

THE COUNSELOR

A PUBLICATION FOR PARENTS, COUNSELORS, & CHURCHES . PROVIDED BY STEPHEN ROSSI, M.A., L.P.C.

December 2009

Living with **Imminent Loss** *without*

**Worry,
Fear,
Discouragement
or
Despair**



Baby Boomers are getting older. Separation and loss loom before becoming realities. What will today bring? It's hard sometimes to remain positive and optimistic about this life. It's full of pain, suffering, hardship, heartaches, sickness, conflicts, chaos, and death. We live with imminent loss. No one escapes these things in life. Everyone dies. Acquaintances, friends, relatives, and family members eventually slip away. People also break your heart and leave you. You may have to live with the strain of conflicted or disconnected relationships. This life hurts. It's full of disappointment. Solomon wrote about the vanity of this life in his Bible book, "Ecclesiastes." The world as a whole is getting worse and winding down. We are living in the Last Days. So we have the additional concerns of living in very evil times.

We must face the realities of this life. There is no escaping the road ahead. How do you do that without falling into worry, fear, discouragement, and despair? Some of you have already tasted the bitter cup of loss and others have had more than your share. Some of you have lost your parents, siblings, and a child. Many have been crushed by divorce and rebellious children. How are you coping with these tragedies? Once these losses begin, you believe more will follow. You fear that the floodgates of calamity will open up any day now and pour all over you. You think about the inevitability of your own death. You may look forward to it in a strange way, but also with apprehen-



sion and fear. Time is running out, you have so much more to do.

We don't have to live this life dreading the next day or just waiting for the next catastrophe. We can live without the negativity, without the worry and fear. We don't have to become discouraged or give up. There are ways to live this life victoriously while embracing the good and the bad.

We are not free from life's imminent losses, but as Christians, we have the promise and power from God to endure and overcome, just like Jesus did. Just like He promised us. (John 16:33)

Worry

Obsessing over potential negative outcomes is counterproductive. We all worry from time to time, but some people worry more than others. It's their nature. They are hypersensitive to everything, especially bad things. Others aren't concerned enough. We need a healthy balance between lightheartedness and worry. Concern should motivate you to be proactive and do something to



prevent or resolve the problem. Too much worrying without any action can lead to panic attacks and immobilization. Worry can begin a chain reaction that leads all the way to depression and despair. Very rarely do things turn out as bad as we have worried about. Sometimes they do. They seldom turn out worse. Avoid taking on the emotional stress of worrying over things that may never materialize. Excessive worry can be life threatening. The more you worry the potentially weaker you become, opening the door for all kinds of illnesses. This is not easy to do, especially if you have always been a worrier or have suffered many losses in your life. You believe the worse is on its way. And so it might be. Look at all those Biblical characters who faced all kinds of imminent threats and losses and survived! They even thrived! Those who died joined the Lord immediately. The world was not worthy of them. (Heb. 11:36-3) Reread Hebrews, Chapter 11. God remains faithful to those who believe Him whether He rescues them from peril in this life or not. You may never face the horrible things those saints did, then maybe you will. Either way, He Who promises is faithful. (Heb. 10:23). Expect the unexpected. Welcome what God brings whether it is good or bad. What? Yes, even the bad. We must trust Him even when He chooses to let our greatest concerns come to pass. He knows what He is doing. He runs the universe!

Worry makes things worse. How do we live with inevitable losses and not succumb to worry? We look beyond this temporal world. (2 Cor. 4:18) We live in the present moment knowing that the things we don't see are really more important and powerful than the things we can see, feel, and touch. We walk by faith not by sight. (2 Cor. 5:7) We keep our eyes on Jesus even though we feel certain that we are about to enter "the valley of the shadow of death." Greater things are ahead. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us as a far more exceeding and eternal weight in glory." (2 Cor. 4:17)

Fear

Similarly, face your fears when events come, not a moment before. Healthy fear is necessary. We know we must get out of the way when a train is coming and we are standing on the tracks! We must have a reverent fear of God too. God built healthy fear into us as a survival mechanism. He never intended for it to rule us. Fear came with sin when Adam and Eve failed in the Garden of Eden. They chose



to disobey God, bringing a multitude of miseries on mankind throughout history. We know that Christ came to redeem the world. He conquered sin and death. Therefore, we must approach this life as Christians knowing that unhealthy fear has no place in us. It is sinful to live this life with excessive worry and fear. Countless times in the Old and New Testaments, God commands us not to worry nor be afraid. (Gen. 15:1; Gen. 50:21; Ex. 14:13; Deut. 1:29; Deut. 20:1; Jos. 1:9; 2 Sam. 13:28; 2 Chron. 32:7; Psa. 56:11; Jer. 1:8; 1 Matt. 6:25; Peter 3:14; Rev. 1:17) This is hard. We know what lies ahead. Your time for pain, suffering, and loss may not have come, but it will. How do you live with that? We are told as Christians in the Bible to be joyful in all trials and tribulations (James 1:2), but how do you implement that when you are about to be rocked by something dreadful? Are Christians weak when they fear imminent losses? Do we lack faith when we fall into a frightful abyss over things to come? The answer is **yes** -- and **no**. It is human to become overwhelmed by grief and sorrow, to be worn down by the eventualities of life, **but for a season**. Any longer than that leads to the sin of worry, fear, and further drifting away from our Lord. He will not let you be tempted more than you can bear. (1 Cor. 10:13) Pray without ceasing when the weight is heavy. (1 Thes. 5:17) He will provide what you need to endure and overcome. "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. (Ephes. 3:20) Many of you know what I am talking about. He comes through! You remember a time when everything terrible that could happen, happened. You remember when you were concerned about the next catastrophic loss and it occurred! He healed you. He rescued you. He drew you out of deep waters. Run to Him when those fears begin to accumulate, even when you have good reason to be concerned. Do your part to eliminate that problem before it occurs. Leave the rest to Him. Philippians 4:19 says, "And my God will meet **all your needs** according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

Discouragement

Relentless worry and fear can lead to discouragement. It may be the next step before total collapse emotionally. Depression is discouragement. You begin to believe that there is no cavalry coming over the hill to rescue you from impending financial doom, divorce, sickness, broken relationships, and death. You can feel it in your bones. This is a dangerous place to be. Most people can't believe they reached this point so fast when it

comes. They were strong in their faith and thought they were ready for anything, until the pressures crept in, and their worries increased. Then came a few of life's "curveballs." They began to fall into themselves (away from Christ) rather than remaining focused on the Lord. They wandered off course. Worry became fear. It is not always easy to deal with the uncertainties of life. It's an invitation to push God away and take charge yourself. That's a Big Mistake! We are not in control. Discouragement is the final **red flag** most people get before, they sink into a deeper pit. Don't let yourself go any further. You must turn away from yourself at this stage and return to Him no matter how terrible you feel. It will get worse if you don't. Despair may be just around the corner.



Despair



Complete emotional collapse comes with giving up completely. It happened to the Israelites many times in the wilderness, as well as Elijah, Jonah, Judas, and many

others throughout Bible history. It happens today. Despair can lead to suicidal thinking. Be very careful here. A mind in despair can prompt a person to do many things that he regrets and damage others for life. Your fears and problems will not last forever. Your problems and suffering are "momentary" compared to what God has in store for you. (2 Cor. 4:17) They won't last as long as you think. Your Help is here! Don't let that dark night of the soul trick you into believing things will never change. You are not better off dead than alive. Don't let your wicked self or the devil win! Jesus paid the price for you to come out of this. It will take some time if you are already down that far, but you must go the other direction - His Way. Now! Despair is a cancer that keeps on growing. You may be so far down at this point that you need God's people, including His Christian counselors to help you come through this. Let Him guide you to the proper treatment at this stage. Don't let yourself get this far if you haven't yet. If despair doesn't kill a person physically, it can cripple them mentally and emotionally and lead them dangerously away from God. Their worst nightmares come true. This does not have to happen. You need His healing. Let Christ heal you with His "Balm of Gilead." He can reverse your circumstances or give you what you need to pass

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through them. Let Him. Jesus will renew you when you give all your worries, fears, discouragement, and despair to Him. Don't hold back. The worst that could happen (if God permits it) is everything you imagined. It happened to Job and countless others down through history, but those who believed did enter into His rest, EVENTUALLY. Eventually always comes with God, in this life and/or the next. . . .

The Christian Life

The Christian life is difficult. How do unbelievers press on? Human will power cannot defeat all the problems in this life. We have the Blessed Hope of Eternity with our Lord after this life. We have His power and help now to overcome. The Bible is loaded with examples of Believers who overcame the worst obstacles you can imagine. We already have the victory over anything this life brings, including death. So how are we to live? How do we face living with imminent losses? With enemies drawn against us on every side? Consider the following. As Christians:

We remember that our body and **this life are temporary.**

We will have a **permanent home in heaven** some day. We must **pass through this life to enter the next.**

We live in a **fallen world.**

We **don't have to be slaves to sin.**

We have **been set free** from the power and eternal consequences of sin.

We are **more than conquerors** through Him who loved us.

We **can do all things through Christ** who strengthens us.

We have the **Wonderful Counselor** and **Holy Comforter (Holy Spirit)** inside us.

We have a **Savior** who knows what we are going through.

We **are comforted** when we mourn.

We have the Lord **when we go through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.**

We know that **nothing can separate us** from the Love of God in Christ Jesus.

We are to **pray without ceasing.**

We know that **God listens and answers** our prayers.

We know that **He is faithful and just.**



We know that we **wrestle against principalities**, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, not flesh and blood. (Ephes. 6:12)

We also know that **the battle** against our spiritual enemy(s) belongs to the Lord and **is already won**.

We can call on the Name of Jesus Christ to fight these enemies. **By His Shed Blood** we are saved.

We are **not supposed to be controlled by anxiety and fear**.

We are **not supposed to give the devil** a foothold.

We know that **by His Stripes we are healed**.

We know that He wants us **to persevere** in all trials.

We know that **all things work together for good** to those who love God." (Rom. 8:28)

We know that if **God is for us** who can come against us? **No one can come against us**.

We are **safe with Him** no matter what comes.

The Christian life is not about us. It is always about the Love, Will, and Power of Jesus Christ.

The Christian life is living out a relationship of love with Jesus Christ, Who loved us first.

The Christian life is about abiding in Christ and obeying Him, Who chose us.

The Christian life is all about forgiveness. He forgave us. We must forgive others and ourselves.

The Christian life is sacrificial. He gave up His rights. We must give up our rights (self) too.

The Christian life involves suffering. He suffered for us. We will suffer persecutions for Him.

The Christian life is the only life. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Opportunities and Victories

"Count it all joy when you face trials of many kinds." (James 1:2) Why? "Because you know that the testing of

your faith develops perseverance." (James 1:3). And "Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." (James 1:4) How? We step out in faith and

let our concerns over impending losses become swallowed up in victory. That is, we give our concerns to God (and don't take them back) and let Him deal with our tomorrows. Give them up and step back. Watch Him and see what He does with them. These are great opportunities for us and Him. Admit that you are powerless over your fears apart from Him. You cannot

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master your fear of imminent losses by yourself. They keep coming in this life. Remember, that when we are weak (in our own abilities), He is strong! (2 Corin. 12:10) He will give you the grace to bear or overcome your burden, your fears, your anything, even when He does not remove that very thing you fear from happening. "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." "Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Corin. 12:9) God will help you move through the grief over future losses. He has in the past and He will again. He is not insensitive to the sorrows in your life, let Him bring you through them. Don't hold onto the pain when bad things come. Imagine facing your worst nightmare and simultaneously having God's protective power and love. It may be a little frightening but glorious victories lie ahead. You get to live out the manifestation of God's loving promises. He will heal you. He will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5) Everything we face presents an opportunity for Christ to shine through us and add another jewel in our crown. We have this treasure in Christ Jesus (2 Corin. 4:7) (Salvation, Eternal Life) inside us, so we press on and let others see how we deal with present and imminent sorrows, and let Christ draw those people to Him, using us. Be a witness for Him in this life. Show others how to trust God with your worries, how to prevent the decent into despair, and how to live victoriously in a world full of sorrow and hardships.

Appreciate the opportunity in turning these things over to Him.

Experience the joy of His Power lifting you up. Face the hardships of this life without grief- stricken panic.

Live this present reality with total confidence in Him.

Know His Perfect Peace amidst the worst storm of your life.

People are watching you.

Imminent Gain



Expect God's Greatness in everything that happens to you when you are completely surrendered to Him. Imminent loss is imminent gain! You never lose, He always wins! No worry, no fear, no discouragement, and definitely no despair.

They are swallowed up in His Victory. We like to be in control. We always feel more comfortable when we know what to expect, how things will turn out. Uncertainty evaporates because we do know, even when we can't see what's next, that our Sovereign Lord Christ knows the end before the beginning of everything. Therefore, through Him Who knows, controls, and uses all outcomes, even the worst, and the losses you will experience, you have the certain victory. We don't have to be in control because He is, and because He is, imminent loss is imminent gain. That's incredible! Loss is counted as gain in God's Kingdom, now and forevermore. We must keep the right perspective and not let this life rule us. Remember this when you are hard pressed on every side. Every life threat brings out His best. God shines in troubles, threats, and impending doom. His power is made perfect when humans fall short every time. Live with Christ today and let Him handle your tomorrows - today. Experience this side of eternity with Him now!

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