



2019 Q2 Family Seasons - Lesson 9

Times of Loss

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SABBATH

Memory Text - "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ." Philippians 3:8

Listen to what Jesus said to his disciples, "**In this world you will have trouble**, but take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:23

Loss was never God's plan.

- The "circle of life", as we call it, was never the plan.
- Survival of the fittest was never the plan.
- Eve wanted the knowledge of Good and Evil, to be like God.
- She felt like God was holding out on her, keeping something from her, not sharing.
- Now we all have the knowledge of good and evil, much to our dismay, and the dismay of the watching universe.
- Paul said, "For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like those condemned to die in the arena. **We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to human beings.**" 1 Corinthians 4:9

God has lost a great deal, and throughout eternity knew it would happen.

"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and **HIS HEART WAS FILLED WITH PAIN.**" **Genesis 6:5-13**

"**The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.** So, I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey....And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them."
Exodus 3:7-9

Adam and Eve's many losses: loss of innocence, the tree of life, their perfect garden home, the animals that provided the animal skins they wore, unselfishness (replaced by selfishness, conflict, blame, and a desire for control and supremacy over each other), death of Abel, and finally one of them lost their spouse, then the surviving partner lost his or her own life. **So many losses as a result of one decision.**

And of course, **Jesus coming to earth and offering the ultimate sacrifice of His life.**



Based on my reading and study, my view is:

- Eve took the attitude of God as being harsh, running them out of the garden and away from the tree of life just because of this one little error.
- Then Cain took her attitude and felt like it was such a little thing to do something a little different than what God asked for.
- After all, he was bringing an offering, and the offering was to the correct God.
- But it was an offering of the fruit of his own work.
- He was not going to humble himself to ask his younger brother Abel for a lamb from the herd that his brother tended.
- He missed the whole point of the offering – pointing to salvation through the sacrificial Lamb of God.
- Sadly, though Ellen White talks about seeing Adam in heaven (The Great Controversy, Pages 647, 648) she does not mention seeing Eve.
- Adam was not deceived by Satan or his wife.
- He put his love for his wife above his love for God, thinking he couldn't live without her.
- He didn't think that if God gave him Eve, he could certainly give him another companion.
- So, after all is said and done, he might spend eternity without her anyway.

Some believe that one of the changes that occurred after Adam and Eve's fall was that instead of having open honesty, it was **the birth of what we call the subconscious.**

- We not only hid from God, we hid from ourselves.
- Peter thought he knew himself when he said he would never betray Jesus, but he didn't know.

Can you imagine what eternal life will be like without loss?

- It's all we've ever known – fear of loss or actual loss.
- On this earth, I'm more surprised when things go well, rather than when things go badly.
- But in the new world, consider a world where **everyone you meet would care more about your well-being than their own.**
- **No need to fear anything or anyone.**
- **Now think about the greatest loss of all – loss of eternal life** in that environment.

The challenge to faith in God is often due to loss, and Satan loves to push this button!

- IF God is in control, what kind of God would allow this kind of world?
- **God could have practiced “selective breeding” like the Nazi's were attempting.** He could just have not created any being that he knew would make bad choices. What's wrong with that? No one else would know.
- **But God would know...His character is based on love and freedom.** Creating a free universe means his creations would have to be free to choose...even wrongly. Even if it hurt him deeply and cost Him dearly.
- **Satan had made serious accusations about the character of God, and God allowed him to demonstrate the results of Satan's leadership.**



- **If God had destroyed Satan, a being who stood next to God, the universe of intelligent beings would have misunderstood God's character, and developed fear of Him.**
- **Habakkuk asked this question: “Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore then law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.” Habakkuk 1:3,4**
- **“You came out to deliver your people, to save you anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness, you stripped him from head to foot. With his own spear you pierced his head when his warriors stormed out to scatter us, gloating as though about to devour the wretched who were in hiding... Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.” Habakkuk 3:13-19.**

We say, “God is in control”, but this is what the Bible says:

1 John 5:19 – **“We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.** We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true – even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.”

We should be asking “what is God in control of?”

- He is in control of himself and how he deals with our dying planet and the beings he created
- He gives us freedom to use the gifts/attributes he gave us.
- He doesn't decide for us how we are going to use those gifts.
- We see Jesus as the parent, choosing to die instead of us.

Nicole Nordeman has written and performed a beautiful song about this called, “Gratitude”, which you can find and listen to online. I highly recommend listening and thinking about the lyrics.

- It made me look at things differently; it helped me to see why we should be grateful in all things
- That even if we don't get things we ask for immediately, we can be grateful that God uses the tough times to teach us extremely important lessons in how to trust in God.
- **Learning to trust God supremely is one of the most important lessons to learn, and it can only be done by experience with Him.**

SUNDAY

Loss of health

We are thousands of years from the tree of life; and we all feel it, too, especially when it comes to our physical health, unless we are killed by trauma first.



- We may be born with illness or genetic issues, or gradually develop them over time as we age.
- We feel the helplessness of loss.

How many parents have, especially as they have dealt with an ill child, wished they were sick instead of the child? What do each of these cases have in common?

Matthew 15:22-28 – Canaanite Woman begging for Jesus to cast out the demon in her daughter that was causing her to suffer terribly. Jesus said, “It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table. Jesus said, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Mark 5:22-24, 35-43 – Synagog ruler, Jairus, fell at his feet pleading earnestly for the healing of his dying daughter. Jesus said, “The child is not dead but asleep.” and raised her back to life

Luke 4:38,39 – Simon(Peter)'s mother-in-law had a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her.

John 4:46-54 – Royal officer came to Jesus and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death. Jesus told those listening, “Unless you see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe.” The officer again asked him to “come down before my child dies,” Jesus replied, “you may go. Your son will live. The man took Jesus at his word, and found that his son got better at the very time Jesus spoke those words, so he and all his family believed.

In each case it was a family member asking for Jesus' intervention to prevent sickness, dying or raising from death.

How do we react when we or our loved ones are sick or dying? Shock, anger, despair, shouting or acting out?

We may feeling like saying, as David did, “My God, my God, why have you deserted me? Why are you so far away? Won't you listen to my groans and come to my rescue? Psalm 22:1

- David took his questions, anger and pain directly to God; he sang and wrote about it.
- While Job endured unspeakable pain, he experienced a deeper intimacy with God. He said, “I heard about you from other; now I have seen you with my own eyes.” Job 42:5
- Paul had some type of chronic illness, and how he dealt with it tells us that suffering can equip us to comfort others, it can give us compassion for others who are hurting, and it can enable to minister more effectively, if we don't allow it to break us. 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Job complained to God about his loss of everything and terrible case of head to toe boils.



- Interestingly, when he finally got to talk with God, notice that **God never told him why this had happened to him.**
- He didn't accuse Satan or gives Job a reason, like “you were being tested”.
- **He told Job about His amazing creation.**
- **If God could do all that, Job could trust Him to have Job's best interest at heart.**
- My experience in explaining to my young children that I was going to get a divorce: I didn't want their relationship with their father to be harmed, so I just told them, “You know me. You know how hard I work, how I try to fix things and solve problems, and finish what I start. **Just trust me that if there was any other way to solve this, I would do it.**”

We can't see God and perhaps don't hear Him either, but Christ's representatives can be seen, heard, hugged and cried with.

God would like our help with this, rather than living life selfishly, doing what pleases us and is fun and entertaining.

MONDAY

Loss of trust

Who hasn't been the victim of someone's betrayal of trust? Betrayal by a family member is even worse.

- “Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Profuse are the kisses of an enemy.” Proverbs 27:6
- Put another way, **An enemy stabs you in the back; a friend stabs you in the front.**
- Forgiveness is the oil of friendship.

“**If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it;** if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. **But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend,** with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God....But I call to God and the Lord saves me. Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. He ransoms me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me. God who is enthroned forever, will hear them and afflict them – men who never change their ways and have no fear of God. My companion attacks his friends, he violates his covenant. His speech is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his swords are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords. Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.” Psalm 55:12-14, 16-22.

We have to decide if we should leave the relationship or attempt to repair and rebuild the relationship. It is a very individual thing, and this idea should prevent us from judging others.

How can both trust and the relationship be healed and saved?



Matthew 6:14,15 – after teaching his disciples 'The Lord's Prayer', Jesus said, “**For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.**”

James 5:16 – Jesus' brother James said, “Therefore **confess your sins to each other and pray for each other** so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

1 Peter 5:6,7 – Jesus' disciple Peter said, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. **Cast all your anxiety of him because he cares for you.**”

1 John 4:18 - Jesus' disciple John said, “**There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.** The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

My Grami's story of rearing nine children through the depression, having less than an eight grade education, with a husband who only came back home long enough to sire another child, then off to the gold mines he would go.

- He did not provide for his family, but left my grandmother with tremendous debt. But she paid off every penny.
- She learned to trust completely in God, and guess what? God fulfilled His promises to be “your true husband” and “a father to the fatherless.”
- God performed many outright miracles that enabled her to keep the children fed, clothed, educated, healthy and together throughout their entire childhood and into adulthood.
- Ultimately, my grandfather was gone for ten years, after which he came back to Grami, was rebaptized and Grami forgave him. They remained married until the day he died.
- My mother felt she couldn't forgive him, though, because of how he had treated her mother.
- Ultimately, Grami taught my mother to forgive him, and pointed to preparation for the unselfish life of love in heaven as the thing we should be pursuing now on earth.

Rebuilding broken trust is a **journey** that begins with a sincere acknowledgment of the hurt and confession of the truth, whatever the offense and whoever the offender.

- When adultery has been the cause of the breach, healing begins when the betrayer confesses, with complete openness. There can remain nothing hidden, or else, when it is found out (and it will be found out), it will destroy the trust that was reestablished.
- The second time trust is breached, it becomes even harder to heal.
- Healing may feel like it comes in a one step forward – two steps back process, but many have been able to rebuild their broken relationship and developed a deeper, more intimate, more satisfying, and happier marriage.

That said, we can't always heal a relationship or trust, as much as we might wish it.



- I was unable to repair my first marriage, which ended in divorce after eighteen years.
- It took a very long time to recover from that.

TUESDAY

Loss of trust, continued

Research reveals that the home is the single most violent place in society, including Christian homes.

- Violence is an assault of any kind – verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, or active or passive neglect that is committed by one or more persons against another in the family.
- Abusive behavior is the conscious choice of a person to exercise power and control over another. Victims are not responsible for causing the abuser to abuse.
- Abusers distort and pervert love, for “love does no harm.” Romans 13:10
- **Genesis 37:17-28 – Joseph's brothers plotting to kill him**, but sold him into slavery instead.
- **2 Samuel 13:1-22 – Absalom's gorgeous sister Tamar raped** by her half brother Amnon
- **2 Kings 16:3; 17:17; 21:6 – Kings of Judah Ahaz and Manasseh sacrificed their children in the fire** to the gods.
- We watch it in the news and are horrified, but we only see the tip of the iceberg.
- *“For Children who are broken...,”* a small Berkley Books, New York published book. It consists of a poem written by Elia Wise during her therapy as part of her recovery from childhood abuse.

Many times the abused turn into the abuser, if not healed. They are like a raging fire inside, and anyone who gets close to that person for any reason will get “burned.”

- I believe I was shown a very healing way of praying, while in prayer after being raped, but would also be helpful for any type of sexual abuse:
- **That since he made you one with him against your consent, that gives you the ability to pray for him as if he were you.** Things he would not pray for himself.
- **In prayer, I envision myself walking through his mind**, opening doors, turning on the lights, and inviting the Holy Spirit to enter the rooms, to clean out the mess, to show the person who he really is and to give him the insight and courage to turn to God for help and recovery.
- I leave the results to God, but it gave me a sense of power. Power for good, and it was a big part of my recovery.

Would you choose to be the abused or the abuser?

- If you really think about it, **most people would choose to be abused, rather than switch places with and become the abuser.**
- **We inately feel that something is very wrong with the abuser;** but the victim of abuse is being preyed upon, they are not harming someone.
- Professional treatment can facilitate change in an abuser's behavior but only if the person takes responsibility for the behavior and seeks such help.



- To those who will open themselves to His presence, God is able to do exceedingly abundantly to help abusers stop abusing, to repent of their attitudes and behavior, to make restitution in every way possible, and to embrace the quality of agape love to heal their own hearts and to love others.

Question from the lesson: Why is it important to provide safety and caring acceptance rather than offering advice about how to live better with the abuser?

WEDNESDAY

Loss of freedom

Addictions – Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, pornography, sex, food, workaholism, extensive online use and gaming or reading unhealthy material.

- Addicted is when you are unable to stop even when you know that it is harming you.
- “They promise freedom to everyone. But they are merely slaves of filthy living, because people are slaves of whatever controls them.” 2 Peter 2:19
- You become a slave to whatever you are addicted to, and by so doing, you lose your freedom and often harm your family.
- Many people claim that Christianity is merely a crutch, but I have experienced that it is the strength to take the bullets of life and heal from them, so you don't pass them on to others.

Psalm 107 – Shows 4 ways we go wrong, and the 4 unique answers God immediately provides when we ask. Every one of these solutions is illustrated in the New Testament by Jesus:

Type one: ignorant

- Some wondered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. They were hungry and thirsty....Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress.
- **He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle....he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.**

Type two: addicted/obsessed

- Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, for they had rebelled against the words of God...so he subjected them to bitter labor [consequences]; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.
- **He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains...he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron.**



Type three: rebels

- Some became fools through their rebellious ways, and suffered affliction because of their iniquities...they drew near the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.
- **He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.**

Type four: busy, busy, busy, imbalanced

- Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the works of the Lord. His wonderful deeds in the deep,. For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths...they were at their wits end. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.
- **He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desire haven.**
- **(NOTE: this is the only group that acknowledges God, and have a “desired” haven).**

My experience with needing to get out of an unhealthy dating relationship. At one point, I was dating a man who wasn't a Christian, and I could feel the relationship pulling me away from God. I prayed that God would not pay attention to the decisions I was making, that my deepest wish was that He never let me go, no matter what. Within 2 weeks of that prayer, I felt strong enough to end that relationship, which opened the way for God to bring a wonderful Christian man into my life. In many ways, we are all like the demoniac on the beach, who could only “show up” in front of Jesus, and hope that Jesus could read the desires of his heart. And Jesus freed him.

If you let demons in, they will trap you:

- Demon possessed man on the beach – so trapped all he could do was get in front of Jesus and hope Jesus could read the desire of what was left of his heart. When he begged to go with Jesus, Jesus told him to return home and tell how much God has done for you. Luke 8:26-39
- **Let the Lord Jesus Christ be as near to you as the clothes you wear.** Then you won't try to satisfy your selfish desires.” Romans 13:14
- **Nature hates a void.** You can't leave bad without reaching toward the good.
- **Once demons are cast out, they will return** with others if your heart is not filled with God's goodness and protection, and you will be worse off than you were. Luke 11:24-26
- **Mary Magdalene had 7 demons cast out.** There is a reason we need to do an about face on the direction we are going, and keep our hearts always connected to God. Luke 8:2

Elizabeth Ann Smart – Kidnapped and kept by a man and his wife for 9 months, all the while sexually abusing her.

- When she was rescued, her mother gave her advice that she said has helped her in her recovery.
- She said that **the best revenge is a life well lived.**
- They may have taken 9 months from her, but **holding onto that would only allow him to control more of her life.**
- He and his wife were convicted and sent to prison.



- Elizabeth went on to marry and have children, and now gives talks to others about how she survived and now thrives following this unthinkable experience.

Things that people can do that have helped us in our tough times:

- Keep our confidence
- Weep with those who weep
- Understand when we don't have energy to do "friend things"
- Hug and listen
- Be a true friend – example of one of my true friends. I told her I was too busy to get with her to do an activity because I had a bunch of work to catch up on, I had company coming and the house needed cleaning and food needed preparing. I was at my wits' end. Without me asking, she came over, cleaned my whole house and brought food for my company.
- Give no advice, unless sincerely asked – my grandmother said she had given up giving advice, because the wise don't need it and fools won't heed it.

THURSDAY

Loss of life

My story – within the last 1 ½ years, my only sibling who was younger than me, my father, his brother, who was one of my favorite uncles, and a dear friend all died.

I thought I could be strong through this process, but it has thrown me for a loop. You have the medical issues prior to death, then the death, then the financial issues to deal with after death.

Isaiah 57:1,2 has brought a lot of comfort to me during this time,

“The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.”

Daniel, a person extremely close to God, was told by a heavenly being what would happen to him at death,

“As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.” Daniel 12:13

As a nurse, I have experienced that there are things far worse than death.

- Long, drawn out painful periods of disease and disability, loss of the mind, rejection by friends and family, and loss of support.
- I have been asked to help patients die sooner, because they are so miserable with nothing but seemingly endless days of pain with no hope for recovery.



- Sometimes I think we have gotten too big for our medical britches. Just because we CAN do something, does that mean we should?
- I have felt that we are often kinder to our pets than we are to our loved ones and patients.
- Hospice did a survey that showed it was a faster, easier death for someone terminal if when they couldn't eat, they weren't forced fed or given water. Very quickly, the minerals in our bodies would go haywire and cause the person to become sleepy and confused.
- However, if we step in and give them food and IV fluids, etc. they often remain wide awake and conscious throughout most of the now drawn out process of dying.

I have a cousin who, because of heart birth defects, has died and been resuscitated multiple times. She assures me that dying is easy. It is living that is hard.

The prospect of dying being easy seems to give those living in pain the idea that committing suicide is the answer to living a pain-filled life.

I have at times been in so much psychological pain that those thoughts came to me. **The only things that stopped me was the knowledge that it would break my family's hearts, and my intense curiosity about what might happen the next day after I killed myself.**

I thought that with my luck, the best thing ever would have happened on the next day. So I pushed on, got help, and am so very glad I did.

When we are in such despair, we often have such a narrow view. A careful choice of a friend, pastor or counselor to share with can give you insights you wouldn't have thought of yourself. They might even have been through something very similar to what you are going through. They can be the light at the end of your tunnel, then in the future, you have insight as to how to be the light at the end of someone else's tunnel.

A woman came onto Dr. Phil's show. Her plan was to talk about the death of her teenaged daughter and how it so greatly affected her, how she couldn't move on. Then she planned to go home and kill herself, and be done with it. She later came on to Dr. Phil's follow up show, revealed what her plan had been and how Dr. Phil's counsel had affected a complete change in her outlook. He had asked her to answer some questions: Did she have a good relationship with her daughter? **Yes.** Did she have good memories of the seventeen years of her daughter's life? **Yes.** Would her daughter want her to focus on the one day of her death, or on the entire life of great memories? **Her life of good memories.** Will you do what your daughter would have wanted you to do? **Yes.**

Paradigm change saved this mother's life!

Normal responses to grief include: shock, denial, despair, depression, anger, guilt, regret, sadness, and anxiety. The goal of grieving is not to eliminate all your pain or the memories of your loss. It is to process the loss, to put things into perspective. In the final stage of recovery, you begin to have a renewed interest in daily activities and to function normally from day to day.



My whole life has changed for the better. And best of all, God keeps finding ways of making my life useful, so that no matter what age I am when I die, I will have spent it bringing God's goodness into this dark world.

After you die, it will be a blink of time.

- Like when you go to sleep at night, and wake up each morning. You have no idea how long you were asleep until you look at your clock and calendar.
- It could be 5 minutes or a thousand years.
- The last thing my sister said on the day she died was, “when I open my eyes, I will see Jesus.”
- For her, the spiritual war and the battle is over. She can rest.

It is we who remain behind that are left with that hole in our lives.

- **Romans 8:31-39** – If God is for us, who can be against us.
- **1 Corinthians 15:52-57** – We shall not all sleep, but **we will all be changed.**
- **Revelation 21:4** – **He will wipe away all tears, there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain.** The old order of things has passed away.
- **“The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”** 1 Corinthians 15:26.

FRIDAY

Further thought

When I have advocated to my patients, friends and family to seek professional counseling, I am often met with the response, “I am not crazy!” My response is:

- **Everything we know we learned from others.**
- We developed “**cards to play**” in the the game of life – actions we saw others use, we read about or tried out.
- We might have been using those same cards fairly successfully throughout our whole lives until something dire happens.... our cards don't work! We use the cards even more fervently...still no help!
- Professional counselors have gone to school many years to learn other cards to play in dealing with the tough things of life, both inside ourselves and outside.
- Going to a counselor can give you some additional cards in your hand, cards that really work, that solve difficult problems, etc.
- Most people will then say to me, “Well, that would probably help, I could do that.
- And they often allow me to assist them to find help to add to their hand of cards.

The well known Psalm 23:

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear



no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

One day I noticed that the “person” of this psalm changed from the third person “he” to first person “You.” I asked, where had things gotten personal and intimate with God? The answer, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for YOU are with me....”

“Two men looked from prison bars; one saw the mud, the other saw stars.” Dale Carnegie.

My lifelong pen pal and now Face book friend does not believe in going to the doctor. She believes that if God wants you to be healed, He will heal you. That didn't stop her from calling and asking my opinions and recommendations when she was faced with various medical problems through the years. When we finally met face to face years later, I told her that I believe that God often uses people to help him heal others. Why? Because just like being God's disciples and part of spiritual healing of others, it is good for us to be part of the physical healing of others. He gives us intelligence and insight into how the body works, what makes it sick, what remedies the sickness.

Why would He not want us to join Him in healing others?

Forgiveness – It releases you from the control of the one who wronged you, sets you free. It doesn't excuse, doesn't forget, doesn't prevent consequences or punishment. It set YOU FREE!

- **Eva Moses Kor's story – an identical twin experimented on by Dr. Mengela in the concentration camp**, first trying to locate and take vengeance on those who tortured her and the other children, then finally her progression to forgiveness.
- What a relief it has been to her – so healing!
- But many of her fellow holocaust survivors belittled and harrassed her for forgiving.
- Her own husband was one of those who felt that to forgive was to allow those wicked people to get a “free pass”.

There comes a point in your life, when you realize that **turning the page is the best feeling in the world**, because there is so much more to the book than the page you were stuck on.

There are many who regret their bad behavior and examples to friends, family and children, whose hearts are cut to the quick when they see their children following their example, rather than learning from it, but they can take heart that they can also **become an example of recovery**.

What a relief it is to find out that **you are only one tool in God's toolbox. He is infinitely creative in his solutions**. It is not all up to you! **“All we have accomplished, you have done for us.”** Isaiah 26:12



“Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver. You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance....Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. Psalm 66:9-12, 16.

My daughter sent this as a text to me not long ago:

“There was once a group of women studying the book of Malachi in the Old Testament. As they were studying chapter three, they came across verse three, which says: **'He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.'** This verse puzzled the women, and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study.

That week this woman called up a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot – then she thought again about the verse, that 'he sits as a refiner and purifier of silver'. She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The man answered, 'Yes', and explained that he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be damaged.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, **'How do you know when the silver is fully refined?'**

He smiled at her and answered, 'Oh, that's easy. When I see my image in it.'

If today you are feeling the heat of this world's fire, just remember that God the Father has His eyes on you.”

Philippians 4:4-8 - “Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice? Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, **whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or**



praiseworthy – think about such things.”

Psalm 91:14-16 - “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

- He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble.
- I will deliver him and honor him.
- With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

“Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, **he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution HE WILL COME TO SAVE YOU.**'” **Isaiah 35:3,4**