

# Terminal Illness

QUICK REFERENCE COUNSELING KEYS Excerpt

## An Unwanted Reality . . .

The statistics are amazingly consistent, one out of one dies! The ultimate reality is: All life is terminal! God's masterpiece of creation is destined for death. Yet, since we were originally created for life, dying becomes an unwanted intrusion. Even the knowledge of our own impending death can become an unwanted reality. Like a flower clutching its last petal of pride, our hearts cry out, "Not me . . . not now!"

*"All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls."  
(1 Peter 1:24)*

**Q:** "What can I say to a friend who is grieving because of a terminal illness?"

Being there and listening is more important than talking. Be slow to use Scripture, and when you do, choose only those verses that are uplifting.

*"There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."  
(Proverbs 12:18)*

**Q:** "How is it possible to live with the emotional stress of knowing that you are going to die?"

Such knowledge should force you to focus on God's purpose for your life and teach you to live for what is really important.

*"We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."  
(Romans 8:28–29)*

**Q:** "Is it always best to reveal the truth to a person who has been diagnosed as having a terminal illness?"

Yes. Most terminally ill patients instinctively know when they are not getting well. Dishonesty and deception rob them of dignity and the motivation to get their relationships and affairs in order before they die.

*"You shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another."  
(Leviticus 19:11)*

## Facing Eternity

### The Reality of Heaven

You were created to enjoy unending fellowship with God and His children in heaven. (Revelation 21:10–11)

#### Heaven is . . .

- The place where God lives (1 Kings 8:30)
- The place of no hunger or thirst (Revelation 7:16)
- The place of no crying or pain (Revelation 21:4)
- The place of no death or mourning (Revelation 21:4)
- The place of no impurity or evil (Revelation 21:27)

### The Reality of Hell

Satan is the supreme master at convincing people that eternal punishment does not exist. The truth is, God does not send people to hell—people choose their own destiny through unbelief. (John 3:18)

#### Hell is . . .

- A place of weeping and torment (Matthew 13:42)
- A place of wrath and anger (Romans 2:8)
- A place of eternal fire (Mark 9:47–48)
- A place of confinement and conscious separation from God (Luke 16:26)
- A place of condemnation and punishment (2 Peter 2:3)

## Hospice Care

**H**ome team effort—The hospice care team includes nursing, physician calls, family counseling, housekeeping services, volunteer help, and spiritual support.

**O**verall approach—Hospice care provides a coordinated system of physical, emotional, and spiritual care.

**S**pecialized services—Physical therapy, medical equipment and supplies, nutritional counseling, and meal planning are supplied.

**P**ain control—Hospice care tries to prevent pain from occurring rather than just giving relief on demand.

**I**nvolvement with family—Hospice teams assist and educate the family members or caregivers in ways to make their job easier.

**C**ost effectiveness—Hospice care is between 20 and 40 percent less expensive than staying in a hospital.

**E**mphasis on quality of life—The main goal of hospice care is to allow the patient to die with dignity and self-respect in a worry free, loving environment.

*“We ought to support people like these,  
that we may be fellow workers for the truth”  
(3 John 8)*

## Leading the Way to the Lord

Those who are close to death are often more receptive to spiritual things.

**Seek** to be alone with the person who is dying.  
(Mark 4:34)

**Speak** directly about judgment and eternal life.  
(Hebrews 9:27)

**Share** the problem of sin in simple terms. (Romans 3:23)

**State** the consequences of sin. (Romans 6:23)

**Specify** God's solution to sin. (Romans 5:8)

**Set** forth the purpose of Jesus. (John 3:16)

**Single** out Christ as the only way to be saved.  
(John 14:6)

**Suggest** a prayer of salvation. (Acts 16:31)

### Key Verse to Memorize

*“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”*  
(Psalm 23:4)

## Key Passage to Read and Reread

**2 Corinthians 4:16–5:5**

### Preparing for *Reality*

**R**ecord your will. (Hebrews 9:17)

**E**xpress your desires. (Hebrews 11:22)

**A**rrange your affairs. (1 Chronicles 28:11, 19)

**L**eave a legacy of love. (2 Timothy 1:3–4)

**I**dentify your fears. (Psalm 46:1–2)

**T**rust your God. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

**Y**ield your heart. (Joshua 24:23)

*“Thus says the LORD, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover.’”*  
(2 Kings 20:1)

### Related Topics . . .

- Caregiving:  
*A Privilege, Not a Prison*
- Chronic Illness/Disabilities:  
*God's Peace in the Midst of Pain*
- Death:  
*The Doorway to Your Eternal Destiny*
- Euthanasia:  
*The Myth of Mercy Killing*
- Grief Recovery:  
*Living at Peace with Loss*
- Hope:  
*The Anchor of the Soul*

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#### **Terminal Illness:**

*How Can I Ever Let Go?*

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For prayer encouragement and biblical counsel call 1-866-570-HOPE (4673).



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