don’ts for the Widowed

- Don’t let yourself be consumed with self-pity.
  Do . . . Learn contentment with your circumstances. (1 Timothy 6:6)
- Don’t look for another marriage partner to take care of you.
  Do . . . Look to the Lord to meet your needs. (Isaiah 54:5)
- Don’t become consumed with false guilt.
  Do . . . Accept God’s grace for you. (2 Corinthians 9:8)
- Don’t make major decisions while in grief.²
  Do . . . Establish priorities. (Ecclesiastes 3:4)

Growing through Grace

Recognize your grief. (John 11:34–36)
- Share your pain with another.
- Allow your inner feelings to show outwardly.

Realize your insufficiency. (2 Corinthians 12:9–10)
- Admit you are powerless to carry the grief alone.
- Know you will realize His sufficiency through your insufficiency.

Relinquish control. (Proverbs 3:5–6)
- Recognize God’s sovereign control over your life.
- Become more aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit and yield to His control.

Respond to God’s grace. (Isaiah 43:2; Romans 8:18; Psalm 34:18; Jeremiah 29:11; Psalm 147:3; Psalm 32:8; Psalm 68:5; Hebrews 4:16)
- Recognize that God loves you and has not deserted you.
- Allow God to meet your emotional needs.

Rebuild your life. (1 Peter 5:10)
- Recognize that God has a new purpose for your life.
- Become involved in the lives of others.

Key Verses to Memorize

For the Widow:
“Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.”
(Psalm 68:5)

For the Widower:
“God . . . equipped me with strength and made my way blameless.”
(Psalm 18:32)

Key Passage to Read and Reread

The Book of Ruth

“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 3:5–6)
Special Ministries for the Widowed

Prayer
Fasting and praying on behalf of others
(Luke 2:36–37)

Counsel
Counseling with godly wisdom (Ruth 2:22)

Teaching
Training others in sound doctrine and how to live a godly life (Titus 2:1–5)

Service
Working to meet the needs of others (Ruth 2:17–18)

Hospitality
Extending a generous and warm welcome to guests
(1 Kings 17:9)

Giving
Recognizing and providing financial needs of Christians (Luke 21:1–4)

Related Topics . . .

• Depression: Walking from Darkness into the Dawn
• Grief Recovery: Living at Peace with Loss
• Hope: The Anchor of the Soul
• Loneliness: How to Be Alone but Not Lonely
• Singleness: Single and Satisfied

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Widowhood

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