

Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias



Helpful Scripture

"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. 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." (Psalms 23:1-4)

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains-where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." (Psalm 121:1-2)

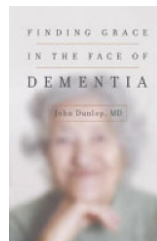
"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." (Deuteronomy 31:8)

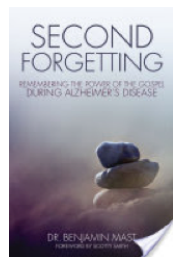
Helpful Resources



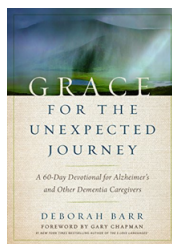
The Alzheimer's Association is an excellent resource for reliable information, education, referral and support. 24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900 or www.alz.org



John Dunlop, MD
Finding Grace in the Face of Dementia



Dr. Benjamin T. Mast
Second Forgetting: Remembering the Power of the Gospel During Alzheimer's Disease



Deborah Barr
Grace for the Unexpected Journey

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia, you are not alone.

Today, an estimated 47 million people worldwide have dementia, including more than 5 million Americans. Dementia is a general term for a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with daily life. Memory loss is often one of the first noticeable symptoms. Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, which leads to changes in memory, thinking and behavior. Many people are impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia, but help and support are available.



Ten Signs of Alzheimer's or Other Dementias

1. **Memory loss that disrupts daily life.** One of the first signs of Alzheimer's disease is forgetting recently learned information, important dates or events, asking for the same information over and over and increasingly needing to rely on memory aids.
2. **Challenges in planning or solving problems.** Some people may experience changes in their ability to follow or develop a plan or work with numbers. This may result in difficulties with finances or cooking. They may also have difficulty concentrating and take much longer to do things than they did before.
3. **Difficulty completing familiar tasks.** People with Alzheimer's often find it hard to complete daily tasks such as driving to a familiar location or completing familiar tasks at work.
4. **Confusion with time and place.** People with Alzheimer's can lose track of dates, seasons and the passage of time. They may also forget where they are or how they got there.
5. **Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.** Some people with Alzheimer's have difficulty reading, judging distance or determining color contrast. This may make driving difficult.
6. **New problems with words while speaking or writing.** It may be difficult for a person with Alzheimer's disease to follow or join a conversation. They may struggle to find the right words or may stop in the middle of a conversation and not know how to continue.
7. **Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.** A person with Alzheimer's disease may misplace things or put them in unusual places.
8. **Decreased or poor judgement.** Changes in judgement or decision making is a common sign of Alzheimer's. People with Alzheimer's may use poor judgement in spending money or struggle with hygiene.
9. **Withdrawn from work or social activities.** It is common for a person with Alzheimer's to withdraw from activities they previously enjoyed. Their symptoms may make it difficult to fully engage or keep up with others.
10. **Changes in mood or personality.** Mood and personality changes are a symptom of Alzheimer's disease. A person with Alzheimer's may become confused, anxious, irritated, suspicious, depressed or fearful. They may become emotional or easily upset when they are not in a comfortable environment.

Taken from Alzheimer's Association, 10 Signs of Alzheimer's Disease. For more information about the symptoms of Alzheimer's, visit alz.org/10signs. If you or someone you know is experiencing some of these symptoms, the next step is to discuss them with a primary care physician.

When the Diagnosis is Alzheimer's or Dementia

The following suggestions may be helpful for both persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia as well as their caregivers.

Educate yourself about the disease. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia, it is important to educate yourself about the disease, its progression and how you can live each day to the fullest. The Alzheimer's Association is an excellent resource. Through their website (www.alz.org) they provide important information for people with Alzheimer's and dementia and their caregivers, and a listing of local support groups and educational workshops. Additionally, they offer a 24/7 helpline (1.800.272.3900) to answer questions and point people to helpful resources.

Build a network of support. A diagnosis of Alzheimer's or dementia can be overwhelming and frightening. It is normal for both the person diagnosed and caregivers to feel a variety of emotions, including anger, depression, fear, isolation and loss. It is important to build in a network of support in the early stages of the disease so you have the support you need as the disease progresses. This network is often comprised of friends, family and professionals who offer medical, emotional, practical and spiritual support.

Enjoy each day. There is often the misconception that people with dementia will need to sacrifice activities that once gave them pleasure. Activities merely need to be adapted to the individual's current level of ability. Both the person diagnosed and their caregivers can continue to enjoy and find meaning in each day by taking care of their bodies, engaging in enjoyable activities, being social and staying connected to feelings.

Plan for the future. It is important to take the time to plan for the future. Putting legal, financial and safety plans in place during the early stages of the disease allows for both the caregiver and person with the diagnosis to participate in planning and decision making. For more detailed information on legal and financial planning, visit the Alzheimer's Associations website at alz.org/IHaveAlz or call 1.800.272.3900. For information on safety planning, visit alz.org/safety.

Look to God for comfort, peace, strength and hope. The diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or dementia often creates much uncertainty, fear and a deep sense of loss for everyone involved. It is important to share your thoughts and emotions with the Lord and allow Him to help and care for you. Through the journey of dementia, God wants you to know that He is present, offers comfort and peace, extends his grace during times of weakness and offers an eternal hope in His love and salvation.