

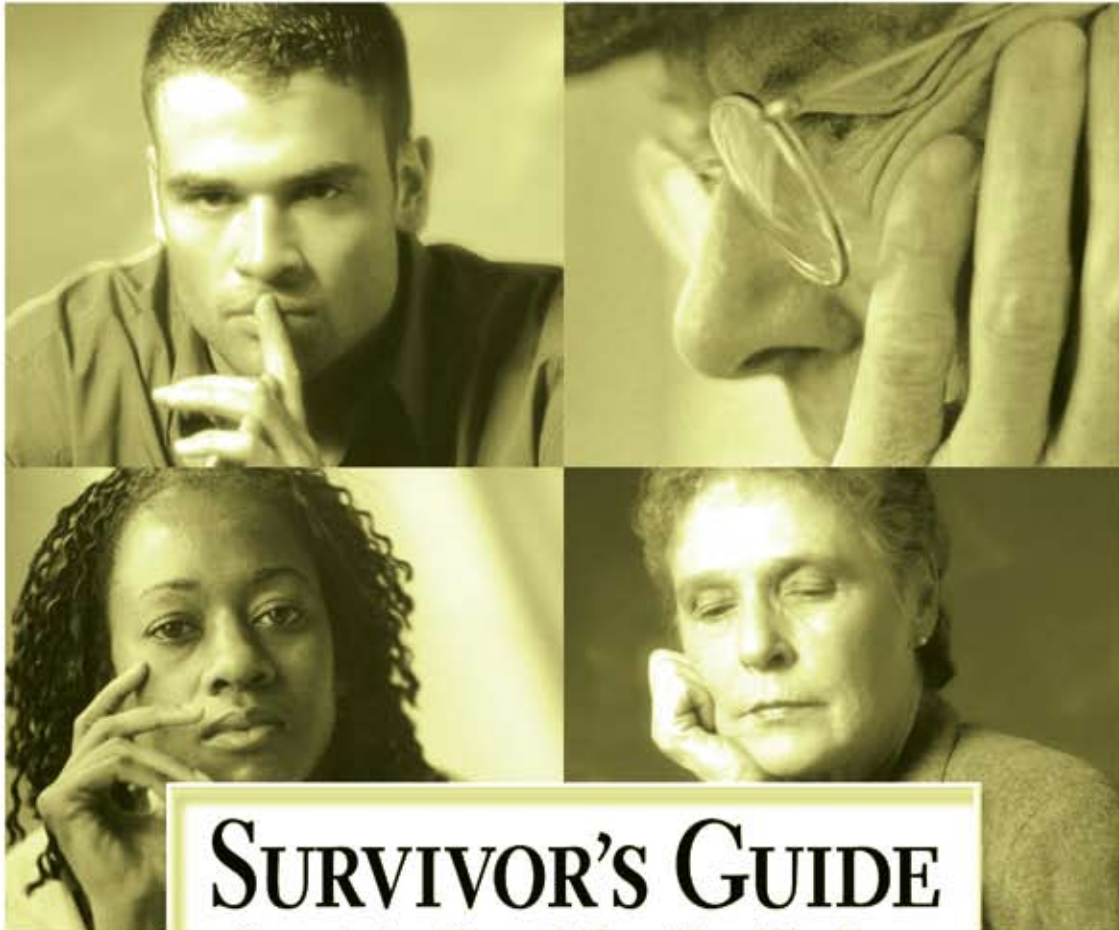


SURVIVOR'S GUIDE

Organizing Your Life - After The Loss



Southern Baptist
FOUNDATION



SURVIVOR'S GUIDE

Organizing Your Life - After The Loss

Written by:
Brenda B. McCollum, J.D.
Director, Office of Strategic Endowment Giving
Florida Baptist Convention

Adapted with permission for use by the
Southern Baptist Foundation
Nashville, Tennessee



INTRODUCTION

Anyone who has ever experienced the loss of a loved one will tell you they deeply appreciated friends who took the time to come alongside of them, to pray with and for them. This may include others who helped with practical tasks and decisions—things that wouldn't wait until the bereaved "got their feet back on the ground."

This guide is written to help survivors (and those who help them) manage financial and business arrangements that often follow the death of a spouse or family member. It was intentionally written to break up those decisions into manageable parts. It begins week-by-week, then transitions to month-by-month considerations.

If you find yourself in need, I would welcome your call to the Southern Baptist Foundation at 800-245-8183. We would be pleased to offer direct assistance, or to connect you with more local assistance through your state Southern Baptist foundation or any other professional assistance you require.

If you have read this far, chances are you or someone you care about has experienced a recent loss. Having experienced that personally, my prayer is that the God of all comfort be your Friend and your Guide...and that He surrounds you with trusted friends to walk with you in the days to come.

Thomas F. Kemner
Vice President for Donor Care
Southern Baptist Foundation

INDEX OF TOPICS

THE FIRST WEEK	1
THE SECOND WEEK	1
THE THIRD WEEK	2
THE FOURTH WEEK.....	3
THE SECOND MONTH.....	3
THE THIRD MONTH	4
THE FOURTH MONTH.....	4
GETTING YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER.....	5
• <i>DETERMINE YOUR MONTHLY EXPENSES</i>	6
• <i>BUDGET</i>	7
• <i>FINANCIAL STATEMENT</i>	8
YOUR ESTATE PLAN	11
• <i>WILL</i>	11
• <i>LIVING TRUSTS</i>	11
• <i>DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY</i>	12
• <i>LIVING WILLS</i>	12
LEAVING A LEGACY OF FAITH.....	13
CHECKLIST.....	14
APPENDIX.....	17



THE FIRST WEEK

The first few days following the death of a spouse will be spent choosing a funeral home and a cemetery, if pre-arrangements have not been completed. The funeral home will need to know how many copies of the death certificate you will need. You will need to have one “long form” (includes cause of death) death certificate for all life insurance policies on your spouse; and one “short form” (does not include cause of death) death certificate for (1) all retirement accounts, including annuities, 401(k)’s IRAs; (2) all pension or profit sharing benefits and Social Security; (3) your broker, CPA and Attorney; (4) all investment accounts; (5) Department of Motor Vehicles (to transfer automobiles) and (6) one to file in the Courthouse in each county where property is jointly owned. It is best to order too many than to have too few.

After the funeral is over and relatives have left, begin looking for insurance policies, statements of retirement accounts, and statements on investment and bank accounts. Make a file for these so you will be ready to deal with them when the death certificates arrive. Prior to receiving the death certificates, you may begin calling or writing insurance companies to request the forms needed to collect benefits.

Keep a log of when you called and who you spoke to. Also keep a running list of “To Do” and “Done” to help you keep track. You may feel that you are thinking clearly at this time but you probably are not. Therefore, these lists will be of great help.

Realize that your friends want to help but may not know how. Let them help out in any way they can – such as running errands, helping to locate a lawn service or maid service, selling your spouse’s car or making calls for you.

THE SECOND WEEK

If you haven’t already done so, write thank you notes for flowers and other kindnesses shown at your spouse’s death.

Locate your spouse’s Will. If all assets were owned jointly with your spouse or you were the designated beneficiary on all accounts or policies, then there should be no probate of your spouses’ estate. Once you have ascertained that there is no asset in your spouse’s name alone, file the Will and original short form death certificate with the probate court. If, however, you find one asset with only your spouse’s name and there is no beneficiary designation, you will need to contact an estate planning attorney to open a probate of your spouse’s Will so the asset can be transferred to you.

If you do not know an estate planning attorney, ask your friends, your CPA, or the funeral director for a recommendation or call your local bar association.

If you have received forms from the insurance companies, fill them out and send them in this week.



THE THIRD WEEK

This week begin dealing with your spouse's retirement accounts. Notify the Social Security office (see Appendix) of the death and inquire as to how the death affects your benefits. You probably should make an appointment with your local Social Security office and go speak with a representative. If your spouse was receiving benefits, take any recent statement of those benefits, an original short form death certificate and the spouse's Social Security number.

If your spouse was a veteran, check with the Veteran's Administration regarding any benefits you may be entitled to.

If your spouse had an IRA, 401(k), Keogh or other retirement savings, these accounts may be transferred to the surviving spouse free of income taxes if they are rolled directly into the surviving spouse's IRA account. If you do not have an IRA, go to your bank or credit union to open one. Assuming you were your spouse's beneficiary, contact the plan administrator (whoever is holding the IRA or 401(k)) and ask what you need to do to roll these assets into your IRA. It is best to have your spouse's retirement account rolled into your 401(k), IRA or 403(b). An IRA will accept the rollover. Your 401(k) or 403(b) may accept the rollover, but is not required to do so. If you want to rollover your spouse's assets to one of these accounts, check with your plan to make sure it will accept the rollover.

If you receive a distribution from your spouse's retirement plan, other than a required minimum distribution, you have sixty (60) days to roll it into your plan. The plan may have withheld 20% for taxes. Therefore, it is best to have your spouse's plan directly rolled into your own.

If you inherit a traditional IRA from your spouse, you may elect to treat it as your own by making yourself the account owner or you may roll it into your own IRA or qualified employer plan, if they will accept it.

There will undoubtedly be much paperwork to fill out. If you are unsure about how to invest these proceeds at this point, have them sent directly to your bank or credit union to be deposited in your IRA account. Once the funds are in your account, put them into a short-term certificate of deposit or a money-market account. At least they will be drawing some interest while you decide where to invest the funds, at a later time.

If your spouse had a pension, social security or other retirement income automatically deposited into a joint bank account, do not remove the deceased spouse's name until you know for sure the checks are being issued in your name. Otherwise, you will lose access to the funds, as they cannot be deposited to an account without the payee's name on the account.



THE FOURTH WEEK

Take this week to assess where you are in accomplishing the tasks above.

- Have insurance companies responded? If not, give them a call.
- Is all paperwork completed to transfer retirement accounts to your name?
- Have you determined that there are or are not probatable assets? Have the Will and Death Certificate been filed with the Court?
- Are bills being paid on time? If you did not normally pay bills, keep a list of the monthly bills for the purpose of establishing a budget later on.

SECOND MONTH

Continue to follow-up with insurance companies and retirement plans.

By this time you are probably receiving doctor and hospital bills if your spouse was hospitalized or required medical care prior to death. Keep a file for these and make sure they have been filed with Medicare, if applicable, and any supplemental insurance you have. Compare the statement from your insurance company showing your responsibility with the provider's bill sent from the hospital or doctor. Sometimes the providers will attempt to collect more than they are entitled to. For example, if the bill says the procedure costs \$80.00 but your insurance only allows \$50.00 for this procedure, and your responsibility is 10%, you may owe \$5.00 not \$8.00. Check with your insurance company to determine your responsibility if you think the provider is incorrect.

Check with the funeral home to see if the marker is in place. If so, go look at it and make sure it is correct.

Send a letter and death certificate to each charge card company to remove your spouse's name. If the card was in the spouse's name alone, and there is no balance, cancel the card.

You should keep one major credit card in your name, but only one.



THIRD MONTH

Make an appointment with an estate planning attorney to have a new Will, Durable Power of Attorney and Living Will drafted, if necessary.

Check the beneficiary designations on all of your insurance policies, your bank accounts, retirement plans and investment accounts to make sure they are correct.

FOURTH MONTH - SIXTH MONTH

At this point you may want to make an appointment with a financial planner/advisor to help you decide where to place proceeds from life insurance policies and the funds in your IRA. Ask your friends for recommendations or your attorney or CPA. Do not invest in things that make you uncomfortable or unable to sleep at night. If the financial planner makes you uncomfortable, keep looking until you find the right one. Take your time – there is no need to rush.



GETTING YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER (FINANCES)

Many surviving spouses have never been completely responsible for the entire financial picture. Perhaps one took care of the checkbook and paid the monthly bills, while the other took care of insurance, investments and retirement planning. When one spouse is gone, a void arises in the financial arena.

The following pages are provided to help you determine your total financial picture and to help you begin to take control of your financial affairs.

The first chart is designed to assist you in determining your monthly expenses. You may experience a decline in income and therefore it may be necessary to cut some expenses. If at all possible, keep your home and continue living there for at least a year. You do not need the added trauma of orchestrating a move at this point. Furthermore, you may later regret having given up a home filled with memories.

The second chart is designed to help you create the big picture and see where you stand. If you have never completed a Financial Statement before, you will find it an enlightening exercise. Make a habit of completing one per year.

Once you have collected insurance proceeds, transferred retirement accounts, changed account names and beneficiaries, it is time to develop a Spending Plan or Budget. A budget will help you achieve your goals and be a better steward of all God has given you. You may want to invest in a computer program for this purpose such as Money Matters by Larry Burkett. Check out <http://www.crown.org> to purchase this software.



DETERMINE YOUR MONTHLY EXPENSES

1. Tithes/Offerings..... \$ _____
2. Home Mortgage..... \$ _____
3. Home Insurance..... \$ _____
4. Home Taxes..... \$ _____
5. Home Maintenance..... \$ _____
6. Income Taxes..... \$ _____
7. Social Security \$ _____
8. Savings/Emergency Account..... \$ _____
9. Retirement Contributions (unless retired) \$ _____
10. Life Insurance..... \$ _____
11. Medical Insurance \$ _____
12. Medical/Dental Prescriptions \$ _____
13. Long-Term Care Insurance \$ _____
14. Automobile Insurance..... \$ _____
15. Car Payment..... \$ _____
16. Automobile Maintenance..... \$ _____
17. Other debts (credit cards, short-term loans)..... \$ _____
18. Food \$ _____
19. Clothing..... \$ _____
20. Gas..... \$ _____
21. Electricity \$ _____
22. Water \$ _____
23. Telephone/Cell Phone..... \$ _____
24. Cable/Internet \$ _____
25. Dry Cleaning..... \$ _____
26. Toiletries/Cosmetics..... \$ _____
27. Entertainment/Vacation..... \$ _____
28. Gifts (Birthday, Christmas, Weddings)..... \$ _____
29. Other..... \$ _____



BUDGET

Monthly Income..... \$ _____
Less: Tithes..... - _____
Income Taxes - _____
Social Security - _____
Total Net Spendable Income..... \$ _____

Net Spendable Income (from above) \$ _____

Less: Mortgage (principal & interest) - _____
Taxes on Home (1/12)* - _____
Insurance on Home (1/12)* - _____
Car Payment/Replacement Account - _____
Auto Insurance (1/12)* - _____
Food/Toiletries - _____
Clothing - _____
Medical/Dental Prescriptions - _____
Electric Bill - _____
Telephone/Cell Phone - _____
Cable/Internet - _____
Entertainment/Vacation - _____
Dry Cleaning - _____
Gifts - _____
Other Insurance (long-term care) - _____
Other Debts (credit cards/short-term loans) - _____

TOTAL..... \$ _____

*Real Estate Taxes and most insurance are billed annually.
Put 1/12 in an escrow account each month

If your outgo exceeds your income, start cutting expenses.



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Assets: (God's gift to you)

1. Cash on hand..... \$ _____
2. Checking Account Balance \$ _____
3. Savings Account Balance..... \$ _____
4. Savings Bonds..... \$ _____
5. Investments (stocks, bonds)..... \$ _____
6. Cash Value of Life Insurance Policies..... \$ _____
7. Cash Value of Annuities..... \$ _____
8. IRAs \$ _____
9. 401(k) or 403(b) \$ _____
10. Real Estate (Home) Fair Market Value \$ _____
11. Real Estate (Rental or Vacation) Fair Market Value..... \$ _____
12. Automobiles (Market Value) \$ _____
13. Home Furnishings..... \$ _____
14. Jewelry \$ _____
15. Collectibles \$ _____

16. Money Owed to You.....	\$ _____
17. Other Assets	\$ _____
18.	\$ _____
19.	\$ _____
20.	\$ _____
21.	\$ _____
22.	\$ _____
23.	\$ _____
24.	\$ _____
 TOTAL ASSETS	 \$ _____



FINANCIAL STATEMENT CONTINUED

Liabilities: What you owe:

1. Home Mortgage..... \$ _____
 2. Rental/Vacation Home Mortgage \$ _____
 3. Home Improvement Loan/Second Mortgage \$ _____
 4. Automobile Loan..... \$ _____
 5. Short-term Debt (furniture/appliances)..... \$ _____
 6. Personal Loans at Bank or Credit Union \$ _____
 7. Medical Bills..... \$ _____
 8. Charge Card: Visa..... \$ _____
 - Charge Card: _____ \$ _____
 - Charge Card: _____ \$ _____
 - Charge Card: _____ \$ _____
 9. Other Debts _____
_____
_____
- TOTAL LIABILITIES..... \$ _____

To find your net worth, subtract your Total Liabilities from your Total Assets: \$ _____



YOUR ESTATE PLAN

It is important to understand the basic estate planning documents that you need to have in place for your protection and care. They are a Will or a Living Trust, a Durable Power of Attorney and a Living Will.

THE WILL

If you had a Will in place, it is probably necessary to update it since your spouse was undoubtedly the beneficiary and personal representative.

You will need to decide what persons and ministries you would like to benefit at your death. These may be the same as in your prior Will or due to changed circumstances your beneficiaries may be very different.

The purpose of your Will is to pass your assets to the beneficiaries you have selected, at the time of death. The purpose of a Will is not to avoid probate. In fact, any property disposed of by a Will, must go through probate.

The Will is of no effect during your lifetime. It only becomes effective at your death. (See Hebrews 9:16-17)

Do not listen to friends or advisors who tell you that you do not need a Will. Everyone needs one. It should be drawn up by an attorney who specializes in the area of estate planning.

When your new Will is signed, keep it in a safe deposit box at your bank or in a fire proof safe at home. Keep a copy at home and make a notation on it as to where the original can be found. You should destroy all old Wills you have signed previously.

LIVING TRUSTS

Depending on your situation, you may want to consider a Living Trust. As long as you transfer all of your assets to the trust, the Living Trust will avoid probate. Establishing a Living Trust and never funding it by transferring your assets to it, is a waste of time and money.

To fund your trust, you must title your assets in the trust name. This is accomplished over a period of months and you must be willing to stay with it until all assets are transferred. For this reason, you may not want to tackle the trust in the first months after your spouse's death.



Not only will the Living Trust help you to avoid probate of your assets at death, but it will also allow you to have a successor trustee who can take over for you if you become incapacitated and do so without court interference. This may be the better reason for having a Living Trust.

DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY

A Durable Power of Attorney allows you to appoint someone to handle your affairs in the event of incapacity. Even if you have a Living Trust, someone needs to be able to withdraw from your retirement funds (which cannot be placed in a Living Trust) and a Durable Power of Attorney gives that power.

It is a fairly powerful document but now can be limited in the State of Florida so that it cannot be used unless you can no longer manage property yourself.

The Durable Power of Attorney remains in force while you are incapacitated, but when you die, it is useless. Your Will or Living Trust takes over at that time.

LIVING WILL

The Living Will allows you to give directions, while you are healthy, regarding the decisions you would want made if you could not make your own medical decisions. It applies to a terminal condition, persistent vegetative state and an end-stage condition. You may initial which of those three conditions you want to include.

You may also name a person to make treatment decisions for you. If you do, and you should, be sure to discuss with them what procedures you would want and which you do not want. Let them know at what point you want life support withheld or withdrawn. Do not expect family members or friends to just “know” your wishes. Instead, discuss it openly so they can act according to your wishes rather than having to guess at what you want under these circumstances.



LEAVING A LEGACY OF FAITH

Leaving a “Legacy of Faith” can include more than just material goods. Your legacy can also include confirming your Christian testimony to those who remain. To help in that, we have created a booklet entitled *My Legacy Story: Eternal Truths and Personal Memories for Those Who Follow* that is designed to help you record the story of God’s grace throughout your life. (It is available free on the MyLegacyOfFaith.org and the Southern Baptist Foundation (sbfdn.org) web sites.)

If you have not done so, you may want to consider leaving a portion of your estate to support a Baptist cause or other Kingdom-minded ministry. Many people, who have tithed throughout their life, find it completely appropriate to tithe from their estate.

If you are a parent or grandparent, you have an additional prayerful decision. You have the challenge of discerning “how much is enough” to leave to your children and grandchildren.

Your gift may be given to your church, association, state convention or one of its entities. God may lead you to support a Southern Baptist College, University or Seminary—perhaps within its scholarship fund. There may be other ministries that have been important to you or the decedent during their life time. This is a matter for reflective prayer.

Within the estate you may be led to give a specific amount, the proceeds of a life insurance policy or another investment, or even a specific piece of property. You may also consider giving to an “endowment.” An “endowment” is a specialized fund from which the ministry (a) only uses a specified amount of its investment earnings, and (b) applies those funds to the purpose you designate. This means the fund remains in perpetuity, achieving the purpose you designate.

The Southern Baptist Foundation administers endowments which are national in scope, including scholarships and loans for seminary and post-doctoral students. Many Southern Baptist state foundations administer endowments for ministry within their state.

As you pray about this, we would be honored to investigate on your behalf and offer counsel. We work in close cooperation with State Foundations, where they exist, the full array of Baptist entities, and the broader faith community. Our role is not to convince you who to give to and which organizations to support; our role is to help you achieve God’s best in the purposes He has laid on your heart.



- _____ 1. Order Death Certificates (usually need at least 10). Funeral director will assist you.
- _____ 2. Locate insurance policies and call to receive necessary paperwork to collect proceeds.
You Will need:
 - ✦ Policy number and/or social security number of deceased
 - ✦ Full name of deceased
 - ✦ Date and cause of death
 - ✦ Certified copy of death certificate
- _____ 3. Contact Veterans Administration, if applicable, for benefits due the surviving spouse.
You will need:
 - ✦ Certified copy of death certificate
 - ✦ Copy of your marriage certificate
 - ✦ Copies of birth certificates for any dependent children
- _____ 4. If the deceased was retired military, contact the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (Cleveland, Ohio) Casualty Assistance Line to report death and check for survivor annuity (SBP, RSFPP). You will need:
 - ✦ Certified copy of death certificate
 - ✦ Copy of marriage certificate
 - ✦ Copies of birth certificates for any dependent children
- _____ 5. Fill out insurance papers. Mailed on _____
(date)
- _____ 6. Proceeds from insurance received.
- _____ 7. Contact decedent's employer for possible group insurance or additional benefits.
- _____ 8. Open IRA account at bank or credit union.
- _____ 9. Notify all IRA, 401(k), administrators to send proceeds to IRA at your bank.
- _____ 10. Check to determine if plan proceeds arrived in your IRA _____ yes _____ no.
- _____ 11. Contact holder of mortgage for possible mortgage insurance coverage.
- _____ 12. Change name on bank accounts, investment accounts and credit cards. Check for any insurance coverage you may have with your bank or credit union.
- _____ 13. File death certificate and Will with probate court.
- _____ 14. Notify Social Security of death. Make appointment to discuss change in benefits.

- _____15. Check with funeral home about marker. Inspect marker to make sure it is correct.
- _____16. Make appointment with Estate Planning attorney, if necessary.
- _____17. Sign new Will, Durable Power of Attorney and Living Will, if needed.
- _____18. Update beneficiaries on all insurance policies, bank accounts, investment accounts and retirement accounts.
- _____19. Meet with financial planner.
- _____20. Compare Explanation of Benefits from health care insurance with hospital, laboratory and doctor bills.
- _____21. Pay any legitimate outstanding medical bills.

APPENDIX

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

WHAT TO DO WHEN A BENEFICIARY DIES

A family member or other person responsible for the beneficiary's affairs should do the following:

1. Promptly notify Social Security of the beneficiary's death by calling the Social Security Administration toll free at 1-800-772-1213
2. If monthly benefits were being paid via direct deposit, notify the bank or other financial institution of the beneficiary's death. Request that any funds received for the month of death and later be returned to Social Security as soon as possible.
3. If benefits were being paid by check, DO NOT CASH any checks received for the month in which the beneficiary died or thereafter. Return the checks to Social Security as soon as possible.

ONE-TIME LUMP SUM DEATH BENEFIT

A one-time payment of \$255 is payable to the surviving spouse if he or she was living with the beneficiary at the time of death, OR if living apart was eligible for Social Security benefits on the beneficiary's earnings record for the month of death.

If there is no surviving spouse, the payment is made to a child who was eligible for benefits on the beneficiary's earnings record in the month of death.

BENEFIT FOR SURVIVOR

Monthly survivors benefits can be paid to certain family members, including the beneficiary's widow or widower, dependent children and dependent parents. The following booklets contain more information about filing for benefits:

Survivor's Benefits (Publication No. 05-10084)

Social Security: Understanding the Benefits (Publication No. 05-10024)

Taken from the Social Security Website www.ssa.gov

SURVIVOR'S GUIDE

Organizing Your Life - After The Loss

The Southern Baptist Foundation
901 Commerce Street, Suite 600
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

toll-free (800) 245-8183
fax (615) 255-1832
www.sbfdn.org

Offered by the Southern Baptist Foundation and

