

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, March 26, 2014 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

THE MAGNIFICENT JOY OF TRIALS

I'm At A Loss

James 1:2-4 & 5-8, Job 1

“Trials are medicines which our gracious and wise Physician prescribes because we need them; and he proportions the frequency and weight of them to what the case requires. Let us trust his skill and thank him for his prescription.”

-Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727)

GETTING STARTED: What is your response to the above quote? Do you agree or disagree with the quote? What is he saying? Record your thoughts below.

The searing, blinding pain of loss has a way of numbing our spiritual senses and, unfortunately, paralyzing our faith. Rather than rightly handling it we, we often lose our way and are unable to see beyond the loss. With Job as our example, we want to learn how to rightly handle loss and grow through it rather than being defeated and deflated by it.

I. GENERAL FACTS ABOUT EXPERIENCING LOSS

1. **Categories of Loss** – There are different categories of loss in life for sure. Some may seem more severe than others and may affect us on a deeper level and be harder to accept and deal with. For example the loss of life cannot be compared to the loss of a vehicle. One is a material thing and one is a life. Nevertheless, the different categories and severity of losses impact don't lessen the impact it does have on our lives. Let's emphasize a couple of these categories:

(1) **Loss of significant individuals** – parent or child, mate or relative, close friend or working partner, someone significant in our life.

(2) **Loss of personal necessities or benefits** – job, desires, life dream, hard-earned business, health, marriage, home security, financial security

2. **Reactions to Loss** –Of course our reactions can be varied depending on the type and degree of loss. Where we are spiritually in our life will invariably have a lot to do with our reaction.

Let me preface these reactions with a few points:

- Sometimes it takes an amazing perspective to react in uncommon ways when loss comes.
- It is natural for our initial reaction to loss to be of the common sort in most cases.
- There is nothing wrong with grief, heartache, pain in loss. We are wired that way.

There are two different and contrasting reactions to loss.

<i>COMMON REACTION TO LOSS</i>	<i>UNCOMMON REACTION TO LOSS</i>
Shock and panic	Acceptance
Denial	Submission
Anger	Reality
Disillusionment	Growth
Bitterness	Grace
Grief/Depression	Humility
Remorse/Resentment	Brokenness

3. **Perspective to Loss** – Why we have such divergent reactions is because we choose our viewpoints. We rely on our own... or we adopt God's. **Actually, perspective determines our growth or lack of it.**

(1) A Horizontal Perspective = A Human Perspective

This locks into one's own way and is strictly selfish. It is expressed in the desire to be in charge... satisfied and pleased, to be control. The reality is that in loss we are not in control. We are reminded of our own mortality and frailty, that life is fragile... life is "tissue paper thin," that we are dust, that what we like to tightly grasp can be quickly snatched away and is fleeting.

(2) A Vertical Perspective = A Divine Perspective

This shows willingness to give up one's own way to accept a better one from above. It is expressed in the desire to see beyond the pain... beneath anguish and disappointment, to recognize that God is in control and we are not, to see things from an eternal perspective rather than a temporal (temporary) perspective.

Do you agree or disagree? "Perspective determines growth" – Do you agree or disagree? Why is it true or why is it not true? What do you think this quote means? Record your thoughts: _____

II. JOB: A CLASSIC CASE STUDY IN LOSS (Job 1)

This man's painfully familiar story evokes admiration from us. Our tendency is to glamorize and immortalize him as if his reaction and perspective are impossible to adopt ourselves.

1. **What He Had (vv.1-5) –**
 - (1) **Godliness (v.1) –**
 - (2) **A Large family (v.2) –**
 - (3) **Abundant possessions (v.3) –**
 - (4) **Prestige (v.3) -**

2. **What He Lost (vv. 13-19) –** From a human perspective, he did not deserve the losses he suffered. He had done no wrong. He had walked faithfully with God. Yet his losses were heavy.
 - (1) **He lost his material possessions/assets -** His oxen and donkeys were attacked and stolen by Sabeans (wandering Bedouins from around Uz) (v.15). His sheep and attending servants were burned to death; perhaps struck by lightning (v. 16). His camels and additional servants were raided and slain by Chaldeans (nomadic marauders) (v.17)
 - (2) **He lost his family -** His sons and daughters (ten of them) were killed in a home destroyed by a tornado (vv.18-19).
 - (3) **He lost his health –** Job 2 and follow record the terrible deterioration of his health and impending illness and skin diseases.

3. **How it Happened (vv. 13-19) –** It happened rapidly, without warning, with finality – devastation occurred. Possibility of recovery seemed beyond reach.

How loss happens to us:

- (1) **Sudden impact –** Just like with Job, loss can come us rapidly, suddenly when we least expect it, and out of the clear blue
- (2) **Without warning –** For Job, everything was well and good and without warning the storm of loss came on him without alerts or warning, and it not doubt caught him off guard. It is the same for us. Loss usually catches us off guard and without warning.
- (3) **With finality –** Sometimes there can be recovery from loss. Job did eventually recover his health and he recovered his wealth and actually was wealthier than he was before his great loss, but some things can't be recovered... at least not on this side of heaven. We say it like this, "Material things are replaceable, people are not." The loss of life... significant life for Job (all of his children), has a finality that can't be recovered. When someone is taken from us in death, they can't come back to us. We can eventually go to them as believers, but in this life loss in death has a finality which can lead to a deep sense of hopelessness, despair and grief incomparable.
- (4) **Devastating consequences –** There is nothing to say except that loss is devastating... it is! Make no bones about it. The reality is that loss always carries

with it devastating consequences for those left in its wake. It is devastating! For us to try to minimize or deny this reality is naïve at best and insensitive and calloused.

(5) **Bewildering recovery** – “How will I ever recover from this?” become the lingering question in the back of our minds... sometimes in the forefront of our minds. Recovery from Job must have seemed beyond reach. Some of his own words recorded in the book of Job reflect this feeling of hopelessness at recovery from the loss he had experienced... at least where those things were concerned.

4. **How He Reacted (v. 20)** – Job had been left with a choice not to be lightly regarded. Which way should he turn? Would he choose horizontal or vertical thinking? Incredible as his reaction may seem, it is not impossible. Before ever voicing words he arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, fell to the ground... and did what? Worshiped! His choice of viewpoint was quickly indicated by his prayer in **verse 21**,

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.”

Job had been careful not to cement into his mind great, unrealistic, airtight expectations. He viewed himself as naked before God, whether he had people and things or not. Perhaps we should not pass quickly over the commentary on his response, which is recorded in **verse 22**,

“In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.”

What does that mean? He could have... most of us would have perhaps, but he didn’t!

He reacted with:

(1) **Proper mourning and grief (v.20)** – We should mourn loss. Grief is healthy. It’s okay to grieve and mourn. God has wired us that way. But Job’s grief did not give way to total despair and hopelessness, and proper mourning always leads to God who is our strength and comfort in loss.

(2) **Reverent worship (v.21)** –

- **He humbled himself before God** – He fell to the ground indicating humility and brokenness before God. *“Then he fell to the ground in worship...”*
- **He acknowledge his need for God** – *“Naked I came from my mother’s womb and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away...”*
- **He acknowledged God and who God is... the give of life and blessing** - *“Naked I came from my mother’s womb and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.”*

(3) **A healthy truth (v.22)** – Job didn’t blame God, or curse God, or shake his fist in the face of God. Rather, he just trusted what he didn’t understand and could not change, and trusted God to see him through it.

Something to remember: **A New Normal** - When we suffer loss our “normal”... what is normal for us has been permanently altered in some way and we will never feel that normal again. But we can find a new normal. The problem with loss is that we

don't want to forget what we have "lost" and somehow we feel that if we move on we will somehow be forgetting and dishonoring what was lost. If we approach it as a "new normal" we have to find, we are not forgetting what is lost, but simply learning to live without that in our life... a new normal.

III. LINGERING LESSONS LEARNED IN LOSS – Lessons Learned from a Seasoned Sufferer

Life-discoveries which were made by Job can be summarized in the three following realities... lessons learned in loss.

- 1. A New Perspective - Our major goal in life is not to be happy or satisfied, but to glorify God (Job 5:17-21)**
- 2. A New Reality - The path of obedience is marked by times of loss and suffering (Job 23:8-14, Hebrews 4:13-16, Hebrews 5:8)**
- 3. A New Promise - What is often considered a "loss" now, leads ultimately to great gain "later" (Job 42:10-17)**