

SAMPLE

DIVORCE *Care*<sup>®</sup>

Find Help · Discover Hope · Experience Healing

# What's Happening to Me?

VIDEO OUTLINE



How to stabilize my life

Why divorce hurts so much

**THE PAIN CUTS DEEP.** Anger simmers under the surface. The bitterness of betrayal wrenches your insides. You're constantly tired, living in a fog, and wondering if you'll ever get through this.

Divorce hurts worse than other people realize, but the emotions and struggles you're facing are normal, and even to be expected. The good news is, you will make it through, and you can find peace and joy along the way.

As you view this week's video and complete the **On My Own** exercises and **Weekly Journal**, you'll find out:

- Severe pain and overwhelming emotions are normal
- Why it hurts so much
- There is hope for you

## VIDEO OUTLINE

Use this outline to write down important concepts, encouraging words, or questions you may have while viewing the video.

## DIVORCE

The pain is incredible

## EFFECTS OF DIVORCE

Emotional instability

Shame

Energy during divorce

Stress & anxiety

You can't function

Confusion

Confusion: Why won't the pain end?

Confusion: Why do I love my ex?

Confusion: Why do I feel relief?

## **ACCEPT WHAT'S HAPPENING**

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Don't deny you're hurting

Don't start a new relationship

## **DISASTER RELIEF**

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Reset expectations

Help your children

### In this week's On My Own ...

You'll learn more about Georgia Shaffer, who faced a divorce, job loss and cancer diagnosis. Looking at the future, she didn't see how things could ever get better. What she learned will help you too.

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# On My Own

A daily Bible study to help you

SESSION ONE

This is a special part of your workbook that will guide you to sections of the Bible that are relevant to the emotions, worries and questions you are dealing with right now. We like to think of the Bible as the “owner’s manual” for life. It’s a place where you can get real-world answers for real-world problems, including separation and divorce.

## GEORGIA’S STORY



*“I was terrified when I signed the final divorce papers,” shares Georgia. “I honestly did not know how I was going to survive. I was paralyzed many days with fear because not only did I go through a divorce, but I was also fighting for*

*my life. I had been given a two percent chance to be alive in ten years because of a reoccurrence of breast cancer. My son was only eight years old at the time. I lost my job. I felt like a failure. And the pain [of grief] was crippling. There were days I just was in bed staring at the ceiling, staring at the walls, and then staring back at the ceiling.”*

Yes, the pain is crippling. It might seem like you’ll never be happy again and that you’ll never make it through this mess. The future looks bleak. “Am I going crazy?” you wonder. Be assured that what you’re experiencing is normal. There is an end to this pain, and this week’s exercises will help you get started on the path of healing and hope.

DAY  
1

## I feel like I’m losing my mind

This is a typical feeling for a person going through a divorce or separation. It will get better.

### GOD’S MESSAGE TO YOU

*“Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.” (Psalm 31:9–10)*

1. David, the second king of Israel, wrote this psalm. Which of the emotions he describes here can you relate to as a result of your divorce or separation?

2. How are David’s emotions affecting him physically?

Emotionally, I was a mess. —Mica

3. Since your divorce or separation, what changes have you seen in your energy level, your ability to concentrate and your other physical or mental capacities?

**REMEMBER: YOUR ENERGY LEVEL AND MENTAL CAPACITY ARE LOWERED**

“I had almost zero energy,” shares Mica. “Emotionally you’re carrying such a heavy load that it depletes you. Every moment that I didn’t have to function for my children or my job, I was tucked into bed. The pain was so bad and so heavy I would shut down.”

“It took every ounce of my being to focus.” —Andy

**DAY  
2**

## It hurts when people judge me

People are talking about you, acting differently around you and sometimes judging you. And it hurts. What can you do about it?

### GOD’S MESSAGE TO YOU

*“I am ... despised by my neighbors—even my friends are afraid to come near me. When they see me on the street, they run the other way. I am ignored as if I were dead, as if I were a broken pot.”* (Psalm 31:11–12 NLT)

1. What is David experiencing in Psalm 31:11–12?

2. In what ways can a person in divorce or separation relate to David’s experience?

3. *“But I trust in you, LORD; I say, ‘You are my God.’ My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me ... The LORD preserves those who are true to him, but the proud he pays back in full. Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.”* (Psalm 31:14–15, 23b–24)

Even though David cannot see the solution or ending to his immediate problems, how does he deal with his situation? (List everything you can find in the above verses; he is sharing some specific ideas.)

**REMEMBER: FIND SAFE PEOPLE TO SHARE WITH**

“At DivorceCare you didn’t have to worry about anybody judging you or trying to hurt you,” shares Wesley. “It was a secure meeting. You could say anything you wanted and everybody was forgiving. There was no shame.”

**DAY  
3**

## Where do I turn for help?

“Scripture never calls us to stuff our feelings. We’re to call out to the living God. We’re to share our pain, our suffering, our disappointments, our distress.” —Dr. Michael R. Emlet

### GOD’S MESSAGE TO YOU

*“Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name.”* (Psalm 142:6–7a)

*“How long [LORD] must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?”* (Psalm 13:2)

1. David wrote Psalm 142 during a time of great distress in his life. What is David asking God to do in verses 6–7a?

I felt like I wasn’t going to be normal again. —Joy

2. What is David's struggle in Psalm 13:2?

3. Which descriptions in today's Bible verses best fit what you're feeling and struggling with?

4. Whom does the writer of today's Bible verses cry out to for help?

5. Today's Bible verses stress the importance of being honest with God. Write your honest feelings to God in the space below.

#### GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU

*"Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken ... Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge."* (Psalm 62:5-6, 8)

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" (Jeremiah 29:11)*

1. What does David find in his relationship with God, according to Psalm 62:5-6, 8?

2. What does David encourage all people to do in the Psalm 62 passage?

3. According to Jeremiah 29:11, why can you trust God with your future?

#### REMEMBER: CRY OUT TO GOD FOR HELP

"I was gut honest with God." —Georgia Shaffer

"Nothing has been a greater comfort than to go to my God and just to weep and to cry and to grieve and to know that He listens and He understands and He, in fact, cries and weeps with me." —Amber

DAY  
4

### I have so many fears

"How am I going to do this financially? How am I going to trust anyone ever again? Am I ever going to recover? Will I ever stop crying? Will I stop being irritable or exhausted or wiped out feeling?" —Joy

"I was afraid I would never be loved. I was afraid I'd never get to be a mom." —Deborah

#### REMEMBER: THERE IS HOPE FOR YOUR FUTURE

"I wasn't so much afraid to die, I was more afraid to live because I didn't know how I was going to make it. I looked at my future and I didn't see things ever getting any better," shares Georgia Shaffer. "And God showed up in ways that I could not have expected."

"I didn't believe I had a purpose. To know that He had a purpose and a plan for me was what changed me, and what helped me to grow." —Terri

DAY  
5

### Does anyone understand what I'm going through?

When hurts and despair hollow your gut, you might feel that God has abandoned you, and you wonder if there's any point in keeping your faith.

Deep down I still loved him. —Terri

## GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU

*“Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest [Jesus] who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”* (Hebrews 4:14b–16)

1. In the Bible, the book of Hebrews was directed to people who were tempted to renounce their faith due to difficulties (persecution). Perhaps you’ve had similar feelings as you’ve dealt with the difficulties of your divorce. **What does Hebrews 4:14b encourage you to do?**

2. The problem is, if you aren’t turning to God for comfort, you are turning to other things that cannot ultimately comfort you. **What other places/things have you turned to (or been tempted to turn to) for comfort?**

3. **What does Hebrews 4:14b–16 say about Jesus’s ability to understand your hurts, feelings, pressures and anxieties?**

4. **What does Hebrews 4:14b–16 say we will receive when we approach God’s throne of grace?**

The reason we can approach God’s throne and receive His help is described on page xi. Please read this to understand more about the help that Jesus has for you.

## REMEMBER: GOD HASN’T ABANDONED YOU

“God, help me to see You. Help me to experience You. Will You give me faith?” Anytime His people call out to Him,” says Elsa Kok Colopy, “even if it’s, ‘I don’t believe in You. I haven’t seen the evidence of You. I’ve gone through this divorce and I’m angry,’ be real about that and pour it out to Him, and watch how He meets you in that.”

## CONCLUSION TO GEORGIA’S STORY

*“One thing I learned is that the healthiest way to work through grief is to feel the pain, but also to purposely bring things into your life that give you that sense of hope. For me, it was to go to the garden. I got outside of my pain, and the miracle of planting a seed and watching it grow reminded me of God, the Creator. So staying stuck in the muck of despair wasn’t good, and distracting myself wasn’t good, but it was a combination of doing both that gave me a sense of relief, a sense of hope. Slowly, little by little, over time I could process.”*

## NEXT SESSION

Find out how long the healing process typically takes and what you can do to help yourself move in the right direction.

What am I doing wrong? Why can’t I pop out of this? —Lesia

# MY WEEKLY JOURNAL

## SESSION ONE

1. The newest loss I have felt is ...

4. Some emotions that have surprised me this week are ...

2. My greatest blessing this week has been ...

5. Write a note or a prayer to God describing your feelings, your hopes and your fears.

6. Write out three things you have learned or three things that God has taught you this week.

### 3. Personal evaluation section:

Rate how you have been this week by checking the level you have experienced in each area on the chart below.

	REALLY BAD	OKAY	PRETTY GOOD	GREAT
*EMOTIONALLY				
PHYSICALLY				
SPIRITUALLY (CLOSENESS TO GOD)				
RELATIONALLY (CLOSENESS TO OTHERS)				
HOW YOUR LIFE IS IN GENERAL				

\*Place a checkmark to record your current status related to each category this week. Even better, substitute a word or two to describe how you are doing.

# PARENT PAGE



## SESSION ONE

If your child is participating in the **DivorceCare for Kids (DC4K)** program, this **Parent Page** will make you aware of the weekly theme, give you tips to create stronger bonds in your single-parent family and help enhance the parent/child relationship. We suggest you purchase or create a journal to record stories, comments and funny things that happen in your family.

For more information about DC4K, ask your DivorceCare leader or visit [www.DC4K.org](http://www.DC4K.org).

## WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MY FAMILY?

### This week's goal

To help children develop a feeling of safety about the new family structure.

### What the experts say

"From age six to just before puberty, the most significant reaction to divorce is one of anxiety. Children are afraid of what is happening. They don't have the skills to know how they can survive. They don't understand anything, and when parents don't keep them adequately informed, they imagine all sorts of horrible things," says Dr. Archibald Hart.\*

### This week in DC4K

We talked about the importance of feeling safe. The children were told that the DC4K leaders are Safekeepers. As the parent in your home, you too can adopt this concept. Tell your children that you are the Safekeeper in your home. It is your job to keep them safe. It is their job to help you keep things safe.

### One family's story

One mother reported that her son worried that someone was going to break in their house at night when everyone was asleep. This wise mother took him around to all the doors and windows and showed him the locks. She put a steel bat in the sliding door and had him try to open it. They talked about calling 911, including when and how to use the phone number. She made sure he had the phone number of their neighbor. She reassured him that he was safe. In your journal this week, write a story about how your family keeps safe.

### This week's Scripture focus

*"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1)*

### Building family strengths

Hold a family meeting. Find a place in your home that feels comfortable, warm and safe. Tell the children this will be your meeting place and decide how often you will meet. Discuss fears each family member has. Brainstorm ways to overcome these fears. Take notes in your journal and date them. Later, you will be able to look back and see the progress your family is making.

Send your child with a recent picture of your family to DC4K next week. (If you don't have a recent family picture, encourage your child to draw one and bring it.)

\* Church Initiative interview with Christian clinical psychologist Dr. Archibald Hart.