

DIVORCE

SPEAKERS

Marjorie K. Carter Ann E. Bauer &

Seminar Topic: Family Law Issues

Description: Custody, Divorce, Adoption

Bio: Not Available

St. Louis, Missouri

home phone: N/A

office phone: 314 721-8844

fax: 314 721-8855

email: cartrbauer@stlnet.com

Dr. Henry Baum

Seminar Topic: Divorce Care & Recovery

Description: Not Available

Bio: Pastor, Campus, Pastor, Family Life Minister. Dr. Baum is available weekdays and evenings and will travel anywhere in Michigan. Reimbursement for mileage at the District rate of 27.5 cents per mile. Honorarium amount is open. Macomb, Michigan

home phone: 810 286-7201

office phone: 810 781-3434

fax: 810 781-9726

email: DocHEB-TMB@worldnet.att.net

Cynthia Garnholz

Seminar Topic: Divorce Law & Family Law

Description: Not Available

Bio: Not Available

Clayton, Missouri

home phone: N/A

office phone: 314 725-5430

fax: 314 725-5432

email: cgarnholz@primary.net

Vivian Hauser

Seminar Topic: Divorce

Description: Not Available

Bio: Presentations center on the work and ministry of Family Connection; divorce, listening, time management. St. Louis, Missouri

home phone: 314 305-8486

office phone: 314 268-1180

fax: 314 664-8233

email: cphhauserve@lcms.org

Dr. Chuck Meseck, PSY.D.

Seminar Topic: Marriage & Divorce Issues

Description: Not Available

Bio: Executive Director of Lutheran Counseling & Family Services Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

home phone: N/A

office phone: 414 536-8333

fax: 414 536-8348

email: lcfs2@execpc.com

Lynn Ricci

Seminar Topic: Divorce and Family Law

Description: Not Available

Bio: Not Available

St. Louis, Missouri

home phone: N/A

office phone: 314 725-9090

fax: 314 725-6247

email: [N/A](#)

ARTICLES

Divorce Recovery

By Alice Klement, Minister of Family Life
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, San Antonio, Texas

The Need is Unmistakable

Ask any group, "Raise your hand if you have been affected by divorce ... your divorce, the divorce of your parents, the divorce of other close relatives or friends." Virtually every hand in the room will go up. The wrecking ball of divorce has swept through nearly everyone's life.

The Church has No Choice but to Respond

Church workers have long recognized the openness to ministry that occurs during times of crises. Divorce is a major crisis. To ignore those who are experiencing divorce is to forfeit an opportunity to bring help and healing. To ignore those who are experiencing divorce is to miss an opportunity to touch those who would never come near the church under any other circumstance.

A Support Group: A Starting Place

Starting a support group has proven to be the most effective way of reaching those touched by divorce both inside and outside the membership of congregation.

1. Choose material that is directed toward those struggling with divorce and designed with a small group format.

We used Serendipity Video Courses: Divorce Recovery: Picking up the Pieces. This course presents a lesson on video, which is followed by small group discussion and Bible study.

2. Enlist someone who has been directly touched by divorce (their personal divorce or the divorce of their parents) to facilitate. Nothing can replace the sense of having "walked in the participant's shoes."

3. Begin publicity:

- ✓ Posters
- ✓ Invitations in the form of fliers
- ✓ Letters of invitation to those who are known to be divorcing or who have not recovered from divorce
- ✓ Notices in the church bulletin and newsletter
- ✓ Announcement on the church sign
- ✓ Announcement before worship begins
- ✓ Notices to area churches
- ✓ Ads in newspaper (If your town has a free weekly paper, public service announcements will often be printed free of charge.)

- ✓ Public service announcements on the radio
The best source of participants will be through personal contact by people in the church.
Make sure to have them pass invitations onto friends.

4. Make arrangements to provide child care.

5. When the course is finished offer group members an opportunity to continue meeting.

Since the group has worked through many of the issues dealing with divorce, it is good for them to choose a different topic or to go directly into a Bible study. Conversation in the new study will still come back to divorce and what's happening in individual lives, but the group is less likely to "get in a rut" of self pity and more likely to move on into a new life when other topics are studied.

A Day or Half-Day Retreat

Offering sectionals that deal with God's words of comfort, single parenting, financial management, legal issues etc. will be of interest to many in the congregation and community.

Again, recruiting sectional leaders who have experienced divorce themselves is a special way to show respect to the participants.

Provide child care.

Advertise using the techniques described above.

Have hosts stationed at registration table ready to accompany those who have come alone.

As a follow-up be ready to form small groups or bring those interested into small groups that are already in existence.

Stephen Ministry

Providing a Stephen Minister who will meet with an individual weekly, is one of the best ways to provide personal care.

If your congregation is not a Stephen Ministry congregation you might ask someone with the gifts of

mercy and service who has recovered from a divorce to walk along side a newly divorced person.

Relating to a Divorced Person

It is important to remember that divorce is not an unforgivable sin. Divorced persons should be invited to participate in all activities along with the rest of the congregation is. Make sure to use the divorced person's gifts and talents within the congregation. Just as they need special ministry at this time, those who are divorced - like all Christians - need opportunities to serve.

Be especially aware of the type of "family" language that is used in the oral and printed communication from your congregation. Make it clear that families come in all shapes and sizes.

When planning family events, offer special invitations to those who have no spouse or children living with them.

Ministry to the Divorced is a Choice

Congregations can continue doing business as usual, planning programs for parents and their

children, or they can purposefully plan to reach out to those who are divorced. The potential ministry to the divorced is too great to pass by. It is a ministry that will bear fruit many times over as those who have recovered from divorce bring friends and relatives to the congregation and finally begin to minister themselves.

For Further Information

Coping with Divorce (Video Bible Study: CPH)

Some of the most compelling and informative segments from On Main Street with Dr. Dale Meyer have been compiled into a video Bible study full of practical advice for Christian families.

Divorce Recovery: Picking up the Pieces (Video Bible Study: Serendipity House)

Life after Divorce Barbara Reed, Ph.D. (Book, CPH)

Practical, biblical steps on going through a divorce from an expert who's been there.

My Parents Got a Divorce Compiled by Gary Sprague (Book, CPH)

Christian kids tell how they went from hurt to hope.

Singles Ministries Resources (Organization)

P.O. Box 60430

Colorado Springs, CO 80960 (719) 579-6471

Provides a listing of ministries on divorce recovery and single parenting.

Single Parent Resource Center (Organization)

141 W. 28th Street

New York, NY 10001

(800) 924-4109

Stephen Ministries (Organization)

2045 Innerbelt Business Center Drive

St. Louis, Missouri 63114-5765

(314) 428-2600

Stephen Ministry is a program that equips lay persons to provide distinctively Christian one-to-one care to those who are experiencing all kinds of life needs and circumstances, both in the congregation and community.

When Your Son or Daughter is Going Through a Divorce

Thomas Whiteman Ph.D. and Debbie Baff (Book, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Practical suggestions on how and when to provide emotional support to your children and grandchildren. This book has an extensive bibliography.

Dealing with the Pain of Divorce
Rev. Craig A. Michaelson
Fountain of Life Lutheran Church
Tucson, AZ

The phone rang late one night. It was a collect call from another state. The voice on the other end said, “You’ve got to get us out of here.” With those words, I was wide awake. A marriage was falling apart, and I was being asked to step in and pick up the pieces.

As a pastor, I have been asked to step into these situations before. A marriage was ending or had officially ended, and the person needed help in dealing with the pain and loss of divorce. Not an easy task.

This time, it was even more difficult because the person who was calling me was my sister. After twelve years in a failing relationship, she and the kids had finally had enough. But now she needed a way out. That’s where my wife and I came in.

The next morning, we were in our car heading for another state. We picked up my sister and her three kids and brought them back to live with us in our two bedroom house. The next year would bring me face to face with the emotional and spiritual roller coaster we call divorce. I saw firsthand the sense of relief on the one hand, and the pain and doubt and sense of loss on the other. As I came to realize what had happened to my sister and her children before they left, I felt anger and hatred like I never had before. And through it all, I came to realize up close and personal what a difficult thing the divorce recovery process is.

I am happy to say that my sister and her children have come a long, long way by God’s grace. Through counseling and support from church and family, they have been able to work through the anger and the pain and the loss of dreams. They have also been able to survive the court battles and struggles over custody and finances. Most of all, they have been able to see God’s hand at work through the whole process as He has given them healing and hope. It is some years later now, and I am happy to say that my sister will be married in a few months to a wonderful Christian man.

But through this ordeal, I came to realize how much the church as a whole is lacking when it comes to ministering effectively to people who are going through the pain of divorce. And I came to realize the need for my church to provide an ongoing divorce recovery ministry. I will share a little bit about that ministry later, but first some observations.

There are no “clean breaks” when it comes to a divorce. This is especially true when children are involved. Divorce is not a quick fix for the marital pain in a person’s life. And yet, in a society like ours that has such a “quick fix” mentality towards life’s complicated problems, some see divorce as the easy way out.

The truth is, in many cases, it takes less effort (and money) to make a marriage work than to make a divorce work. While there are exceptions, many couples are able to put the pieces back together after a period of cooling off. Sometimes it is necessary to separate for a while with the intention of putting the marriage back together. The time of separation allows both spouses to work on their own personal issues on their own, followed by a time of working on marital issues together. The time of separation can also help remove the regular tension and friction that the couple was experiencing prior to their time of separation. Hopefully, each spouse can come back into the relationship ready to invest some positive energy into the marriage. One very helpful resource for couples who are still willing to make an effort is called *Before You Divorce*. This tool is helpful for couples who are seeking one last chance to save their marriage before they divorce. More will be mentioned about *Before You Divorce* at the end of this article.

Still, there are many who feel it is impossible to make their marriage work, and they aren't willing to try. They see divorce as the escape, the answer to all their problems. They fail to realize that the problems that are "causing" them to divorce will probably still be with them, along with a whole new host of problems. Still, some aren't convinced. They want to end their painful marriage, period. When I run across that kind of attitude, I like to use a pencil as an illustration. I show the person, or couple, a pencil. I then bust the pencil in half. It is impossible to make a clean break when you bust a pencil in half. The edges are jagged, and there are splinters all over.

The same is true of a divorce. No matter how much a couple wants to and tries to make a clean break, there are many jagged edges and splinters left. They may not be noticed right away because of the sense of relief that is often felt. But sooner or later, they will surface and fester. And when they do, the pain and the problems return, sometimes in ways that are overwhelming. And when the pain and problems return, some people will do almost anything to find relief. Often people seek relief by jumping into another romantic relationship. That leads to my next observation.

Jumping into a new romantic relationship doesn't fix the pain of divorce. In fact, it often intensifies the pain. When the "baggage" from a previous relationship hasn't been dealt with in a healthy way, and it gets carried over into a new relationship, it just complicates the new relationship that much more. That is one of the reasons why the divorce rate is higher in 2nd or 3rd or nth marriages than it is in first marriages. If a person hasn't taken the time to heal and learn from the previous marriage, and to gain the needed relationship skills, they are often setting themselves up for disaster in future marriages. Some divorce recovery experts suggest a period of 5 years before a person should consider pursuing a future relationship with the potential of marriage. While this figure isn't set in stone, it does point out the importance of allowing time for healing.

It's important to remember that time alone doesn't heal the pain of divorce. So what is a person to do? The best way I have seen for people to recover from the pain and loss of divorce is by joining a Christian divorce recovery group. There are several reasons for this.

First of all, a Christian divorce recovery group helps you to see where the healing from the pain of divorce comes from--Jesus Christ. He and He alone can bring the lasting healing and hope that is needed for a divorced person to move forward in a healthy way. Christian divorce recovery groups intentionally help you to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ--the Source of healing. This is one relationship that it is O.K. to "jump into" following a divorce! In fact, it's recommended!

Christian divorce recovery groups also provide some other benefits. One benefit is that you are with a group of people who know what you are going through. Maybe the others haven't experienced exactly what you have, but there are certain common experiences and emotions that you and they are experiencing. It helps to know that others can relate to what you are going through. They have either been there, or are there with you at the same time.

Another benefit of a Christian divorce recovery group is that you gain an instant support and accountability group to help you through your divorce. The support is crucial for helping you through the low periods. The accountability is crucial for helping you through your self-destructive thoughts and times of temptation. Together, you become wounded healers for one another.

I have found that a wonderful divorce recovery program for our church has been *Divorce Care* from Church Initiative, Inc. (See below for more information). It is a 13 week Bible and video-based divorce recovery series. I am continually amazed at what a difference those 13 weeks can make in peoples' lives! People who began the *Divorce Care* series feeling raw because of their open wounds and hopeless because of their loss begin to see hope and help--in Jesus Christ and in others--for the future. I would highly recommend *Divorce Care* to church professionals who are looking for an effective divorce recovery ministry tool, or to people who are trying to deal with the pain of separation or divorce. I haven't found anything better available.

In speaking of divorce recovery, it is important to remember the children. *The effects of divorce on children can be overwhelming.* Divorce isn't something that children choose--it is something that happens to them. Often children are left stunned (what happened?), feeling guilty (like it's their fault), angry (because life is out of control) and afraid (because the security of a family is gone). And down the road, children may end up having parents that they didn't select or desire.

That is why it is important to focus on the needs of the children when separation or divorce has occurred. Too often, instead of helping children with their emotional needs, couples use children as pawns to hurt each other. Children feel caught in the middle of a mess they wanted nothing to do with in the first place.

It is important to communicate with children about how a separation or divorce makes them feel. The children need to feel secure in sharing their true feelings about the situation, even if what they say isn't what a parent wants to hear. Parents need to put themselves in their children's shoes and try to understand them because their decision to separate or divorce will have a major effect on them as well.

The *Divorce Care* series has two sections that deal with “divorced kids.” Some good suggestions are given for what behaviors are appropriate for parents when interacting with their children. It is important for any divorce recovery group to remember to offer free child care during all sessions. Children may also benefit from counseling or divorce recovery groups that are intended for children. Then they too can deal with the pain and loss in a healthier way.

God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). It isn't what He had in His plan for husband and wife (Matthew 19:4-6). God also hates divorce because He knows the pain it can cause, for those who are divorcing, and for their families and friends. God hates divorce, but He doesn't hate those who experience divorce. His love and grace are available to them as they turn to Him for forgiveness and healing and hope. What better place than in the church to help adults and their children make a new beginning with their lives following the pain and loss of divorce!

“For Further Reading/Discovery”

Divorce Care (P.O. Box 1739 Wake Forest, NC 27588-1739, 919-562-2112)

Divorce Care is a 13 week Bible and video-based divorce recovery series that is used by churches all around the country. Each week, a video is shown which covers an aspect of divorce and divorce recovery. Each video features Christian authors, pastors and speakers who are experts in divorce recovery. The participants each have a workbook which they can follow as they watch the video so they can take notes if they like. Following the video, the participants talk together about the topic in that video. There is time for sharing concerns and joys, and for praying together. Then during the week while they are apart, the workbooks offer participants an opportunity to continue growing and recovering on their own. Each day, there are Bible readings and questions which keep participants focused on Jesus Christ as the source of their healing. There is also a section in the workbook that shows resources that can be ordered to help adults and children further in their healing and growth. To find out which *Divorce Care* groups meet in your area, you can call 919-562-2112 or e-mail your ZIP code at 72603.1341@compuserve.com. You can also check out the *Divorce Care* website at www.divorcecare.com.

Divorce Care is a Christian divorce recovery program that focuses on Jesus Christ as the source of healing from the pain and loss of divorce. Lutherans will feel uncomfortable with the way *Divorce Care* describes how one enters into that relationship with Jesus. The beginning of the workbook, entitled *The Foundation For Healing* refers to “putting Jesus in your life.” Some of the video segments also end with similar language. This should not preclude someone from using it in a Lutheran setting though as it is easy to preface your session with a proper Lutheran understanding of conversion.

Before You Divorce

Often when a couple comes to a pastor to discuss their marital problems, it is the last resort either before or while they are in divorce court. Often the intensity of emotion is high, and the desire to make the marriage work is low. But there is still a glimmer of hope if they have come to talk to you. *Before You Divorce* is an effective divorce prevention tool that can help a couple look

realistically at the spiritual, emotional, physical, relational, legal and financial effects of divorce. A key aspect of *Before You Divorce* is the *Promise Page*, which is a written agreement that both spouses agree to sign. By Signing the *Promise Page*, both spouses agree to put a halt to legal and/or other actions that would lead to divorce. At the same time, they are promising to work together on the *Before You Divorce* program, under the supervision of a pastor. By taking a realistic look at divorce in light of God's Word and the various effects of divorce, a couple is better able to diffuse their negative emotions and work on positive and God-pleasing ways they can rebuild their marriage.

Before You Divorce is a part of the Divorce Care, Inc. For address information, see above. Also, the comments pertaining to *The Foundation For Healing* section in the *Before You Divorce* workbook would apply just as in *Divorce Care*.

Divorce

Lutheran Hour Ministries has put out a helpful booklet with this title. *Divorce* offers practical ways for people to cope with the anger, loneliness, guilt and fear that often accompany divorce. It also has good advice regarding children and new relationships. *Divorce* can be ordered from Lutheran Hour Ministries at 2185 Hampton Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63139-2983 or by calling 1-800-876-9880.

Helping the Children of Divorce

Pastor Roger Sonnenberg

The thinking for years has that divorce is “a time-limited crisis, that children (are) resilient, and that within a year or two at most everyone in the family would settle down and life would improve for all” (Judith S. Wallerstein & Sandra Blakeslee, *Second Chances*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1996, introduction). Studies, however, done by Wallerstein over the last 25 years show otherwise. They indicate that children of divorce suffer emotionally and psychologically, not just for a few years, but for many years after the divorce.

Case # 1

Casey, 8, and Kimberly, 11, are in my office upon the request of their mother, Diane. Both children have been convinced by their father that “mom is a tramp” and that the reason the marriage broke up is because of the man Diane is engaged to marry. Though the children’s parents have been divorced for over 4 years, there has been a constant battle over everything from the clothes the children are allowed to take from one place to the next and to the school they attend. The courts ordered dual custody of the children, which means one week they are with their dad, the next week they are with their mother.

Casey begins to cry when asked about his mother’s upcoming marriage; “Dad says mommy’s boyfriend is the reason we’re no longer a family...I just wish dad wouldn’t say such bad things about mom...”. When asked to complete sentences such as, “I feel angry when...?” repeatedly the kids answer things such as “when dad and mom fight” or “when mom or dad makes us take sides.” After counseling with the children, Diane shakes her head in frustration, and with tears in her eyes laments, “I guess this is what people mean when they say ‘divorce is forever!’ “

Case # 2

John’s parents divorced 15 years ago. He was 17 at the time. John is now 32. He is in counseling because his second wife has just left him and has filed for divorce. In counseling he speaks a lot about his parent’s divorce and the effect it had on his life: “I heard my father say to a friend of his that he waited until I was almost out of high school before he divorced my mom... I was puzzled by his comment because for me it didn’t lessen the hurt of it... Everything was different after that ... holidays ... income available....”

John is not alone in being effected adversely for years afterwards because of his parent’s divorce. This story is repeated over and over in the lives of many children. Wallerstein discovered:

“Ten years after divorce, close to one-half of the boys, who are now between the ages of nineteen and twenty-nine, are unhappy and lonely and have had few, if any, lasting relationships with young women” (Ibid., p. 67).

Though there can be many reasons for this, research shows that children of divorce will often “shut out all feelings.” They do this to avoid the pain of bad memories. “As a result they are tragically constricted, suffering an inhibition that makes intimacy difficult to establish” (Ibid., 7).

Case # 3

Larry is 21. His sexual orientation is homosexual. His parents divorced when Larry was 6 years old. He remembers the fighting and the arguing, especially the night they literally fled for their lives when his father threatened to kill his mother. Though his father sporadically saw him, he never felt close to his father; in fact, his father suggested that he was “too much like his mother to really like.” Throughout his growing up, Larry had few if any male models. He and his mother lived too far away from both sets of grandparents. The few times his mother had any significant relationships with men, it was usually with someone who also abusive.

Though certainly not always the case, John’s poor relationship with his father or any significant male model has contributed greatly to his homosexuality.

“Clinical as well as empirical studies have found homosexuals to be more likely than heterosexuals to have had distant, hostile, or rejecting childhood relationships with their father” (Joseph Nicolosi, Ph.D., *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey, p. 44).

John had a great deal of anger toward his father which was never resolved. His visits with his father, even now, often leave him feeling depressed and unfulfilled. “You know pastor, I have lived 21 years, and I don’t know what a man really is. I have often wondered, ‘What makes a man a man?’ and ‘When does a person become a man?’ ”

Where is the Church?

One of the findings of Wallerstein was that the church seldom, if ever, responds to the needs of these children.

“After a natural disaster, neighbors rally to assist those who have been hurt. After most such crises, clergymen may call on the family to console adults or speak with children who are badly shaken. But not so with divorce. Friends are afraid that they will have to take sides; neighbors think it is none of their business. Although half the families in our study belong to churches or synagogues, not one clergyman came to call on the adults or children during divorce. Grandparents may be helpful but are apprehensive about getting caught in the crossfire. They often live far away and feel their role is limited. When a man and woman divorce, many people tend to act as if they believe it might be contagious. The divorced person is seen as a loose canon...”(Wallerstein, *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8).

As I personally think about my own ministry, I think about the many times I forgot the children of divorce. Though I was there for the divorced couple, I often neglected the children. I suspect many pastors and church leaders recognize the same is true about themselves and their congregations.

“Helping the Children Cope with Divorce”

In an article entitled, “Peeking Into a Divorce Recovery Group” (The Good Shepherd, Fall 1997), I discussed the divorce recovery program for divorcees that we instituted in our church. Since then, we have also put together a special program for children of divorce entitled, “Helping Children Cope with Divorce.” Through special programs (i.e., art therapy), the children are encouraged to talk about their pain and discover ways in coping with the hurt.

Mentoring for Male Children

Research has repeatedly shown that gender identification is in large part determined by the cast of characters in a person’s early life. For example, a male child will mold his own ego after the person he has taken as a model. It might be his father, or grandfather, older brother, neighbor, or uncle.

Every male has a healthy need for intimacy with other males. This desire emerges in early childhood and is satisfied first with the father, then later with male peers. When this drive is frustrated, homosexual attraction emerges as a “reparative striving” (Joseph Nicolosi, Ph.D., *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality*,” Jason Aronson Inc., 230 Livingston Street, Northvale, New Jersey, p. 34).

The church needs to ask what it is doing for the many single mothers who are raising their children alone, with an absent father or the lack of a salient father. We decided that this would be an opportunity for specialized ministry in the area of mentoring. After all, the church has been charged by God to care for another (Galatians 6:2, 10). The charge that is given to each mentor is to help his “protégé reach his God-given potential” (Bobb Biehl, *Mentoring*, Broadman & Holman Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1996, p. 27). The initial reaction has been very positive both from the perspective of the mentors as well as the mentorees.

“Helping Children Cope with Divorce”

There are many other ways a church can help the children of divorce.

- Provide workshops for parents who are concerned about the impact of divorce on their children.
- Provide special Bible studies and discussions for parents to help recognize the impact of divorce on children emotionally, developmentally, and behaviorally.
- Provide resources for helping the family cope with divorce.
- Send special notes of affirmation and encouragement to children who are hurting due to the divorce of their parents.
- Pray for the children.

Though many churches are not large enough to provide these opportunities for children of divorce, it might be that a group of churches could join together to do such ministry.

Statistics tell us that 68.4 percent of the children born this year will live in a single parent home

by the time they reach age 18. Because of this, it is imperative that the church respond to help these children. In doing so, we remember that as we minister to these little ones, we minister even unto Jesus Himself (Matthew 25:40).

A Prayer on a Hopeless Night

My world came crashing to a halt one brisk wintry night when my daughter presented me with a stack of letters she had found in her dad's car -- letters from his mistress. At first I thought it must be some horrible dream, but as we carefully read each letter we knew it was no dream; it was reality. My husband had been secretly involved with another woman for several years. It should have been obvious to me: his late nights, the weekends away painting at the beach, his distance from me in the bedroom.

When confronted, my husband admitted he was in love with two women: me and his mistress. The pastor came to visit us, but he was of little help, at times almost supporting my husband's actions. I was devastated. Whom could I trust? To whom could I turn? My daughter was as emotionally and spiritually hurt as I was.

One thing, one thing only, gave me hope amidst my hopelessness: my faith in Jesus Christ. I spent the entire evening crying, praying, asking, "Why me, Lord?" "Why should I stay with him?" "What's the right thing to do?" I kept thinking of the Bible passage, If any of you needs wisdom to know what you should do, you should ask God, and he will give it to you (James 1:5).

The next few weeks we considered many options, even divorce, but I believed with God's help I could forgive my husband and he could, with God's help, overcome his sin of adultery. He could give up the "other woman." If he couldn't, what did Ephesians 1:18-20 mean when it says I pray ... that you may know ... His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead? We had always been a church-going family who genuinely loved the Lord, but we never prayed together much as a couple. After listening to some cassette tapes on marriage by Charlie Shedd, we decided we had to start praying together even though we were so separated from one another. We had to do it not only for our marriage and our family but for our own well being. We were both dying spiritually.

The first few times were awkward, but soon it became easier. We often found ourselves crying as we prayed. We confessed things we had never admitted to each other before. We selected passages from Scripture that spoke of God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ and read them to one another. Eventually we began to hold hands as we talked to God.

It has been seven years since I first learned of the adultery. We have moved away from where we lived, and both of us retired. Though the years have not been easy, the other woman is no longer in the picture. My husband and I are happier than we've ever been, not because of any wisdom we have but because God answered my anguished prayer that terrible night. He heard my cry for wisdom, for power, for strength. He is a wonderful God, a God who rescued our marriage, a God who rescued each of us through the life, death and resurrection of His Son.

Due to the sensitive nature of this true story, the author wishes to remain anonymous

Office of the President
Especially for Women
Resources that strengthen, comfort and share God's Word
<http://www.lcms.org/president/aboutlcms/pcw/bibliography.asp>

Divorce and Remarriage
An Exegetical Study
A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations
of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod
November 1987
Part I
<http://www.lcms.org/ctcr/docs/divrem-1.html>

Divorce and Remarriage
An Exegetical Study
A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations
of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod
November 1987
Part II
<http://www.lcms.org/ctcr/docs/divrem-2.html>

Divorce and Remarriage An Exegetical Study A Report of the Commission on Theology
and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod November 1987
<http://www.lcms.org/ctcr/docs/text/divrem-1.txt>

Human Sexuality:
A Theological Perspective III
Some Problems
A Report of the
Commission on Theology and Church Relations
of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod
as prepared by its Social Concerns Committee
September 1981
<http://www.lcms.org/ctcr/docs/sxy-04.html>

Q. How is divorce viewed in the LCMS?
<http://www.lcms.org/cic/divorce.html>

Will I be accepted at a church
even though I'm divorced?
Lutheran Hour Ministries
<http://mall.gtw.net/lhm/booklets/divorce.asp>

Be A Light To The Divorced/Widowed
http://familyissues.lcms.org/lcms-fm/content/doc_articles/421.doc

Name: [Divorce Recovery](#)

http://familyissues.lcms.org/lcms-fm/content/pdf_articles/609.pdf

Singularly Focused

http://familyissues.lcms.org/lcms-fm/content/pdf_articles/613.pdf

A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance: Help for the Losses in Life

This book of support for those who grieve explores life's major losses, including death, divorce, unemployment and illness. Learn comforting, effective ways to adapt to a loss
Aid Association for Lutherans

<http://www.aal.org/LifeResources/marital/benefits.html>

Divorce (2001)

<http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PageCategory.asp?CategoryID=20>

Christians Are More Likely to Experience Divorce Than Are Non-Christians

December 21, 1999

Barna Research

<http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=39&Reference=D>

THE DEVASTATION OF DIVORCE

by *Bridget Maher*

<http://www.frc.org/get/if00h2.cfm>

Vows by *Bridget Maher*

<http://www.frc.org/get/pv01j6.cfm>

Special Feature

Dispelling the Myths of Divorce

http://www.frc.org/specialfeature.cfm?get=02_06_01_mar&filetype=txt

The number one predictor of divorce is the habitual avoidance of conflict

<http://www.smartmarriages.com/divorcepredictor.html>

Where is God in a Divorce?

By Colleen M. Hegge, Esq.

Attorneys Ministry

A web site of Focus on the Family

<http://www.family.org/cforum/attorney/precedents/a0017247.html>

I Still Do . . . and Always Will

Recovering the promise of marriage.

by Tom Neven

Focus on the Family

<http://www.family.org/fofmag/marriage/a0010568.html>

Divorce and Public Policy Fact Sheet

by Amy Desai, J.D.

Citizen Link (a web site of Focus on the Family)

<http://www.family.org/cforum/research/papers/a0016186.html>

LINKS

Resources and links for those fighting a divorce.

<http://www.smartmarriages.com/fighting.divorce.html>

DIVORCE INTERVENTION:

<http://www.smartmarriages.com/divorce.resource.html>

DivorceCare

DivorceCare is a special support group where you can find help as you recover from the hurt of separation or divorce.

For more information call 800-489-7778 • International callers dial 919-562-2112

[Church Initiative](#) • P.O. Box 1739 • Wake Forest, North Carolina • 27588-1739 •

info@divorcecare.org

Divorce Care Divorce Recovery Support Groups

www.divorcecare.com

Your Divorce learning center for practical solutions to divorce challenges

www.smartdivorce.com/support.htm

Surviving Divorce & Separation: Support Groups

www.divorcesource.com/info/surviving/support.shtml

Divorce Headquarters

www.divorcehq.com

:LWML

Lead Me, Lord, through ... Tears

This inspirational booklet provides devotions for those suffering from a loss of any kind, offering an uplifting message designed to encourage and comfort. Specific devotions for the loss of a mate, a child, or a job; divorce; moving; and more. Also thoughts on loss in general are offered. In the gentle vein of Lead Me, Lord, through ... Motherhood, this resource includes an envelope for mailing. 4" x 6". By Angie Bokenkamp.

21010 \$1.75

Divorce

Type	Publisher	Title of Resource	Author	Description
Book	Augsburg Fortress Publishers	Divorce Survival and Hope	Russell E. Fink and Barbara Owens-Smith	Offers divorced and separated people the opportunity to share with each other during the transition from being married to being single.
Book	Concordia Publishing House	Divorced and Christian	Alive Pappler	For all those grieving over a broken marriage, this book points the way to faith, strength, and healing. The book portrays the feelings of the divorced Christian. Especially helpful to those who are tempted to be judgmental and offers insights to those who want to believe that the death of a marriage doesn't have to be the death of a person.
Study	CPH	Discovering Life After Divorce	Richter	This four session study for support groups or individuals is from The Master's Touch series. This bible study helps those divorced form a healthy relationship with the Lord and rebuild relationships with family and friends.
Book	Concordia Publishing House	Divorced, Surviving the Pain	Peppler	Meditations to point those in need of comfort, support, and encouragement after a divorce to the source of light and hope - God Himself.
Book	LLL	Divorce	Daignault	This booklet helps the divorced with common worries, questions, and feelings. Advice on dealing with guilt, emotions, changes, loneliness, dating, and children, with an uplifting message about God's constant presence.
Book	The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod	Divorce and Remarriage		Commission on Theology and Church Relations. An aid for LCMS pastors to use in counseling, with special emphasis on principles provided by Scripture on divorce and remarriage.
Other	Family Crossfires	Divorced/Widowed: Letting Go of Past		Newsletter Articles...Minister to a different age group each month Infants to Seniors
Pamphlet	Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.	Divorce		Helps readers understand the changes and challenges that come with divorce. Outlines the basic emotional stages a divorced person goes through and provides a summary of the effects on children. Filled with advice on coping and starting anew.
Pamphlet	Family Research Council	Divorce Reform		

Type	Publisher	Title of Resource	Author	Description
Pamphlet	Focus on the Family	Divorce: Coping With the Pain	Andre Bustanoby	
Pamphlet	Winters Communications, Inc.	Divorce In The Family		Describes ways parents can help their children cope and the various stages of adjustment that children go through.
Pamphlets	Lutheran Hour Ministries	Divorce		
	Focus on the Family	Non-Custodial Dads	Dobson	Two divorcees and a minister discuss the pain of non-custodial fathering, the stereotypes of the "dead-beat" dad and the "Disneyland dad," making the most of every opportunity with your child, and the need to come to terms with your relationship with your ex-spouse for your child's sake. The program ends with a brief message about the devastation of divorce.
Bible Study	Concordia Publishing	Family Life Issues Courses		Families struggle for survival in our society. The Winter/Spring special edition of Newsweek (1990) took a hard look at the condition of family life in the 90's as it pondered the rapidly approaching 21st century. Consider the following data: The divorce rate has doubled since 1965. Half of all first marriages will end in divorce. 60% of all second marriages will end in divorce. 42% of fathers fail to see their children after a divorce. 1/3 of all children born in the 80's will live in a blended family. About 22% of children today were born out of wedlock. 50% of all men and women in their 30's cohabited before marriage. Half of all children under age 5 are cared for by a non-relative. By the year 2,000 four-generation families will be the norm. 57% of today's teenagers have had sex before the age of 18. The rate of teenage suicide has tripled in the past 20 years. Significant numbers of children are being raised by their grandparents. Concordia Publishing House has the unique and timely opportunity to provide families with Bible study resources designed to strengthen and support families. Both church work professionals and lay that people seek sound Biblical materials will provide solutions to the difficult questions and issues that arise regularly in every family. The initial selections in this series include: Family Systems-- Functional Christian Families; The Christian Father; The Christian Mother; The Single Parent; Them Sandwich Generation; Media and them Christian Family; The Blended Family; Christian Family Finances.

Type	Publisher	Title of Resource	Author	Description
Book	Aid Associations for Lutherans	A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance: Help for the Losses in Life		This book explores life's major losses such as death, divorce, unemployment and illness and offers valuable information to help you understand and cope. Learn comforting, effective ways to lessen the pain and promote healing when a loss impacts your life and the lives of those you love.
Book	American Guidance	Children of Divorce		Children of Divorce is a twelve-session group discussion and skill-building program that gives kids the tools and insights they need to work through tough divorce-related problems. Geared for five to eight participants, children learn communication skills, problem solving, and how to deal with anger. DA6550-Children of Divorce Instructor's Kit; DA6552-KidsBook; DA6553-ParentsBook.
Book	Concordia Publishing	Stuff You Gotta Know: Straight Talk on Real Life	Guy Doud	Honest answers parents and kids can read and discuss together about sexuality, eating disorders, alcoholism, divorce, popularity, and other real-life issues.
Book	Concordia Publishing	Comforting Little Hearts Series		These four children's books help Christian parents and children deal with the difficult issues of divorce, chronic illness, blended families, and death.
Book	Concordia Publishing	Life After Divorce: How to Grow through a Divorce	Reed	A divorce recovery book stressing the positive aspects of forgiveness and providing help to build a future, relying on the strength given by Jesus Christ.
Book	Concordia Publishing	Divorced and Christian	Alive Pappler	For all those grieving over a broken marriage, this book points the way to faith, strength, and healing. The book portrays the feelings of the divorced Christian. Especially helpful to those who are tempted to be judgmental and offers insights to those who want to believe that the death of a marriage doesn't have to be the death of a person.
Book	Concordia Publishing	God, Where's My Daddy?	Donna Marie Furrey	Are you a single parent? As you struggle to keep the home fires burning, your children may be experiencing a unique sense of guilt and loss. Through the characters in this story, children of divorced parents learn that their feelings are normal. Illustrated.

Type	Publisher	Title of Resource	Author	Description
Book	International Marriage	Step Kids	Ann Getzoff & Carolyn McClenahan	Among the things that Step Kids talks about... How to talk to a Stepparent, Your parents' divorce Getting along better with your kind of Stepmother, How to live with your kind of stepfather, Visiting Mom; Visiting Dad, Sex in your stepfamily Parents in a homosexual relationship What is so great about stepfamilies? How to hold a family council When to get professional help
Book	Concordia Publishing	Comforting Little Hearts	Robin Prince Monroe and Anne Good Cave	Life can be hard on young children and their parents. They need to know there is a God who knows and understands their circumstances and pain. Each book in this series takes families through difficult issues such as divorce, chronic illness, blended families and death. The interactive pages help parents and children ages 4 to 7 work through issues together. Special sections for parents give information from counseling experts. Together parents and children learn that no matter what the circumstances are, God plans to give them a future and a hope. Why Don't We Live Together Anymore?: Understanding Divorce, 0-570-05037-5 56-1861; When Will I Feel Better?: Understanding Chronic Illness, 0-570-05038-3 56-1862; I Have a New Family Now: Understanding Blended Families, 0-570-05039-1 56-1863; Balloons for Trevor: Understanding Death, 0-570-05040-5 56-1864. Robin Prince Monroe is a popular author and Speaker. She speaks on a variety of topics including dealing with a holiday grief and the Christian and creativity. She lives in Greenville, South Carolina. Anne Good Cave has published more than 15 articles for a national organization publication. This is her first book with CPH. Anne
Book	LLL	Divorce	Daignault	This booklet helps the divorced with common worries, questions, and feelings. Advice on dealing with guilt, emotions, changes, loneliness, dating, and children, with an uplifting message about God's constant presence.

Type	Publisher	Title of Resource	Author	Description
Book	International Marriage	Caught In The Middle: Children of Divorce	Velma Thorne Carter and L. Lynn Leavenworth	Raising children without a partner to share the decision-making and financial responsibilities can be an overwhelming task. It's especially difficult for the parent who is attempting to start over after a painful divorce. It is even more difficult for the children who have had their once secure world turned upside down. Beginning with an in-depth discussion of the parent's decision to separate and suggestions for ways to tell the children what has happened. The authors talk frankly about many of the problems to be faced: options for custody; visitation rights; danger of exploiting the children's loyalty; keeping communication open; handling children's reactions of shame, anger, guilt and depression; developing new roots and traditions.
Book	International Marriage	My Kids Don't Live With Me Anymore Coping with the Custody Crisis	Doreen Virtue	For all divorced parents, here is an authoritative and compassionate guide, explaining and offering practical solutions for the emotional upheaval following the breakup of a family. Parents who have lost, surrendered, or share custody are taught ways to deal with feelings of sick, anger, panic, and depression, and for helping their kids through this stressful period of grief and readjustment. Parents can learn to face their deepest fears about their kids' future and keep a close and loving relationship with them, no matter what their custody
Book	NavPress	When Your Ex Won't Pay	Palmer/Tangel-Rodriguez	This book is for custodial parents facing the uphill battle of claiming financial support for their children.
Book	NavPress	When Your Parents Call It Quits	Webster	This booklet for teens helps them deal with feelings about their parents, themselves, and God in the wake of divorce.
Book	Regal	Our Family Got A Divorce	Phillips	Chip's family gets a divorce - all four of them. They learn that Jesus can fill up the angry, hurt, and scared places with His special love.
Book	Thomas Nelson	Innocent Victims Understanding the Needs & Fears of Your Children	Tom Whiteman	Practical, straightforward guidelines on how parents and other adults can help children cope with divorce.

Type	Publisher	Title of Resource	Author	Description
Book	Tyndale	When Your Parents Pull Apart	Hunt	This book is a teen's guide to surviving his parent's divorce.
Pamphlet	Channing L. Bete Co.,	About Divorce		Helps readers understand the changes and challenges that come with divorce. Outlines the basic emotional stages a divorced person goes through, and includes a summary of its effects on children.
Book	Nelson	When your Son or Daughter Is Going Through a Divorce	Whiteman/Barr	Through personal and professional examples, the authors help parents understand their feelings, fears, and concerns surrounding a child's divorce.
Book	Jossey-Bass Publishers	Helping Children Cope with Divorce	Edward Teyber	Named One of the 10 Best Parenting Books of the Year by Child Magazine. This award winning book helps parents handle their children's problems and reactions as they go through each stage of the divorce process. The author includes vital information about how to minimize stress during initial breakups and ultimate separation.
Book	Word	Love Must Be Tough	Dobson	Dobson writes to those on the brink of divorce and to anyone seeking a better understanding of complex interrelationships between men and women. Loving toughness helps partners develop a healthy respect for each other.
Magazine	International Marriage	A Marriage Encounter for Just the Two of You		Through the intense and very personal experiences of a number of people, you are offered a journey through a variety of losses: death of a spouse, parent or child; suicide; a child's reactions to death; miscarriage; divorce; moving; illness; violation; loss of a body- part; middle-life, and aging. How have others coped and survived? What can you do to help your own grieving process?
Pamphlet	Channing L. Bete Co.,	Divorce		Helps readers understand the changes and challenges that come with divorce. Outlines the basic emotional stages a divorced person goes through and provides a summary of the effects on children. Filled with advice on coping and starting anew.
Pamphlet	Winters	About Divorce		Educates the reader about the process of divorce, its emotional stages, changes, legal issues, effects on the children and more. Offers positive advice for

coping with the changes as a
result of divorce.

Type	Publisher	Title of Resource	Author	Description
Video		You Can Paint a Rainbow		You Can Paint a Rainbow is for children who have suffered the loss of a parent through death or divorce. These children struggle to verbalize the sea of emotions churning inside of them. This is a good place to begin to minister to a child in this situation.
Video	Lutheran Media	Raising Kids Alone		This four tape series (90 minutes) covers the following topics: After Divorce: Support for the next step; children of Divorce: Creatively responding to their needs; Working Together: How both parents can influence children; and Visitation: Making it work for children.
Video	Waldenvideo	When Mom & Dad Break Up		Hosted by Alan Thicke (Growing Pains). Parents Guide, written by noted author and psychologist Eda LeShan, is included with each video. Produced by Sonny Fox (producer/host of TV's "Wonderama," and former Vice President of Children's Programming at NBC). Written by Emmy Award winner Rick Hauser. This reassuring and entertaining program tackles the questions children of divorced parents frequently ask.