



Trusting God Through The Changing Seasons Of Our Life Trusting God Through Times Of Loss

We all experience times of loss. We lose a game as a player or a fan; we lose our innocence; we lose a relationship; we lose our reputation; we lose a job; we lose our health; we lose our wealth; we lose someone we love more than we love life itself.

Our losses can come from our choices. Our losses can come from choices that are made for us.

Life is a journey and during the course of our journey we will experience times of loss. At times we can see these losses coming. At other times they surprise us. They can be very unexpected. Those losses can occur suddenly when we are enjoying our greatest success or they can come when life is already very difficult and add to the grief that we are already experiencing. There are times when we can recover what we lose. There are other times when what we lose can never be recovered. Life will not always turn out the way we expected it to turn out.

The emotional pain of losing comes from loving what we lost. The pain of losing comes from our crushed expectations. The pain of losing comes from missing what we have lost. When we lose something or someone that is very important to us, we can suffer disappointment, despair, depression, and anger. The level of disappointment, despair, depression, and anger will be determined by how much we loved what we lost.

Two words that are commonly used in the bible to describe the pain of our loss are sorrow and grief. Sorrow and grief can be like crashing waves that roll over us again and again and you are powerless to stop those waves. Sorrow and grief can be so severe that it can take away our physical strength. It can bring us to our knees. It can take away our breath. It can produce a volume of tears that drains us of all our energy. It can make us want to stop living. It can make us feel like we will never be happy again. It can even cause our heart to stop beating.

A loss can feel like an amputation without any anesthetic. Times of loss can leave you feeling like an amputee whose life will never be the same.

During our times of loss, our friends can return to normal and move on with their lives after a short period of grieving for us while we cannot return to normal and we can grieve over our loss the rest of our lives.

We can find comfort during times of loss through various means. We can numb our emotions with various drugs. We can numb our emotions with self-gratification. We can take our mind off our loss by having goals and by staying busy. It can really help to talk to others about our loss and our feelings. It is painful but it is helpful to cry. These temporary means of comfort can be used by God and are even recommended by God. They are not forbidden by God unless they become God to us and displace God. This is called addiction or being co-dependent.

Our grief and sorrow will naturally diminish over time even if we do nothing. The waves will still come but they will not be as frequent or as large. God wired our minds so that we naturally adjust to our new circumstances.

But God has so much more He wants to do in our lives through our losses. Yes, He loves us and wants us to stop hurting. If we are in Christ, one day He will remove all our pain.

For now, God has given us His Spirit to comfort us. He is called the comforter.

[John 14:16-17](#)

[16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;](#)

[17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.](#)

[KJV](#)

But the Greek word that we translate comfort can also be translated consolation.

Consolation does not mean just to ease someone's pain. Consolation means to give someone a reason and a reward for their loss. We all know what a consolation prize is. It is a prize that is given to losers.

God has a consolation prize for our times of loss. But God's considers His consolation prize to be better for us and others than what we lost.

[Romans 8:28](#)

[28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.](#)

[NKJV](#)

When someone dies, we say, they are in a better place. We mean being dead and in the presence of God is better for them than being alive and with us.

But from God's perspective, the truth is we who remain are also better off without them. God's consolation prize is better for us than what we lose. How can this be?

The Greek word we translate comfort can also be translated exhortation. The Holy Spirit is also called the Spirit of truth. Perhaps today, I can be the mouth piece of the Holy Spirit

and give you an exhortation from God that will help you receive the consolation prize God has for you.

If we are going to trust God in times of loss, we must wade through our emotions and see our loss from God's perspective. Then we must cooperate with God by obeying Him. God will then do what He has promised to do and we will receive the consolation prize He has for us!

(Tell the story of Joseph and his brothers-Genesis 30-50.)

Joseph was an old testament character that suffered great loss. He lived in 19th century BC in the land of Canaan. He was one of 12 sons of Jacob and number 11 in the birth order on sons. He was favored by his father over his brothers. He also had two dreams that he believed were from God that he shared with his family. The dreams indicated he would one day rule over his family.

As a result, his older brothers hated him. They saw an opportunity to get rid of him and they did. When Joseph was 17 years old, they sold him into slavery to some merchants from Egypt. He spent the next 13 years working as a slave in Egypt, first for an officer in the Egyptian officer and then as a prisoner. Through a miraculous series of events he became second only to pharaoh in Egypt at age 30. He served in that position for 11 years before his two dreams came to pass and his relationship with his family was restored.

Joseph was a man who understood losing and understood sorrow and grief. He lost his family and his freedom. Is there anything harder than losing our family and our freedom? He would have been crushed by his loss even if his brothers had nothing to do with it. But the fact that he lost the love of his brothers because they rejected him only added to the pain of his loss. Then he was a slave for 13 years and for most of those years, he lived in very hard conditions in a prison. We can tell how hard this loss was on Joseph by the grief he experienced when he eventually saw his brothers again.

But 24 years later, when his dreams finally came true he could say to those who caused his 24 years of suffering...

[Genesis 50:20](#)

[20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.](#)

[NKJV](#)

From the story of Joseph and his declaration of faith, we can learn several things about trusting God in times of loss.

- [We must believe Joseph that God is sovereign over all the affairs of men.](#)

To say that God is sovereign means that God has supreme authority, control, and power over all that has happened, is happening, and will happen in the future in all times across all history. It means God is the ruler of the universe and that He governs all that happens, including the affairs of men.

It means that God is in control. Not everything that happens is caused by God but nothing that happens in the universe can happen without God's permission. It means that God has the power and knowledge to prevent anything He chooses to prevent. This means that anything does happen, God is still in control, fulfilling His eternal purposes.

This does not mean that God causes evil. It means that God allows evil to happen to serve His will. Theologians call this God's permissive will.

Joseph believed God was in control and not his evil brothers. He believed that nothing in the universe could happen to him without God's permission. He believed that God has the power and knowledge to prevent anything He chooses to prevent, so anything that did happen to him God intended to happen. His declaration of faith reveals that he knew God is sovereign over all the affairs of man. To trust God during our times of loss we must believe that God is sovereign over all the affairs of men.

- [We must believe that God has a sovereign purpose for what we lose.](#)

Joseph believed that God did not randomly allow things to happen to Him. He believed that God had a sovereign purpose for what was happening to Him. His declaration of faith reveals that he believed God had a sovereign purpose for what He lost. To trust God during times of loss we must believe God has a sovereign purpose for what we lose.

- [We must believe that God's sovereign purpose is salvation.](#)

Joseph believed that God's sovereign purpose for his loss was to save his family. His declaration of faith reveals that he believed God's sovereign purpose was to save his family. To trust God during our times of loss we must believe that God's sovereign purpose is salvation.

[How can we be so sure that God's sovereign purpose for our loss is salvation?](#)

- [The main theme of the story of the bible from Genesis to Revelation is salvation.](#)
- [The main theme of the life of every major character in the bible and their losses is salvation.](#)

1. Noah suffered loss to save his family for the salvation of the world.
2. Abraham suffered loss to save his family for the salvation of the world.
3. Joseph suffered loss to save his family for the salvation of the world.
4. Moses suffered loss to save Israel from Egypt for the salvation of the world.
5. The prophets suffered loss to save Israel from their sin for the salvation of the world.
6. Paul suffered loss for the salvation of the world.

- [The main theme of the life of Jesus and the losses that He suffered are salvation.](#)

The name Jesus means salvation. Jesus declared that He came to seek and save that which was lost. Jesus suffered loss for the salvation of the world.

If we are followers of Jesus, we are called to be like Jesus. Any time we suffer loss God's sovereign purpose is the salvation of others.

Therefore, Jesus said...

Matthew 16:24

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

NKJV

To trust God during times of loss we must believe...

- God is sovereign over all the affairs of men
- God has a sovereign purpose for what we lost
- God's sovereign purpose is salvation.

Salvation is God's consolation prize for our times of loss!

If we believe these truths about the sovereignty of God, we can cooperate with God like Joseph did.

How did Joseph cooperate with God?

- He devoted himself to God
- He was a witness to a pagan people
- He kept himself morally pure.
- He served others.
- He spoke the truth to others.
- He forgave his brothers.

As Joseph cooperated with God, he received God's consolation prize, his own salvation and the salvation of others.

How have I experienced God like Joseph?

Before I understood these truths about God, I was very bitter about the circumstances in my life. It was only after I received Jesus that I began to understand these truths about trusting God through times of loss.

Trusting God through times of loss does not mean that you immediately put your loss behind you and discover the details of God's plan. God sympathizes with our pain and he does not expect us to immediately win the world. God created a Sabbath for grieving. And that Sabbath may be different for each one of us.

But if you believe these truths about God, God will gently work in your heart during your times of grief to call you to cooperate with Him like Joseph did. This is how God used some of the losses in my life for salvation.

God used the loss of mother to cancer and my father to alcohol for salvation.

God used the loss of a college scholarship for salvation.

God used the loss of my savings account for salvation.

God used the loss of my wife for salvation.

Each one of these losses has been very painful. But God has fulfilled His purposes as I have trusted Him and cooperated with Him.

What about your losses?

- Innocence
- Relationship
- Reputation
- Health
- Wealth

I am very sorry. I do understand life is not fair. I do understand severe grief.

But the best thing I can do to console you is to admonish you to...

Believe that God is sovereign over all the affairs of men.

Believe that God has a sovereign purpose for your loss.

Believe that God's sovereign purpose for your loss is salvation.

Will you cooperate with God? If you will, you will experience God and His consolation prize during your pain, just as Jesus did for you.