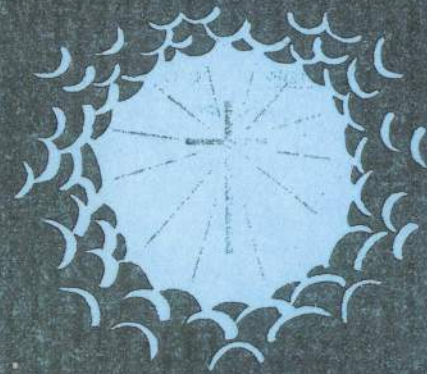


FACING DEATH



ARMENIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA
WESTERN DIOCESE
Department of Youth Activities and
Christian Education

LITHO IN U.S.A.

Because our attitude toward death now
**WILL DETERMINE
WHAT KIND OF LIFE WE'LL LIVE**

- whether or not we do some good for the world
- whether or not we give -- and get -- love
- how we actually endure the process of dying.

**WHY
talk about
FACING DEATH
now?**



Death
is a fact of life--
it's inevitable.

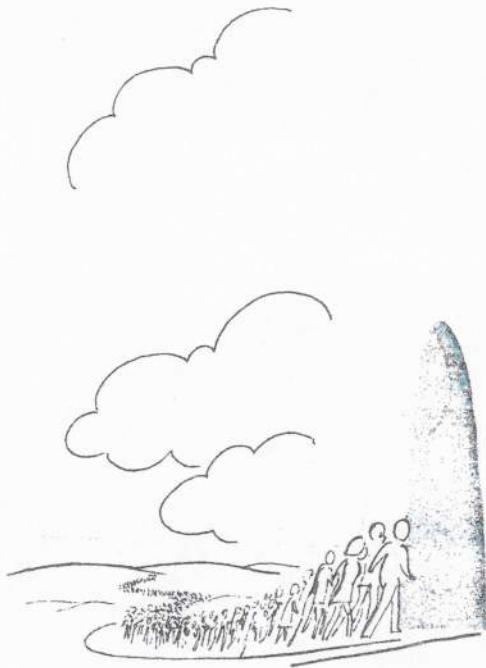
TALKING ABOUT DEATH
--knowing what to expect--
can **LESSEN** our **FEAR** of it

- help us to accept its reality and so accomplish much with our lives.
- help us to die in peace and dignity when it's time.



CHRISTIANITY
teaches that
**DEATH IS A
BRIDGE** between
this life and
the next...

To a Christian,
death is an end--
(end of this life on earth)



-- and death is
a **BEGINNING**

CHRIST HIMSELF
proclaimed and proved
this central message of
Christianity through His
own resurrection.

"He who believes in me,
though he die, yet shall
he live."

-- JOHN 11:25

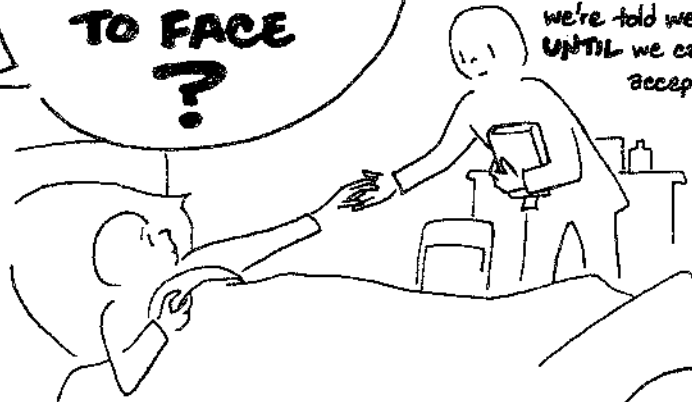
Christ's apostle **PAUL**
explained that death is
a change from a simpler
to a more complex life
through resurrection.

"For since we believe
that Jesus died and rose
again, even so, through
Jesus, God will bring
with Him those who
have fallen asleep."

-- 1 Thessalonians 4:14

Then why is death so **HARD TO FACE** ?

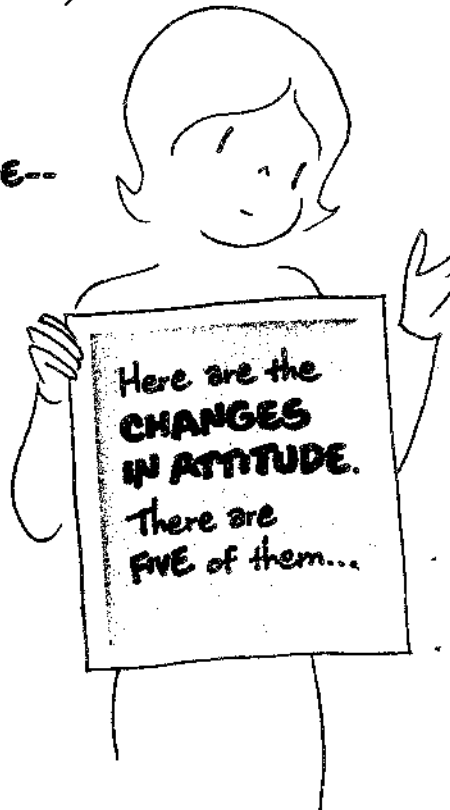
No matter how strong our faith... **MOST OF US NEED HELP COPING** when we're told we're going to die... **UNTIL** we can **TRULY** accept it.



COPING with death often requires **CHANGES IN ATTITUDE**-- leading to acceptance.

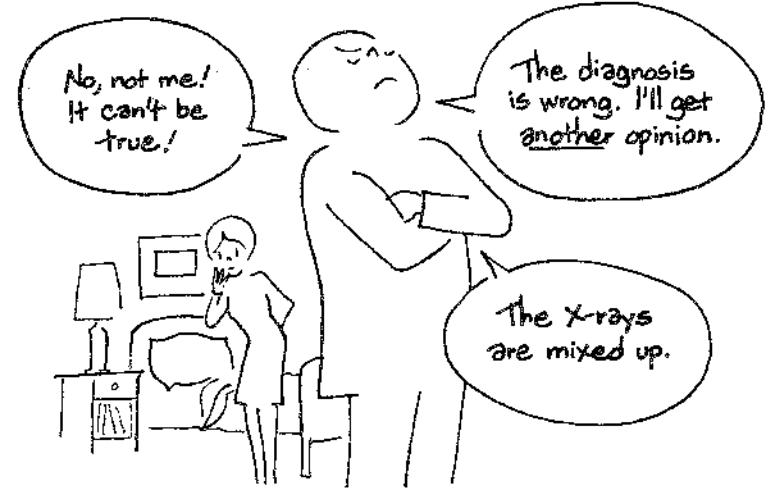
We can express our **LOVE** and **CONCERN** for the dying person and learn to cope with death ourselves by

- being there when needed
- thinking of his or her needs over our own
- sharing our real feelings.



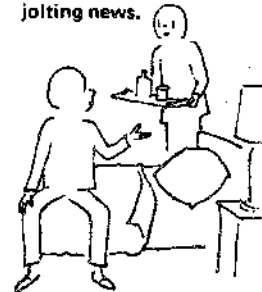
FIRST...

A dying person may **DENY** death

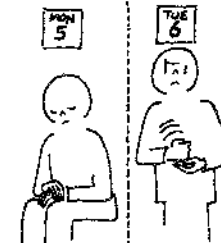


We can help by **LETTING HIM OR HER DENY IT** as much as needed (but not encouraging it)

- being constantly **PATIENT**, not judging. Denial is a natural reaction to such jolting news.



- **EXPECTING CHANGE** from time to time -- denial one day, acceptance the next -- so that we can keep ourselves steady.



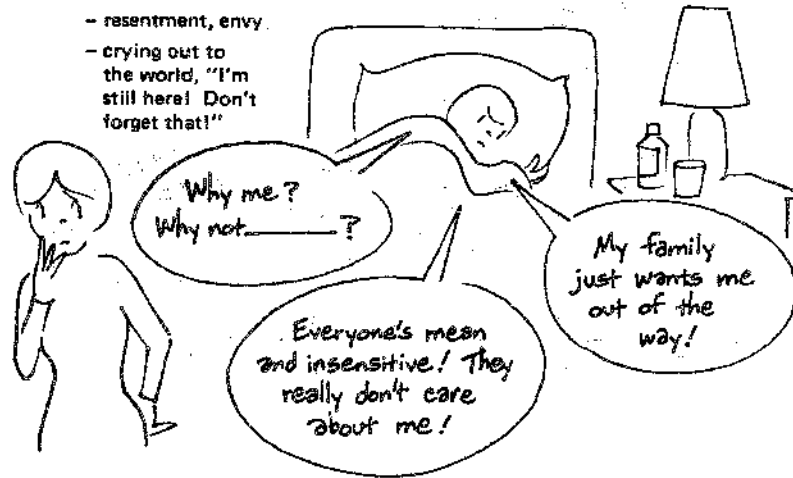
- **WHEN** the dying person is **READY**, reading the Bible together; talking about Christ's death -- His agony and doubts.



SECOND...

A dying person may express **ANGER**

- resentment, envy
- crying out to the world, "I'm still here! Don't forget that!"

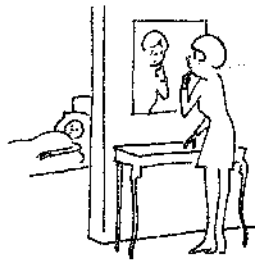


We can help by **SHARING** our time and a sympathetic ear--letting the anger be expressed

- avoiding arguing back, understanding. (How would we feel if all our dreams and relationships were about to come to an end?)



- **ASKING OURSELVES** -- is it our own fear of death that makes us react defensively?



- **WHEN** the dying person is **READY** -- reminding him or her about Christ's life -- and death -- of sacrifice; how He was rejected even by His own followers, etc.; how He also struggled with doubts in the Garden of Gethsemane, but stood strong to the end.

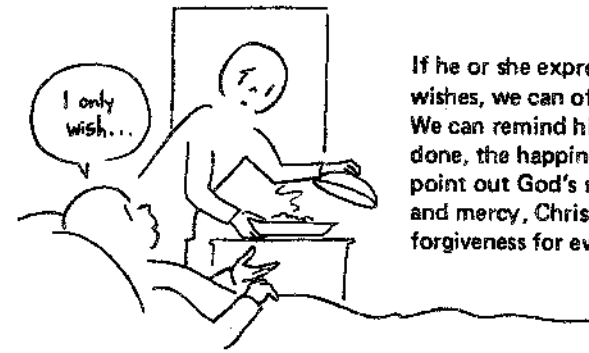


THIRD...

A dying person may try to **BARGAIN** with God (usually not aloud)



We can help by **REALIZING** that the person may feel guilty--for not being more religious, etc.



If he or she expresses these hidden wishes, we can offer encouragement. We can remind him or her of the good done, the happiness had, etc. We can point out God's never-ending love and mercy, Christ's sacrifice and forgiveness for every one of us.

FOURTH...

A dying person may experience **DEPRESSION**

...sadness and a great sense of loss.

AT FIRST the dying person will be depressed about "losing" identity as a person, ability to carry out responsibilities.

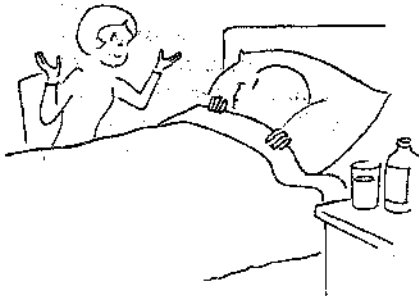


LATER the person will be more deeply depressed thinking about all that will be lost -- everything and everyone he or she loved.



We can help in **TWO WAYS...**

We can try to be **CHEERING** -- with pleasant conversation, encouragement that the family's doing well, bolstering self-esteem, reminiscing ...



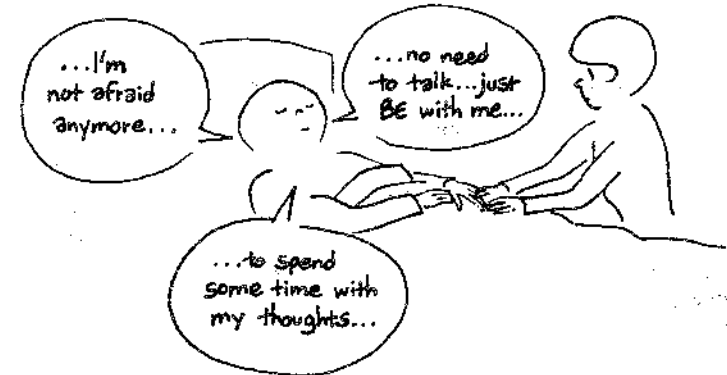
... or we can **REMAIN SILENT** -- letting grief be expressed; not trying to be cheerful.



When emotions are under control-- we can remind the dying person of Christ's promises of eternal life in Heaven with Him.

FINALLY...

A dying person, given enough time and understanding, may eventually **ACCEPT** death.



We also must accept this reality... not clinging... letting go so he or she can die with inner peace and dignity

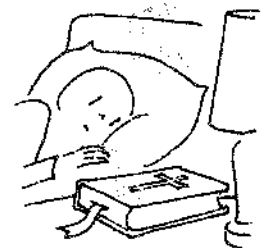
-- OFFERING our presence quietly, not demanding conversation.



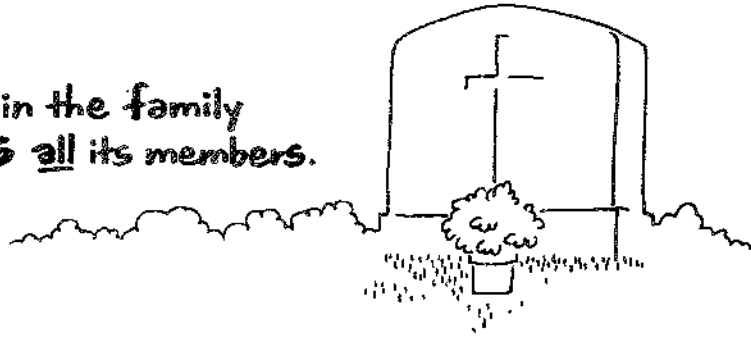
-- NOT FEELING REJECTED because he or she is detached. It's natural to want to put one's thoughts in order.



-- leaving a BIBLE nearby so it can be read when desired.



A death in the family
AFFECTS all its members.



GRIEF

- feelings that parallel the dying person's.
- emptiness, sorrow, loneliness - we should EXPRESS these feelings to sympathetic listeners; and not brood over "what might have been." We can express our love for the dead person in the way we go on living.

ADJUSTMENT

- to a new everyday routine.
- to added responsibilities, duties that may cause frustration and apprehension. If some unfamiliar chores are too difficult, a friend or relative can probably help out.
- to the loneliness. It is important now to go out with friends and have fun -- to keep spirits up.

But **CONSOLATION** will come sooner--
and more deeply--if we look in the
Bible for the wisdom that can
help us understand.

FRIENDS and NEIGHBORS

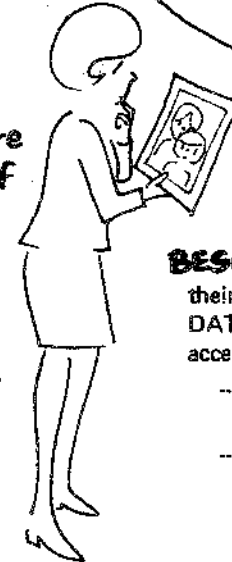
can help out the family now --
by lending a sympathetic
ear . . . quietly
sharing their
chores.



What about
the **CHILDREN**...
what shall we tell them
about death
?

Children
should share
family grief
as well as
joy.

If they want
to attend
funeral services,
we should
let them.

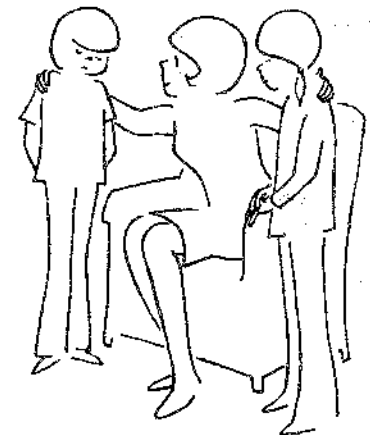


BESIDES . . . someday they'll have to face
their own dying. WE CAN LAY THE FOUN-
DATION for their faith in God and fearless
acceptance of death by

- encouraging them to EXPRESS their feelings
- ANSWERING their questions as clearly and fully AS WE CAN.

NOTE: Often children feel guilty
for a relative's "going away" (guilty
over past quarrels, angry words and
thoughts).

Talk it over with them; reassure
them so they'll understand that they
had nothing to do with the death.



What
is
DEATH
?



MEDICALLY SPEAKING,

death is a process, rather than a moment in time: all vital body functions (pulse, respiration, brain waves) cease to function permanently, but not all at the same time.

THEOLOGICALLY SPEAKING,

death happens when the body begins to disintegrate; defining the precise moment is not important.

According to Christ's assurances--
AT DEATH we give our lives back to God

God transforms our body; our whole personality will enter a **NEW ENVIRONMENT** -- Heaven.

"For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable. . . . For . . . this mortal nature must put on immortality."

— I Corinthians 15:52-53



What's
HEAVEN
like
?

It's **DIFFERENT** from the space/time environment we know on this earth

. . . where **CHRIST** will **WELCOME US** and the **HUMAN PERSON** (body and soul) will **FLOWER** into its most wonderful form.

Living there will involve developing relationships, truly communicating, acquiring knowledge . . . but **ON A MUCH HIGHER LEVEL** than is done here on earth.

Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him . . .

— I John 3:2

The Kingdom of Heaven is OPEN to EVERYONE

-- to those who trust in Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection as the fulfillment of God's promises of salvation.

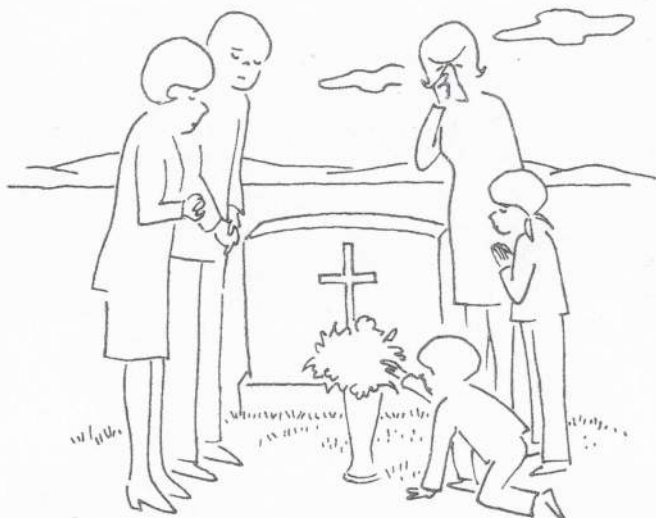
-- to those who act in accordance with God's law by the light of nature.

— Romans 2:12-16



When someone dies,
it brings us ALL close to death

- it's a time for questioning
- it's a time to re-evaluate life's purposes, our own lives
- it reminds us that our time will come someday.



It's a time to
RENEW OUR FAITH in
Christ's RESURRECTION
--His promise of Salvation



Each of us should be
PREPARED to FACE DEATH
--at any moment--in the
WAY WE'RE LIVING!



"Watch therefore -- for
you do not know when
the master of the house
will come . . . lest he
come suddenly and find
you asleep."

-- Mark 13:35

Let's re-evaluate our lives now!