

A watercolor painting of a landscape. The foreground shows a field of trees with autumnal colors (yellows, oranges, reds, and greens). In the middle ground, there are rolling hills and a cluster of buildings, possibly a farm or a small village, surrounded by tall, thin trees. The background features more distant hills under a soft, hazy sky with warm tones of yellow and orange. The overall style is soft and painterly.

# And Give You PEACE

Words of Comfort  
at a Time of Grief

Arden, Peter and David Mead

# Introduction

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As you will shortly discover, the devotions in this booklet are born from a personal experience—the personal experience of three Christian men who have grieved honestly (warts and all), and *faithfully* (in that the hope of the resurrection from the dead was never far from their thoughts, and informed even their grief).

Many (perhaps too many) are written from the perspective of a grieving SPOUSE. Most of the others are written from the vantage point of a grieving son. (They are born from personal experience, after all.)

Because they come from such personal (and very specific) experience, it stands to reason that not all of the devotions in this booklet will apply to you ... to the death that you are mourning ... to your grief. It is our hope that this shortcoming does not prevent you from finding the universal truths that many of these devotions contain. Do what you can to apply them. See the word “friend,” or “son,” or “grandmother,” or whatever word you need to see, when some other word occupies the printed page.

This was a hard book to write. We imagine it will be a hard book to read. We hope that it helps.

## Using This Booklet

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This probably isn't the sort of devotion booklet you want to read straight through. The devotions aren't necessarily arranged in a chronological order, or even a logical progression. Rather, they are TOPICAL—to be read whenever you are personally experiencing what any devotion addresses. You may find yourself revisiting certain devotions often. Some may go completely unread. We suggest you read the titles of the devotions in the index ... and then keep the booklet on hand so that it is ready to be used when you need it.

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# Someone Hands You Something That Can Help You

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**W**e were called rather suddenly to the hospital. My mother had seemed well enough the evening before—considering she had terminal cancer. She was joking, and laughing, and enjoying my brother's 22nd birthday.

But during the night pneumonia had settled into her lungs, and we were called in to say our good-byes ... and to watch ... and to wait.

My father, who had arrived first, was clearly beside himself but struggling to maintain some sense of composure. As I entered the room, he thrust a leaflet into my hands—something that must have been thrust into his hands only minutes before. “Here,” he said. “Read this.”

I didn't want to. What I wanted to do was ... I don't know ... look at my mother, further assess the situation, hold her hand ... pace.

But I could see from the desperation in my father's eyes that something in that little leaflet (maybe he didn't even know exactly what) had somehow helped him. He wanted it to help me, too.

And so I read it. A little leaflet from the hospital chaplain's office that tried to make some sense of the physical process of death.

Nothing sunk in. I couldn't understand why Dad was making me read it. I only knew that he, who always had something profound to say, was relying on what he had at hand.

What amazes me, now, more than a decade since that death, is how often my mind has turned back to the words in that little leaflet. They had seemed nearly worthless at the time. But they stuck. They grew, so to speak. They were profound words rooted in faith and hope. And I have grown to appreciate them nearly as much as I appreciate the intention with which they were given to me.

Which is my way of saying, when someone hands you something that can help you (even, perhaps, this little leaflet or something like it ... or a casserole ... or a hug), take it.

# Like Being in a Fog

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As he closed the book in which he had been taking notes, the funeral director said, “You may not realize it, but you have just made about two dozen major decisions.”

Major, perhaps ..., but when a loved one dies, so many things happen at once (or in rapid succession) that I feel as though I am just going through the motions ... or watching myself in slow motion (or is it fast-forward?).

The phone calls, the arrangements, the visitation, the funeral, the stream of well-wishers, the gifts of baked goods and casseroles, the floral tributes. There are kindnesses to be acknowledged, legal matters to deal with, forms to fill out ...

And a feeling that I am kind of wandering aimlessly through it all ... alone.

But not alone. Family and friends have been here, even if they seem distant or I perceive them to be unable to understand. The pastor ... a doctor ... a lawyer ... a trusted friend or associate—shadowy figures they may seem at times, but people are there to walk me through these foggy times, often to lead me through the daze.

And my Lord is there working through them, I know, using them, sending them to me, giving them to me out of his treasury of loving gifts.

Our Lord’s disciples went through foggy times, too—shortened, of course, by the immediacy of his resurrection. That immediacy may be another gift from the Lord, a hastened preview of the gift (for which he died and rose) that waits for me as well, and the one whom I love ... even in this fog.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

—*Psalm 46:1*

# The Obituary Isn't Enough

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## *Nineteen Lines*

To sum up 29 years.  
Your parents' names  
and the fact that you  
were loved by your  
brother and sisters  
and their children.  
Three grandparents  
even made the list.  
Hardly room for a long  
out-of-touch friend  
whose picture was in  
your wallet the day you  
died. A picture that  
awoke volumes of a life  
which nineteen lines  
couldn't begin to retell.  
The last three lines  
gave directions to the  
funeral home.

Can a woman forget her nursing child  
or show no compassion for the child of her womb?  
Even these might forget, yet ***I will not forget you.***

—Isaiah 49:15

# You Realize It's Over

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**A**fter all that flurry of activity, suddenly it's all over. The guests have left, the flowers have wilted, the food is gone. Now I have to pick up and get back to normal. As if life can ever be “normal” again.

It may take several weeks to realize that *this* is normal. This is the way it's going to be from now on. My loved one is not coming back—this side of eternity.

And I can live with that. I have no other choice, of course. But in the midst of my grieving I said, “this side of eternity.” And because Jesus went through death like this—went *through* it!—God gives me the confidence that I will, too, along with the one for whom I grieve.

Eternity is a long time to be together again!

O save your people, and bless your heritage;  
be their shepherd and carry them **forever**.

—Psalm 28:9



# And Give You PEACE

## Words of Comfort at a Time of Grief

The devotions and prayers in this small booklet are not to be read straight through...or even daily. They are TOPICAL, and are to be read at the very specific times when they are the most appropriate: when the family feels like a loved one is really gone for good, or when the holidays leave one especially lonely, or when the funeral food is all eaten or after the first genuine laugh following the death.

Born from personal experience and expressing genuine faith, this book reverberates with the assurance of God's enduring presence when it is needed most. Appropriate for teens through adults, for those grieving the loss of spouses, family members and friends.

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