

DEALING WITH THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON KIDS

A Guide to Dealing With Feelings of Loss

LOSS: the state of being deprived of or of being without something that one has had. (from dictionary.com)

LOSS: Divorce is a time a great loss for the child of divorce. In addition to losing at least one parent full-time, they experience a multitude of other losses. This sense of loss can follow a child of divorce through their entire life and affect their future relationships. Some studies have shown that the divorce of ones' parents can be as stressful, if not more stressful, than the death of ones' parents. With the death of a parent, the child does not view it as a choice. Whereas, in a divorce, the child will realize that at least one



Scripture References About Loss

Ps 9:9	Nah 1:7
Ps 18:2	Mt 5:4
Ps 23	Mt 6:19-34
Ps 30:5	Mt 11:25-30
Ps 34:18	Jn 14:1-4
Ps 46:1-2	Jn 14:27
Ps 55:22	Rm 8:31-39
Ps 71:20-21	Php 4:6
Lam 3:22-23	1 Pt 5:6-7
Lam 3:31-32	Rev 21:4

parent had the choice to leave. In many ways this makes the loss seem more real and hurt more deeply. Furthermore, that loss tends to stick with the child and affect their decisions and relationships well into adulthood as they approach life through a lens tainted by the constant fear of loss. Unfortunately, our society tends to be a grief-avoiding culture where, rather than deal with the sense of loss created by the divorce, kids are shielded from the grieving process and never work through their emotions.

A WHOLE LOT OF LOSS

Children of Divorce experience a wide variety of losses. Not all children of divorce will experience all of these losses, but losses can include:

- Loss of the parent not living in the home
- Loss of extended family including grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles and others
- Loss of friends and school
- Loss of parental support
- Loss of family history and traditions
- Loss of childhood
- Loss of an intact family
- Loss of a familiar way of life and daily routines
- Loss of easy access to both parents
- Loss of economic security
- Loss of a house and community
- Loss of familiarity and favorite places
- Loss of support in handling emotions and growing up
- Loss of security

HELPING A CHILD WITH LOSS

- ✓ Give them someone to talk to.
- ✓ Reassure them that their parents' inability to stay together wasn't their fault.
- ✓ Reassure them that they are lovable.
- ✓ Reassure them that they are loved by you and by our Heavenly Father.
- ✓ Help them to establish new rituals & routines.
- ✓ Give them time to be kids.
- ✓ Give them choices to give them control over something in their lives.

THE SPIRITUAL IMPACT OF LOSS

The loss of a parent (actual or perceived), particularly the loss of a father, can have a devastating and lasting impact on the spiritual development of a child. Archibald Hart writes about the experience of children of divorce in his book Growing Up Divorce, "When adults hear the words, "Heavenly Father" only scenes of desertion and loss come to their minds. They don't think of God as a Father image. One lady said "Just hearing, 'Our Father" would make a knot tighten up in my stomach."



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