

# Preparing for and Coping with Death and Dying

## PURPOSE

The aim of this study is to help people cope with death and dying.

## WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH

At the end of this study, you may develop new thoughts about how you can live your life more meaningfully and purposefully.

## SO WHAT

"For I know that my redeemer lives, and He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and... after... worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25-26). Job's example of confidence amid despair says to us who deal with the trauma of death: "Say to them that are of a fearful heart: 'Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God will come... with recompense (i.e., reward, payment and compensation); He will come and save you'" (Isaiah 35:4 & Revelation 22:12). This assurance brings hope that will not lead to disappointment (Romans 5:5, New Living Translation {NLT}), hope that we can renew each time we share in the universal experience of death.

## CONTEXT

Some contemporary Christians will not talk about death and dying. In fact, every vestige of the death reality is suppressed so that places such as hospitals, mortuaries and cemeteries are intentionally avoided to escape the harsh trauma of end of physical life. But try as you may, in this mortal life, loss of breath, (that is, spirit in the nostrils), comes to every living being (Genesis 2:7; Job 27:3 & Zechariah 12:1). And this trauma may cause emotional pain for surviving relatives and friends that may last a very long time. This background provided the impetus for the study question that follows.

35 **STUDY QUESTION**

36

37 What does the Bible offer to people cope with death and dying?

38

39 **ANSWER SOURCE: HOLY BIBLE**

40

41 **"The living knows that they will die..."** (Ecclesiastes 9:5). "Is there  
42 not an appointed time to man upon the earth? Are not his days also  
43 like the days of a hireling" (Job 7:1)? "What man [or woman] is he  
44 [or she] that lives and shall not see death..." (Psalm 89:48)? "Seventy  
45 years are given to us! Some even live to eighty. But even the best  
46 years are filled with pain and trouble; soon they disappear and we  
47 fly away" (Psalm 90:10, New Living Translation, NLT). "For we [who]  
48 live are always delivered unto death..." (2 Corinthians 4:11). "There  
49 is no man that has power over the spirit to retain the spirit;  
50 neither has [the] power in the day of death; and there is no  
51 discharge in that war..." (Ecclesiastes 8:8). Job testified of this  
52 reality saying: "For I know that thou will bring me to death and to  
53 the house appointed for all living" (Job 30:23). But the Psalmist  
54 offered encouragement with this testimony: God guides the meek in  
55 judgment and He is our guide even unto death (Psalm 25:9 & 48:14);  
56 "...and unto God, the Lord, belong the issues from death" (Psalm  
57 68:20). Fellow believers, the Lord, who is our high priest, is  
58 touched with the feelings of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15) and His  
59 grace is sufficient, that is adequate, for us. His strength is made  
60 perfect in our weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:9).

61

62 **"If a [person] dies, shall [s/he] live again..."** (Job 14:14)? The  
63 answer to this question is important because if death is only  
64 temporary separation, then we have hope beyond the tomb; the sting of  
65 death is blunted and our grief is tolerable! Let us begin by warming  
66 our hearts with a few divine promises: "Precious in the sight of the  
67 Lord is the death of His saints" (Psalm 116:15). "...Blessed are the  
68 dead, which die in the Lord...; they... rest from their labors and their  
69 works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13). "For if we believe that

Courage and hope for dealing with death and dying!

70 Jesus **died** and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus  
71 **will** God bring with him [at His return]" (1 Thessalonians 4:14). "If  
72 Christ [was] not... raised, then our preaching is vain [and] your faith  
73 also is vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). "But now is Christ risen from  
74 the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept" (1  
75 Corinthians 15:20); therefore, know this: "...We which are alive and  
76 remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are  
77 asleep [in Jesus]" (1 Thessalonians 4:15). Therefore, all who mourn  
78 the loss of loved ones can be encouraged by God's promises for "...The  
79 Lord thy God... is... the faithful God, which keep covenant and mercy  
80 with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand  
81 generations" (Deuteronomy 7:9). You will see your love ones again!

82  
83 **Can God be trusted to keep His covenant with those who die in the**  
84 **Lord?** "God is faithful, by whom [we] were called unto the fellowship  
85 of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:9). "...**Christ...**  
86 died; rose and revived that He might be Lord... of the **dead** and living"  
87 (Romans 14:9). So we can say with Naomi: "Blessed be... the Lord who  
88 [has] not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead..." (Ruth  
89 2:20). We have already quoted the promise: "...Christ rose from the  
90 dead and [became] the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians  
91 15:20). Even in life, we taste death by being "...**dead** to sin (Romans  
92 6:2, 7 & 11; 8:10), [when our] life... [is] hid with **Christ** in God"  
93 (Colossians 3:3). "Now if we [are] **dead [to sin]** with **Christ**, we  
94 believe that we shall also live with him" (Romans 6:8). Then let us  
95 also believe that "...There is an order to [the] resurrection! Christ  
96 was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to  
97 Christ, [including them that sleep in Jesus] will be raised when He  
98 comes back" (1 Corinthians 15:23, NLT; 1 Thessalonians 4:14 & John  
99 11:13). Therefore, we can have this resolve: "O Lord, thou art my  
100 God! I will exalt thee; I will praise thy name for [you have] done  
101 wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth"  
102 (Isaiah 25:1) and by these counsels, "...The faithful in Christ Jesus"  
103 (Ephesians 1:1) [is] "...Blessed... with all spiritual blessings in  
104 heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

105

106 **Our earthly journey is temporary (Job 14:1, NLT). "...Time is short..."**  
 107 **(1 Corinthians 7:29) and our life on earth is short-lived** (Psalm  
 108 89:47); "...it is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then  
 109 vanishes away" (James 4:14, NKJV). "[God has] decided the length of  
 110 our lives. [He] knows how many months we will live and we are **NOT**  
 111 given a minute longer" (Job 14:5, NLT). Therefore, this present  
 112 world, in its current state is **NOT** our final abode. "...We are looking  
 113 forward to new heavens and a new earth He has promised, a world  
 114 filled with God's righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13, NLT, Revelation  
 115 21:1). "...And the former [world] shall not be remembered or come to  
 116 mind" (Isaiah 65:17, NKJV) because "...God will wipe away every tear  
 117 from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor  
 118 crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have  
 119 passed away" (Revelation 21:4, NKJV). Clearly, here we have no  
 120 abiding city; ...we look for a city that has foundations, whose builder  
 121 and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10). "...[That city is the] new  
 122 Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from... God..." (Revelation  
 123 3:12). Therefore, "...if our **earthly** house of this **tabernacle** were  
 124 dissolved: [that is, if the physical body dies], we have a building  
 125 of God; a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2  
 126 Corinthians 5:1). "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be  
 127 clothed... with our house which is from heaven" (2 Corinthians 5:2),  
 128 "...[and] being clothed we shall not be found naked" (2 Corinthians  
 129 5:3).

130  
 131 **God has prepared something special for all who will live and reign**  
 132 **with Him.** "...Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into  
 133 the heart of man the things, which God has prepared for those who  
 134 love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9, NKJV). God has reserved dining for  
 135 guests of the new world. He has even prepared a new name for them  
 136 (Revelation 2:17, NKJV). The new world will NOT be a boring place  
 137 where obesity will be a problem, for its inhabitants will engage in  
 138 construction and agricultural activities (Isa 65:22, NKJV;), even as  
 139 their families abide with them there (Isaiah 66:22, NKJV).  
 140 Citizenship in the New World is an absolute necessity; you cannot  
 141 miss being on that island resort; a place, where "...The tabernacle of  
 142 God [will be] with men [and women], and He will dwell with them, and

143 they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be  
144 their God" (Revelation 21:3). It is against this background that we  
145 cling to the promise: "The dead [people] shall live; together with my  
146 dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing [you] that dwell in dust,  
147 for... the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isaiah 26:19), fulfilling  
148 the Psalmist's assurance: "...Weeping may endure for a night, but joy  
149 comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

150  
151 **Because sin has tainted the human experience (Romans 5:12), and**  
152 **redemption (Isaiah 53:8 & 12; 1 Corinthians 15:3) is a sure promise**  
153 **to the repentant (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 26:20 & Revelation 2:5,**  
154 **16), death can be a positive reminder of our hope in Christ!**

155 Christ's return brings these assurances: "...By man came death, by man  
156 came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:21). "For  
157 the bread of God is He [that] comes down from heaven and gives life  
158 unto the world" (John 6:33)! Before Jesus returns, some will die in  
159 the Lord, but "...We shall not all sleep; but we shall **ALL** be changed"  
160 (1 Corinthians 15:51). Dear reader, the first death, according to  
161 Jesus is a sleep (John 11:11-13). Admittedly, we don't know who is  
162 accounted for by the first death, but God does. What the Bible  
163 teaches is that "...the sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave  
164 gave up their dead; and all were judged according to their works"  
165 (Revelation 20:13, NLT). "...Some [of the resurrected dead will awake]  
166 to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace"  
167 (Daniel 12:2 NLT & Matthew 25:46). **In which group do you want to**  
168 **assemble?** "...The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers,  
169 sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have  
170 their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone..."  
171 (Revelation 21:8, NKJV). "...[The] lake of fire is the second death"  
172 (Revelation 20:14, NLT). Make no mistake about this fact: "Those who  
173 live to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and [the  
174 second] death from that sinful nature; but those who live to please  
175 the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit" (Galatians  
176 6:8, NLT). Therefore, let us remind ourselves that "In a moment, in  
177 the twinkling of an eye, at the **last trump, [when] the trumpet** shall  
178 sound, ['...those who die in the Lord...'] (Revelation 14:13, NLT) shall  
179 be raised incorruptible and... shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:52).

180  
181 **We can hope in Christ's promise that all captives of the grave will**  
182 **be set free.** "For the Lord... shall descend from heaven with a shout,  
183 with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God and the  
184 **dead in Christ** shall rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). "This is  
185 the first resurrection..." (Revelation 20:4-6). "For this corruptible  
186 must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1  
187 Corinthians 15:53). "When this corruptible shall have put on  
188 incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then  
189 shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is  
190 swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54). "O death, where is  
191 thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory" (1 Corinthians 15:55)?  
192 "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with  
193 them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever  
194 be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Do you desire to live in  
195 God's new world, where "...no one will be hurt or destroyed on [His]  
196 holy mountain" (Isaiah 65:25, NLT)?

197  
198 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS: In this study, we examined what the Bible  
199 offers to help people cope with death and dying. As we studied this  
200 journey, key points included: 1) The living knows that they will die;  
201 2) If a person dies, shall s/he live again? 3) Can God be trusted to  
202 keep His covenant with those who die in the Lord? 4) Our earthly  
203 journey is temporary, 5) God has prepared something special for all  
204 who will live and reign with Him, 6) Because sin has tainted the  
205 human experience and redemption is a sure promise to the repentant,  
206 death can be a positive reminder of our hope in Christ. and 7) We can  
207 hope in Christ's promise that all captives of the grave will be set  
208 free. Death and dying does not have to be a gloomy experience. So  
209 let us figure out how to turn this inevitable life experience into  
210 something positive. That discussion follows.

211

212 **MAKING MEANING**

213

214 **There is going to be a meeting in the air!** The redeemed of all ages  
 215 will unite for celestial travel. Therefore, [when life temporarily  
 216 ends at the first death], we do not sorrow like those who have no  
 217 hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). That does NOT mean that we do not  
 218 experience or show grief when death occurs! What it does mean is:  
 219 "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing..." (2 Corinthians 6:10);  
 220 "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation; continuing instant in  
 221 prayer" (Romans 12:12)! How can we do this? We can have this joy  
 222 because we know that the grave cannot hold those whose earthly life  
 223 was hid with Christ in God because all who heard God's word and  
 224 believed that He sent Jesus received everlasting life and has passed  
 225 from [the second] death unto life (John 5:24). In fact, those who  
 226 were "...planted together in the likeness of [Christ's] death... shall be  
 227 also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Romans 6:5). In other  
 228 words, all who kept Jesus' sayings shall not be hurt by the second  
 229 death (John 8:51 & Revelation 2:11). "Blessed and holy are those who  
 230 share in the first resurrection; for them the second death holds no  
 231 power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ..." (Revelation  
 232 20:6).

234 **DECISION MAKING**

235

236 **"[Our] days are swifter than a runner; they flee away..."** (Job 9:25,  
 237 New American Standard Bible, NASB). Let us then be frugal and  
 238 faithful to our God with time management! "We are laborers together  
 239 with God...; [we] are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9),  
 240 "...[assembled]... for an habitation of God through the Spirit"  
 241 (Ephesians 2:22). "...[Our] body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who  
 242 is in [us], whom [we] have received from God..." (1 Corinthians 6:19).  
 243 "God has committed to... each [of us] sacred trusts for which he holds  
 244 us accountable (Matthew 25:14-29). "Everyone who is called by  
 245 [God's] name, ...[He] created for [His] glory..." (Isaiah 43:7, NKJV).

246 Therefore, educate your mind to reflect back to God the glory that  
247 belongs to Him (1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:1 & 2; 96:7 & 8; Isaiah  
248 42:12 & 43:7; Jeremiah 13:16; 2 Peter 1:3; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation  
249 4:11 & 14:7). Don't waste your time in meaningless conversations,  
250 including lifestyles that will not help you live a life of faith in  
251 God (1 Timothy 1:4-6, NLT). "Having therefore these promises, dearly  
252 beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh  
253 and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians  
254 7:1). Then, let us live fruitfully; giving glory to God during this  
255 probationary life because it does not lasts forever.

256

257 **"The end of all things is at hand; be... sober and watch unto prayer"**

258 **(1 Peter 4:7)!** "Our God shall come and not keep silence..." (Psalm  
259 50:3). God promises to find joy in His people and the voice of  
260 weeping shall be no more heard..." (Isaiah 65:19). When resurrection  
261 morning arrives, "[God] will swallow up death in victory; and the  
262 Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of  
263 His people shall he take away from off all the earth..." (Isaiah 25:8).  
264 The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), but at the first  
265 resurrection (Revelation 20:5-6), the "...covenant with death shall be  
266 disannulled..." (Isaiah 28:18). "The last enemy that shall be  
267 destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26). "[God] will ransom [His  
268 children] from the power of the grave; [He] will redeem them from  
269 death..." (Hosea 13:14). "God shall wipe away all tears from their  
270 eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying,  
271 neither shall there be any more pain..." (Revelation 21:4). What a day  
272 of rejoicing that will be when all of God's children are gathered  
273 together in Christ! There is a day, in the future, when God will  
274 say: "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a  
275 covenant with me by sacrifice" (Psalm 50:5). Have you made your  
276 covenant with God by sacrifice? Are you obeying Him?

277



278 **CALL TO ACTION**

279

280 **We who are alive and remain must "not be weary in well doing for in**  
 281 **due season we shall reap, if we faint not"** (Galatians 6:9 & 2  
 282 Thessalonians 3:13). We do that by continuing to "fight the good  
 283 fight of faith [that we might] lay hold on eternal life, whereunto  
 284 [we are] called..." (1 Timothy 6:12). Let us "...die daily" (1  
 285 Corinthians 15:31) for "...There is laid up for [us] a crown of  
 286 righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give [us]  
 287 at that day... [of] His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8).

288 **"Comfort... [God's] people..."** (Isaiah 40:1). Encourage them to repeat  
 289 the promise: "...neither death nor life, nor angels, nor  
 290 principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,  
 291 nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to  
 292 separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"  
 293 (Romans 8:38-39). Then, "Break forth into joy, sing together..., for  
 294 the Lord has comforted His people..." (Isaiah 52:9).

295 **"[Let] the voice of rejoicing and salvation [be] in the tabernacle of**  
 296 **the righteous..." (Psalm 118:15).** "[God will] open... the gates of  
 297 righteousness... into which the righteous shall enter" (Psalm 118:19-  
 298 20). Therefore, know this: as you abide in Christ (John 15:3-4) by  
 299 keeping His word (John 14:23 & 6:63), if you become captive to the  
 300 grave, it will have no choice but to let you go at the call of our  
 301 Lord, Jesus Christ (John 5:28-29) because "...your life is hid with  
 302 Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). Very shortly, "...The ransomed of the  
 303 Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, everlasting joy [shall  
 304 be] upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow  
 305 and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10). "Let the redeemed of  
 306 the Lord say so, whom He [has] redeemed from the hand of the enemy  
 307 [of death (1 Corinthians 15:26)] and gathered them out of the lands,  
 308 from the east, ...the west, ...the north and... the south" (Psalm 107:2-3).