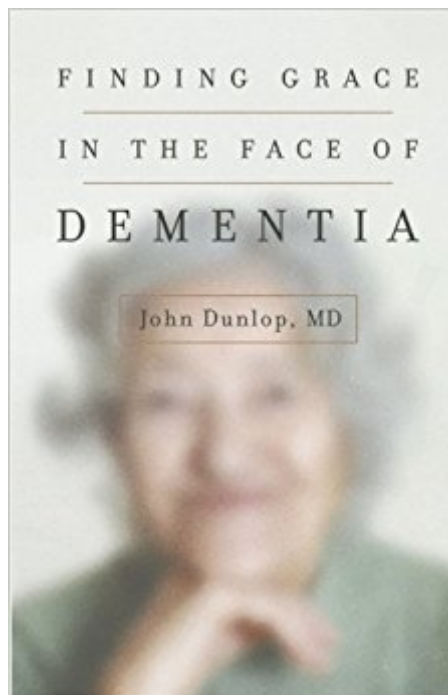




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# Finding Grace In The Face Of Dementia: "Experiencing Dementia--Honoring God"



## Synopsis

A diagnosis of dementia in a loved one can be both frightening and frustrating. Only a biblical foundation fuels a Christian response that both honors the patient and glorifies God. Drawing on years of professional experience working with Alzheimer's patients, Dr. John Dunlop wants to transform the way we think about dementia. Rooting his vision of care in the inherent dignity that stems from the fact that all people are made in the image of God, he explains biblical principles, describes the experience of dementia, and answers common questions about the condition. With a plan for how to care for patients with compassion and respect, this book helps caregivers, family members, and anyone else affected by dementia honor God as they improve the quality of care to patients.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“This book offers needed help and hope for those who have a loved one experiencing dementia. John Dunlop’s training as a medical doctor, along with his understanding of what the Bible teaches us about our bodies and our souls, gives him a unique perspective from which to address this crucial issue.” —Dennis Rainey, President and CEO, FamilyLife; host, FamilyLife Today; author, *Stepping Up* “Finding this book is like discovering a wonderful treasure. John Dunlop has mined decades of experience as geriatrician, son of a mother with dementia, bioethics expert, and active church member to help the rest of us make sense of a condition that seems to rob people of every shred of dignity. Drawing on the glorious biblical truth of every person’s creation in the image of God, Dunlop shows that dignity cannot be lost even in the face of dementia. People

entering or anticipating the experience of dementia, as well as their family, friends, and caregiversâin other words, nearly everyoneâwill find in this book the grace they need to cope with its challenges.âJohn F. Kilner,Â professor of bioethics and contemporary culture, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; author,Â *Why People Matter*Â andÂ *Dignity and Destiny*âAlmost thirty years ago, my mother died of complications springing from nine years of Alzheimerâs Disease. During those nine years I read several helpful books that described the stages of the disease, what to expect, and how to respond. Nowadays similar resources are found on the web. But there is nothing quite like John Dunlopâs book on dementia. Decades of experience as a geriatrician and a devout Christian combine to help other believers think through dementiaâwhat it means, how to trust God when you see its onset (in you or in friends and relatives), and, yes, how God glorifies himself and brings strength to his people precisely in the midst of such horrendous, ravaging illness. This book will help you become a better caregiver; more importantly, it will help you become a more mature and thoughtful Christian. It may even help you become a better patient.âD. A. Carson,Â research professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; cofounder, The Gospel CoalitionâMy father-in-law resided with us through his eight-year journey with Alzheimerâs. As a physician, I had taken care of patients with dementia, but then I lived with the disease. The best way to help a friend or family member dealing with this illness is to give them a copy of this book. It is an invaluable resource.âDavid Stevens, CEO, Christian Medical and Dental Associations

*Finding Grace in the Face of Dementia* is a remarkably helpful book on the increasingly common phenomenon of dementia. Growing out of his medical practice as a geriatric physician and his experience as a caregiver for his parents, both of whom suffered from dementia, John Dunlop writes for those who struggle with this disease themselves, for caregivers, and for members of the body of Christ eager to lean in and love well in these difficult circumstances. This book ably and understandably covers the waterfront medically, theologically, practically, and experientially. Combining compassionate kindness, sober realism, appropriate anguish and lament, and ultimate confidence in Godâs love and grace, Dunlop both encourages and fortifies those who suffer and those who give care. This book rings true to my own experience with my mother, who suffered from dementia for twenty years. May this much-needed resource be used widely and mightily in the days ahead.âSteven C. Roy, associate professor of pastoral theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity SchoolâDementia may well be the most feared diagnosis in the Western world, and this book is a timely contribution to a community in need of education and encouragement. Dunlop does not gloss over the challenges that dementia can bring but takes us by the hand and leads us sympathetically through the various aspects of the illness. Dunlopâs

extensive experience allows him to contribute rich practical and spiritual wisdom for those walking this path. I highly recommend it as a guide.âMegan Best, palliative care practitioner; bioethicist

John Dunlop (MD, Johns Hopkins University) serves as an adjunct professor at Trinity International University and practices geriatrics in New Haven, Connecticut, where he is affiliated with Yale School of Medicine. Dunlop is the author of *Finishing Well to the Glory of God: Strategies from a Christian Physician and Wellness for the Glory of God: Living Well After 40 with Joy and Contentment in All of Life*.

the book is very informative and nicely written. I recommend to anyone with spouse or family with any type of dementia.

One of the best books on dementia that I have ever read!!

Very good, practical and helpful in many ways as a caregiver.

Dr. John Dunlop, a geriatrician, has written a brisk and authoritative book about dementia, its different forms and symptoms, the treatments available and, most important, how families can confer dignity, as well as emotional and spiritual well-being on a loved one who is suffering. This topic is near to my heart, as my mother died last year with some form of dementia (never diagnosed... she denied it was happening). When caregiving for a person with dementia, it is tricky balancing the need for safety with the desire for independence. Dr. Dunlop suggests ways to allow patients with dementia to have choices in their life. He also discusses how to convey love to the patient, even in the final stages of dementia or Alzheimers. Most helpful to me was the section on how dementia patients experience the world around them -- with that perspective in mind, it's easier to understand the responses and characteristics a person with dementia displays. Because the book is written from a Christian perspective, it also addresses the spiritual dimensions of both dementia and caregiving. It's something I thought little about as we cared for my mother. The day-to-day physical care is so mind-numbing and exhausting, you won't have the energy for the spiritual unless you think about it beforehand. I'm not sure I agree with the author that God "allows" dementia or disease, or that it has a purpose. From my hundreds of conversations with people who suffer disease, accidents and other misfortunes, my feeling is that these things come into our lives at random, simply because we live in a fallen world. But I agree with the author that "even when I do

not fully understand, I have learned I can still trust him."Unfortunately, the author does not address situations that are less than perfect. He states that caregiving should always come from a place of love, not obligation. But what if the person you're caring for was a miserable human being who brought nothing but pain and hurt into your life? While you might not provide care with love, you might provide care because there is no one else to do it, or just because this is your parent or grandparent. I believe God honors that. He gives many suggestions for how to engage a person through singing or playing hymns or favorite songs, reliving memories through photographs, etc. It made me sad, because in our situation, there was nothing in my mother's life that brought her joy, except hobbies she could no longer participate in. Day in and day out we just sat in the hospital or rehab room while she napped and we stared off into space. She didn't even have the desire or ability to watch her long-time favorite TV show. We couldn't find any way to bring her even a moment's happiness or peace, though as Dr. Dunlop points out, the patient may be at more peace than the caregiver, no matter how advanced the dementia. Also, from our own situation I realized that a person's care becomes complicated in situations where the family cannot agree on care options. When you don't agree with the person who is legally able to make the decisions, it can be agonizing. I could have used some advice as to how to reason with a stubborn person, and how to deal with the frustration and anger that arises when unnecessary treatments are inflicted. (My mother underwent pacemaker surgery in the last weeks of her life, because we could not dissuade my father from the belief that it would restore her to her previous state of health. I curse the doctor who offered the surgery.) The person closest to the patient often cannot see clearly enough to make wise decisions. They are desperate to keep the person they love alive, no matter the cost. Still, this is a valuable book for those caring for a person with dementia. I would recommend that it be read not just once, but often as you provide care. Every day has its frustrations and it can be hard to keep your temper or your sanity if you are not given frequent doses of encouragement.

“Finding Grace in the Face of Dementia” by Dr. John Dunlop is one of those rare books that combines valuable scientific information with meaningful spiritual insight. Although Dr. Dunlop's theological perspective stems from a more Evangelical background than my own, his personal experience as a geriatrician gives him an unquestionable authenticity in terms of applying those religious ideals. This is one of those books where a perusal of the Table of Contents is valuable indeed. The author provides a great deal of practical information, as well as giving the reader the option of focusing on specific concerns depending on their own needs. For instance, I found Chapter 2, “What Should We Know about Dementia”, extremely informative and

interestingly written. Dr. Dunlop intersperses personal anecdotes, case studies, and scriptural references liberally throughout his narrative, and yet maintains an overall tone of compassionate objectivity. He is realistic that many people may not share his philosophical and religious perspective, and is not judgmental, but is forthright in supporting his own convictions. Although no one wants to contemplate the likelihood of having to deal with mental deterioration in oneself or others, as the author points out there is a high probability that this will occur. This book offers a very useful assist in facing that probability constructively.

As a Care Manager (nurse/social worker), I see dementia in the elderly every single day, from one degree to another. It is a heart breaking, heart wrenching disease. It steals the mind, and eventually, the body, of those we want to care for the most. It is hardest on those who must care for these individuals. Their family. Imagine walking up to your mother, or your father, and having them look you in the eye and saying "Who are you?" It happens all the time. It begins with little things: misplacing the car keys, forgetting where you laid something down, to losing your way when driving to a familiar place, to forgetting your very own identity. It comes like a thief in the night. And it steals your mind. Slowly your body begins to deteriorate as well. Until eventually, the you, well the you that once was, is gone completely. Dunlop tells the story of how to face this horrible disease process with grace. Using Biblical principles, he tells us how to face each day with someone we love who has been diagnosed. The hardest part of having a family member with dementia is in finding the light heartedness needed to survive with grace. Faith is the key. And Dunlop reminds us of how we can keep our faith in God, and allow Him to take control during these dark times. A well written book, I was in tears one minute and smiling the next, as I was taken on a roller coaster ride through my own memories of caring for people with dementia. A book that is a must read for anyone with a family member, friend, colleague, or client who is suffering from dementia. I give this book five stars, and a big thumbs up! You can find this book on .com Paperback is \$12.41, ebook is \$11.79, and audio CD is \$19.98.

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