

Supplementary Notes for

AFTER LOSS

courage and healing through God's grace
by Lynelle Watford

Each reading in the booklet can apply to any kind of loss, but some have examples of specific types of loss. The following chart identifies if a specific type of loss is referenced and indicates aspects or challenges related to loss.

The readings roughly correspond to three periods of time--immediate, at about four months, and about a year or later. Time periods are indicated by bold lines and are labeled in the last column.

Title	Type of Loss	Aspect/Challenge/Topic	
Shock		Initial emotional assaults & despair, but Jesus is there	Immediate
Emotions, Emotions		When flung about with emotions, God gives stability	
Life Goes On	Marital separation, abandonment by spouse	Routine demands of life can help us gain equilibrium	
Tears	Suicide death of child	Tears are part of grief	
Struggle to Understand	Suicide death of grown son	I don't have to understand the "Why?" but can trust	
Pour & Lift	Disability in infant	Give burdens to God; thank Him for His goodness	
Blame Is Not a Game	Death of a son	Blaming God and others; considering walking away from God	Four Months
Marathon Endurance		Three tips to make it through grief	
Unchanging God		Theology cannot be based on one's circumstances	
One Word		Trouble thinking and functioning	
Ambushed	A grown son's death	Things can suddenly remind us of the loss, with emotional effects	
Staircase Out	Death	Thankfulness helps us heal	
Splendid Scars		The scars, left from our healing, can be beautiful	One Year
Beautiful Change		Loss exposes the delusion of self-sufficiency	
Find Meaning	Miscarriage	Ministry to others will help in healing	
End of Fear's Domain		When deep loss becomes a real possibility, we may fear having more losses	
What Remains	Debilitating and chronic disease	Whatever the losses, much remains in knowing God	
New World.	Deadly virus (Covid-19)	Reality of a future with Jesus	

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Additional Information on Readings:

Life Goes On:

The wife, abandoned by her husband, with six children under her care, was both badgered and grounded by constant, daily demands. She put it this way, "It's good that life has to go on. It is brutal and yet is God's grace."

Profound loss may leave us feeling detached from details of daily living. Emotional and even physical pain may dominate our life and everything else seems like a blur. Yet we are still alive and need to stay connected to life—to caring for ourselves and others, while at the same time finding extra time for rest and quiet for healing. We need a healthy balance between alone time and connectedness. But the grieving person may not have the emotional energy to find that balance. Others who care may need to gently help the grieving one find a healthy balance.

Struggle to Understand:

Loss often seems senseless and without purpose. When we not only ask "Why?" but then continue to search for answers, much emotional energy is given to something that may not help in healing.

As Christians, we believe God has a purpose for everything, which means He knows the 'Why' behind loss. If He does not reveal that to us, we may be tempted to reject God.

For me, the thought "I just don't understand," was a common one. It was as though I was on a quest to find answers. I wanted to figure it out; I felt compelled to find answers.

When it occurred to me one day that I don't have to understand, it was liberating. Another way to think of it, is to consider being willing to set aside questions for the present time and to decide to trust God. This concept was a pivotal point in my grief journey.

Blame Is Not a Game:

This is another critical area. When we are hurt, we tend to blame.

After our son died, I blamed myself, others, and God. It took a while for me to work through each of these areas to get to the point of acceptance and forgiveness.

Since I believe God is in control, He was the one I ultimately blamed. In my resentment, one day I considered walking away from Him. I didn't have to think about it too long before I realized that was something I could not do. If I walked away from Him, I would have to change practically everything about my life. I had to accept that I did not understand why God did not stop my son's death. Rejecting God would not have solved anything. And I would have been rejecting the only one who loves me unconditionally.

Read a published devotional about my struggle with blame at ForeverWaters.com/blame-devotional.

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Unchanging God:

After our son died, sometimes I would hear or read things that confused or even angered me. For instance, someone at church said how good God is that his wife was cancer free. While I was glad to hear that and I had been praying for her, his choice of words made it sound as though the favorable answer to prayer was his proof God is good. It made me wonder if he would testify to God's goodness even if the answer had not been what he had wanted.

I had prayed for my son, but my prayer had not been answered as I had hoped. Did that mean I should conclude that God is not good? I do not think this is what this person intended and yet I often hear the two thoughts connected: that God is good and I got what I wanted.

My theology cannot be based on my experience; it must be based on God's Word. I believe God is good because God's Word says He is.

What Remains:

This concept has been powerful in my life, especially in the last year. A slight revision of the title, "What Remains," is "Much Remains." That was my word for last year.

Most of us have lost much in life. Yet followers of Christ will never lose what is most precious—Jesus. Because of that, no matter how much we lose, much will always remain.

I wrote this reading in the fall of 2020. I had not been able to see my grandchildren who live in New Mexico for a year due to Covid. And I didn't know when we would get to see them. This was a big loss as they were only a year and a half and five years old at the time.

Since that time, we have seen our grandchildren twice. Covid is still a barrier. My mom passed away a few months ago, and there have been other losses as well. Still, much remains.