



From We to Me: Embracing Life Again After the Death or Divorce of a Spouse

Robert C. De Vries

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The death of a spouse is a monumental event, regardless of how good or bad the marital relationship was in life. Divorce provokes many of the same emotions as death, with the added stress of seeing one's ex after the divorce is finalized (for child custody duties, court appearances, etc.). When a spouse dies, it feels as though the whole world falls into stasis, and the surviving spouse often copes with the loss by living in a kind of autopilot mode. Regardless of whether death or divorce ends the marriage, what to do about grief—indeed, whether one should do anything about it—is a question that many spouses must have asked themselves countless times.

With four books on death and dying already in print, Susan J. Zonnebelt-Smeenge and Robert C. De Vries return to the topic with *From We to Me*. It focuses on a Christian-based method for coping with the death of a marital relationship, whether through spousal death or divorce. The authors initially met to write this book and, through the course of that project, discovered they were falling in love with each other. A nice story, of course, but it doesn't end there. Both were widowed, with children from previous marriages, making them uniquely suited to write this book.

The book covers the entire range of the process of dealing with the end of a marriage. The authors stress that completing the grief process is vital before embarking on future relationships. The tone is caring and warm, making use of biblical quotes as well as psychological explanations to bring the grieving process and what comes after into sharp relief. There are emotional and spiritual holes to fill, dealing with physical intimacy issues, having a reliable support network, and confronting head-on the choice of whether or not to date again. All these issues are addressed with ample commonsense advice and the knowledge that not all readers will be in the same emotional space when they read it. The provision of sections for the widowed and the divorced in each chapter in the first half of the book is ingenious. Whether one is a widow or divorced, reading both sections in each chapter is worthwhile.

Anyone who's endured the death or divorce of a spouse, or knows someone who has, could benefit from reading *From We to Me*. Zonnebelt-Smeenge and De Vries have written a well-thought-out, practical guide with Christian-based spiritual advice. Whether one is a practicing Christian or not, much of what the authors write about will apply to the death of almost any relationship.

J. G. STINSON (July / August 2010)

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