

# **Family Seasons**

## **Times of Loss**

Lesson #9 for June 1, 2019

Scriptures: Mark 5:22-24,35-43; 1 Peter 5:6-7; Genesis 37:17-28; Luke 16:13; Romans 6:16; 1 Corinthians 15:26; Philippians 3:8.

1. This lesson will focus on times of loss. Are all losses a result of sin? What happened to Adam and Eve when they ate that fruit? Why did they feel naked? Weren't they already naked? (Genesis 2:25) And why were they suddenly afraid of God?

As they witnessed in drooping flower and falling leaf the first signs of decay, Adam and his companion mourned more deeply than men now mourn over their dead. The death of the frail, delicate flowers was indeed a cause of sorrow; but when the goodly trees cast off their leaves, the scene brought vividly to mind the stern fact that death is the portion of every living thing.  
—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 62.1.

2. Today, we have become so accustomed to the reality of pain and loss and death that, sometimes, we hardly notice. In some areas of the world when the cold season begins and the leaves start to die, they turn gorgeous colors; we go to see and celebrate the death of those leaves! What a change from Adam and Eve's first response.
3. Adam and Eve tried to cover their nakedness using fig leaves! But, God provided them with sheepskins. Did God kill the lambs and show them how to prepare the skins so they could be used as clothes when He gave them those sheepskins? When they were cast out of the garden, what was available out there to eat? Was it similar to what was in the garden?
4. Adam had to start tilling the soil in order to produce food. Eve soon gave birth to her first child. Do you wonder what God said to them about pregnancy and childbirth and caring for a child? Did they get any parenting classes? We have no idea how many children Eve eventually birthed. What we do have recorded is the story of the offerings of Cain and Abel and Cain's response when he ultimately took Abel into the field and killed him.
5. What did Adam and Eve do when they learned that Cain had killed Abel? Did they hold a family funeral? There must have been other children around. Did the angels at the gate of the garden give them any instructions about what to do with the body?
6. In our day, we live thousands of years from the tree of life and from any life-sustaining energy it may have provided. So, unfortunately, we live in a world where loss of health is very common.
7. Try to imagine how things would be if Jesus suddenly showed up in our day and walked into a large hospital and healed everyone there! How would the major media report the event? What do you think would happen in that hospital in the next few days?

In describing His earthly mission, Jesus said, The Lord "hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18. This was His work. He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. **There were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house, for He had passed through them and healed all their sick.** His work gave evidence of His divine anointing. Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of [12] His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of

men. He took man's nature, that He might reach man's wants. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Even little children were attracted to Him. They loved to climb upon His knees and gaze into the pensive face, benignant with love.—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*\* 11.2-12.0. [Bold type is added.]

8. People came from long distances to be healed. (Mark 3:7-8) What would people do if they knew someone was walking around on planet Earth who had that kind of power? We know that in the future it will happen again on this earth before the second coming.
9. Read Mark 5:22-24,35-43; Matthew 15:22-28; Luke 4:38-39; and **John 4:46-54**. This is a remarkable story because Jesus healed someone who was at a distance. To consider the many healing miracles that Jesus performed would take a long time. To consider the implications of each of those miracles and why He did them in the way He did would take even more time. In reference to the story in John 4:46-54, many scholars wonder if the woman named Joanna might have been the wife of that government official. See Luke 8:1-3.
10. So, how do we respond when a relative becomes seriously ill?
11. One of the great ethical and theological questions that has faced Christians down through the years is this: If a family member or friend becomes seriously ill or is perhaps involved in a serious accident and is lying in a coma in a hospital some distance away from you, does it do any good to pray for that person? Our knee jerk response as Christians is: Of course! However, how does that actually work? In the setting of the great controversy, is it possible that God can do certain things for His children when someone prays about it that He “could not” do because of the Devil’s opposition if no one were praying?
12. Think of the story of Job. What an incredible experience. In light of all we know about his troubles, how do you understand Job 42:5? There were no churches, no Bibles, no pastors! We think of Job as one of the all-time great saints. What could other people have told him about God that he did not already know from personal experience? Remember that at the very beginning of the book, God said Job was “perfect and upright.” (Job 1:8)
13. When you have passed through a similar experience of hurting, does it make you more empathetic and compassionate for those who are going through it at the present? See 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.
14. None of us could ever suffer more than Jesus suffered. He experienced not only all the physical torture, beatings, and crucifixion, but also suffered under the incredible torture inflicted upon His soul by the Devil and all of his angels. I am sure they did everything they could possibly do to try to get Jesus to give up His mission and go back to heaven. Jesus died at a young age after living a perfect life, ministering to others who were suffering.
15. So, why is suffering necessary? Why did Jesus need to suffer? Couldn't the Father have prevented Him from suffering? What are we supposed to learn from all of that?

Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ's patience. With sympathizing tenderness, angels have witnessed their distress and have heard their prayers. They are waiting the word of their Commander to snatch them from their peril. But they must wait yet a little longer. **The people of God must drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism. The very delay, so painful to them, is the best answer to their petitions.**—Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*,\* vol. 4, 447.1 (1884); *Great Controversy*\* 630:2-631:0.

**The time of trouble is the crucible that is to bring out Christlike characters. It is designed to lead the people of God to renounce Satan and his temptations. The last conflict will reveal Satan to them in his true character, that of a cruel tyrant, and it will do for them what nothing else could do, uproot him entirely from their affections.** For to love and cherish sin, is to love and cherish its author, that deadly foe of Christ. When they excuse sin and cling to perversity of character, they give Satan a place in their affections, and pay him homage.—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*,\* August 12, 1884, par. 11; *Our High Calling*\* 321.3. [Bold type is added.]

These words are about the future; but, they are also true today!

16. It is quite likely that many of God's people will die in the final days before the close of probation. Will we learn anything from those experiences? Have we learned anything from the story of Job? Did Job learn anything from that experience? Was he closer to God after going through all of that? Did Job's friends learn anything from that experience? (See Job 42:7-17.) How would you have responded to those words from God?
17. Not all losses are physical. One of the most serious losses to affect human lives is a loss of trust. And that, of course, applies particularly to those in our immediate families or near relatives. What kind of experiences could lead to the loss of trust in a spouse? Or, child? Or, parent? Is it possible for that trust to be regained? What must happen for that trust to be regained?
18. Read 1 Peter 5:6-7; 1 John 4:18; James 5:16; and Matthew 6:14-15. These promises can be claimed by every single child of God. Whether the problem has arisen in a marital situation, a family situation, or even in a work or study situation, the promises are still good.
19. Rebuilding trust takes a long time, and it must go step-by-step. It will require confession, honesty, and living a life that does not lead to further loss of trust.
20. For those who have actually managed to rebuild trust after it was broken, their marriage may be stronger, more intimate, more satisfying, even happier, as a result. Will God's universe be stronger and happier as a final result of Lucifer's rebellion?
21. There are times, however, when trust should not be restored. How would you go about deciding if someone had permanently destroyed their trustworthiness?
22. One of the almost unthinkable things that happens far too often in our society today is family violence. That violence might be verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, or even neglect, either active or passive. What does the Bible teach us about those kinds of situations? Read Genesis 37:17-28 and 2 Samuel 13:1-22. Joseph had walked about 50 miles to try to do a special favor for his father by bringing a report back from his brothers. And look at how they repaid him! Do you think Joseph tried to convince his purchasers to deviate just a few miles from their path toward Egypt to sell him back to his father? Surely, his father would have paid more for him than any slave owner in Egypt.
23. The story of David's children—Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom—is almost too terrible to consider. Why do you think such a story is recorded in the Bible? Were David's sons tempted to commit those atrocities because they knew what their father had done with Bathsheba and Uriah?
24. Read 2 Kings 16:3; 17:17; 21:6. Try to imagine the horror of sacrificing one of your children on an altar to a pagan deity! These verses outline the experiences of King Solomon and his descendants like Manasseh and others.
25. Were those people who offered their own children as sacrifices trying to appease an angry

god? What would it take to convince a person that he should sacrifice his own child as a burnt offering? Did the mothers of those children agree to those sacrifices?

26. Abusers need to be helped. Professional treatment can often facilitate change in an abuser's behavior. But, the person himself/herself must agree and recognize that s/he needs help. It is not enough to claim that alcoholism, stress, or even the need to fulfill sexual desires is an adequate reason for abuse. Anger is not a good excuse either. The good news is that God is able to do exceedingly abundantly to help even abusers if they are willing to ask for help and accept it. See Romans 13:10 and Ephesians 3:20.
27. Careful studies have been done on the issue of violence or abuse of children in their early years. The results are horrifying. Up to 40% of girls in the United States report having been sexually abused in their childhood. And, unfortunately, much of that abuse came from family members or family friends. Does help only come to those who want it?
28. There is another form of loss that is self-inflicted! Millions, even billions, of people in our world choose to become addicted to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, pornography, sex, even food! And those who are addicted seem to be irresistibly drawn to their favorite evil. The best possible way to deal with those vices is never to get involved with them.  
**2 Peter 2:19:** They promise them freedom while they themselves are slaves of destructive habits—for a person is a slave of anything that has conquered him.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., 2 Peter 2:19). New York: American Bible Society.
29. Read Luke 16:13; Romans 6:16; James 1:13-15; and 1 John 2:16. There are many things to which people can become addicted. These verses suggest just a few of them. Addiction is not necessarily the same as sin. Sins which become habitual can often be addictions.
30. The only long-term solution for this kind of problem is complete surrender of one's self and his/her feelings and desires to Jesus Christ. (Galatians 5:24)
31. Read Romans 6:8-13 and Romans 13:14. The Devil makes certain that each one of us is tempted as much as possible, especially God's people. And the further we go from the Devil and the closer our walk is with Jesus Christ, the more the Devil tries to get us. But, if we grow closer and closer to Jesus each day, the Devil will be defeated in his attempts.
32. So, how can we as Christians help our fellow Christians, even family members, to deal with possible addictions? **It is not a sin to seek professional help.**
33. Of course, the worst loss is to have a family member die. To the faithful Christian family member who dies, it is only an instant until s/he will see Jesus coming in the clouds. But, to those who are left behind, we recognize the truthfulness of 1 Corinthians 15:26: "The last enemy to be defeated will be death."—*Good News Bible*.\*
34. It is important for each one of us to recognize the stages in the grieving process. The initial shock often is associated with denial; we say that it just could not be true! Often, we find ourselves absorbed with thoughts about the departed family member. In some cases, this stage may take up to six months.
35. That stage eventually gives way to despair and depression. Often, that despair and depression are felt most severely on or at the times of the birthdays or wedding anniversaries of the departed. Often, we feel guilt, anger, regret, sadness, even anxiety at such times. This side of the second coming, we cannot change the fact that our departed family member is gone. But, eventually, the Christian can look up and thank God for the promise that the day is coming when even death will be thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14)

36. Look at the comforting passages found in Romans 8:31-39; Revelation 21:4; and 1 Corinthians 15:52-57. Surely, no Christian reviewing these promises can continue to grieve forever.
37. Remember that Jesus Himself promised that He would always be with us. (Matthew 28:20; Isaiah 43:2) We must remember that the battle is the Lord's, (1 Samuel 17:47) and He promises victory. (1 Peter 1:3-9)

When difficulties and trials surround us, we should flee to God, and confidently expect help from Him who is mighty to save and strong to deliver. We must ask for God's blessing if we would receive it. Prayer is a duty and a necessity; but do we not neglect praise? Should we not oftener render thanksgiving to the Giver of all our blessings? We need to cultivate gratitude. We should frequently contemplate and recount the mercies of God, and laud and glorify His holy name, even when we are passing through sorrow and affliction.—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*,\* book 2, 268.2. [These words were written by Ellen White shortly after her husband died.]

38. Read Matthew 6:12-15. Why is it that the Father will not forgive us if we do not forgive others? Is He being vindictive?
39. And if we develop Christian love, we will have the experience that Jesus was talking about when He spoke to Peter as recorded in Matthew 18:21-22.

**Matthew 18:21-22:** <sup>21</sup> Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven times?"

<sup>22</sup> "No, not seven times," answered Jesus, "but seventy times seven."—*Good News Bible*.\*

40. Does it help to think through these experiences recorded in the Bible and others that you might know about when people have suffered through serious problems if you yourself are going through a similar situation? Are there ways that we as a church family can reach out to those who are struggling?
41. Some evils are too horrendous even to imagine. Could you imagine on a happy wedding day that the newly married couple could end up experiencing domestic violence?
42. So, what should be the role of healing, counseling, and help for others in the process of trying to spread the gospel to them?

**During His ministry Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. His miracles testified to the truth of His words, that He came not to destroy but to save....** Wherever He went, the tidings of His mercy preceded Him. Where He had passed, the objects of His compassion were rejoicing in health, and making trial of their new-found powers. Crowds were collecting around them to hear from their lips the works that the Lord had wrought. His voice was the first sound that many had ever heard, His name the first word they had ever spoken, His face the first they had ever looked upon. Why should they not love Jesus, and sound His praise? As He passed through the towns and cities He was like a vital current, diffusing life and joy wherever He went.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 350.3; *MH*\* 19.4-20.1.

**The Saviour devoted more time and labor to healing the afflicted of their maladies than to preaching. His last injunction to his apostles, his**  
*Family Seasons #9 - page 5 of 6*

**representatives on earth, was that they lay hands on the sick that they might recover.** When the Master shall come again, he will commend those who have visited the sick and relieved the necessities of the afflicted.—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*,\* April 9, 1908, par. 16; *Counsels on Health*\* 34.1. [Bold type is added.]

43. Can we even imagine the situation of Judas entering the Garden of Gethsemane, going up to Jesus, and identifying Him by kissing Him? How could a person spend all that time with Jesus and still be willing to betray Him? (Luke 22:48)
44. How are we supposed to understand Matthew 5:28? We live in a world where the female body is used in almost every way imaginable to attract attention—even to get one to buy soap! With Satan using all of these temptations, he clearly understands exactly what Jesus was talking about; the Devil is doing everything he can to destroy human beings.
45. Have you had the experience of having a friend who is not a Christian pass away? Strange things are often said at the funerals of such people. By contrast, notice:

When thinking of the loss of life, we should remember the passing of Henry White, Ellen White's oldest son. He had contracted a cold, developed pneumonia, and become deathly ill. Ellen White recounts a touching moment with her son: "When Henry White, our eldest son, lay dying, he said, 'A bed of pain is a precious place when we have the presence of Jesus.'" —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 274. In December of 1863, James and Ellen White lost their "sweet singer." He had requested to be buried next to his little brother, John Herbert, so that they could come up together in the resurrection. He was only 16 years old when he died, but he left an endowment born from experience: the presence of Jesus and the promise of the resurrection.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 120-121.

46. Read again Matthew 5:21-22,27-28. We need to notice that Jesus recognized the horrendous possibility of murder and adultery. And He did not wait to try to stop it when it was already in full blossom; He tried to nip it in the bud. Jesus intended for His words to both be preventive and preemptive.
47. Unfortunately, domestic violence is very prevalent even in Christian marriages. Can we as a church produce an environment that is so loving and forgiving that domestic violence would become "impossible"?

Those who have borne the greatest sorrows are frequently the ones who carry the greatest comfort to others, bringing sunshine wherever they go. Such ones have been chastened and sweetened by their afflictions; they did not lose confidence in God when trouble assailed them, but clung closer to His protecting love.—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*,\* book 2, 274.

48. Could domestic violence be taking place among the members of your church family and no one outside of the family even knows? Maybe if we are a little freer in talking about it as in this lesson, things can improve.

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