

## PLAN 3: Struggling with loss (why do we and what do we do about it?)

10 days (roughly 20 minutes per day)

*In this plan we will look at the Bible in a way that will focus us in on the topic of loss - why do we face loss, and what do we do in response to it? We will start by looking at my answer to the question based on the verses that have helped me (this will only take the first day), and then we will move into the story of Job, who was the most afflicted man ever and went from having it all to losing it all, and he lived with great pain. Next we will look at the prophet Jonah, a bitter man that had lost a few things as well, and we will see how God sees his loss and the approach that God takes as He communicates with Jonah. After that we will look at the story of a man named Joseph who was betrayed by his brothers and ultimately lost everything that he had and had known up to that point. Yet the Lord worked through all these people to deliver the messages that He did in His Word. We will conclude by looking at Ecclesiastes, which was written by the wisest man ever, who also had 700 wives, and yet was depressed. He writes, in his deep wisdom, about the real meaning of life, and we discover that he had everything we typically put in front of God in life, yet it was worthless - so we don't need to worry about losing these things when the only thing that we truly can't afford to lose in eternity is Him.*

**Day 1:** 1 Peter 1:6-7 then Psalm 27:14 then Isaiah 60:22 then Proverbs 3:5-6 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: 1 Peter 1:6-7: "In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith - of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire - may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." - so we go through these things "for a little while" in order to "prove the genuineness of your faith" - and in these struggles and hardships, Christ is revealed. Psalm 27:14: "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." - so the verse begins and ends with telling us to wait for the Lord - wait for God's timing and trust Him through loss and in life. Isaiah 60:22: "When the time is right, I, the Lord, will do it." Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." - wherever the path goes (it only said He's making the path straight, not where it goes, indicating that sometimes we have to go through these things), keep trusting in Him and living for Him in everything as He establishes your life, even if that involves loss. Thanks for reading.

**Day 2:** Job 1-10

**Day 3:** Job 11-21

**Day 4:** Job 22-32

**Day 5:** Job 33-42 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: We see in Job the intense, intimate story of a man (Job) who has it all and loses everything so fast. He was close to God, had family, wealth, and good health - it would be arrogant to want more than this in life. He lost it all. The Devil approached God and proposed that Job be tested. He made the claim

that Job was only following God because he had things good - Satan didn't actually care, he just wanted to torture the man - and he did. Job lost all those things. His family died, anyone he had left hated him, he lost his wealth, he began to be crippled and tortured with a long list of health issues and pain, and his love towards God was contentious because of his anger towards the situation. This is an intense, dramatic story. But we can still relate. Whether it's a bad day or a bad life, hardship is hardship, and loss is loss, and this is the story that the Bible tells to address it. In Job 1:21 he says that "naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will return. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away - may the Name of the Lord be praised." And in Job 2:10 he says "shall we only accept good things from God, and not bad?" So clearly, in the first couple chapters, Job is in a good place. He, unlike what we would do, still praises God and admits that these things that he lost are all fleeting (they come and go), and nothing (only God) lasts forever, so instead of pursuing these things, in the face of loss Job makes clear that either way he will still "praise the Name of God" and "accept the bad things." This is the intensity and intimacy that God wants us to have in our faiths - the ability to accept and live through hardships, difficulties and loss.

**Day 6:** Jonah 1-4 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: We see a very deep story on loss here with the prophet Jonah. Jonah had probably wanted something other than preaching in Nineveh (the most dangerous and violent, God hating city arguably ever) - he ran off to Tarshish, and the storm resulted. When God goes a different direction in your life, don't run away from it - the prophet Jonah spent 3 days in the belly of the whale, in the "realm of the dead" (he was in Hell). This is what happens when we choose to avoid the path that God has for us, especially when it comes to the things that we lose, like how Jonah lost the plant. Again with what Job said earlier, God gives and takes away. It's not the gift that we need, whether that's a plant or a relationship or a circumstance - we need the giver, we need God. Jonah didn't need a plant he needed a deeply rooted relationship with God).

**Day 7:** Genesis 37-42

**Day 8:** Genesis 43-47

**Day 9:** Genesis 48-50 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: Joseph's story is one of the greatest examples of loss turning to life, of pain turning to purpose, and of what seemed like nothing turning into something. This is our hope when it comes to loss, but it might not always turn out this way. None of Joseph's brothers had died, but it was even worse than that - they had betrayed him. He lost the shirt off his back and was sold into slavery. He was now in a new nation, in slavery, with nothing (not even clothes). Talk about loss! What good could possibly come from this? But if you follow the story, what happened needed to happen in order to save those people in Egypt. I think Genesis 50:20 sums it up perfectly - "this was intended for evil, but God has intended it for good." There is a reason for every season, and Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that God has "made everything beautiful in its time." We now turn to Ecclesiastes, the story of Solomon (the wisest man to ever live, who also had great riches and many wives) where he details how meaningless every material thing is that he had (this will illustrate that we don't need the things that we lose, but the God that gives them).

**Day 10:** Ecclesiastes 1-12 then read the following COMMENTARY on the text: We see here in Ecclesiastes the truth about the things we lose in our lives and in our faiths. In this story we see the author, Solomon (the wisest man to ever live) tell his story about how he felt that everything was meaningless. He was trying to find the meaning of life. Solomon ends Ecclesiastes with Ecclesiastes 12:13: "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind." He was arguably the most successful human being to ever live - his money would have been trillions in US Dollars in the 21st century, and he had 700 wives, and he was the king of his nation. Yet he was depressed - I wonder why... Because success and achievement here on Earth is distracting, as he admits in Ecclesiastes 2:4-11. In Ecclesiastes 12:13, he makes clear that time with God and a life lived for Him is more valuable than anything else. So live for God, not yourself, today, not tomorrow. This is the story of Solomon, and how a great man of faith, even the author of Ecclesiastes, fell into sin by focusing on and prioritizing other things in life. Let it serve as a warning, and keep in mind that, just like Solomon, you don't need the gifts and blessings that God will give you as much as you need the GOD who gives them and holds them back at times of His choosing. Thanks for reading.