



Links Players

LOSSES AND GAINS 2: PERSPECTIVE

“Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?” (Job 3:11, NIV)

OH BOY, IS IT EASY TO LOSE PERSPECTIVE DURING A ROUND OF GOLF! One of the reasons for this is stress. Brain research tells us that stress makes it exceedingly hard to process thoughts deeply (which may be one reason you have trouble focusing on your Bible reading sometimes, by the way).

So there you are after a pair of miserable holes that have sent your previously good round toward the trash heap, and your buddy innocently says, “Sure is a nice day to be outside, isn’t it?” You may remember well enough to give him a mostly agreeable, “Yes, it is,” but you’ll know instantly whether you’ve lost perspective by what’s really going on between those ears of yours.

Stress causes us to lose perspective, and stress comes from trouble. It doesn’t even have to be present trouble. We may come to a fresh situation and tell ourselves this isn’t going to go well because of what has happened in similar situations in the past. Thanks to trouble, we can talk ourselves into perspective-robbing stress.

In our study of what can be lost and gained in a time of trouble, perspective just might top the list. A loss of perspective can bring frustration, fear, sleeplessness, impatience, depression—we’ll stop there, because that’s already quite a list.

But trouble can also produce an overhaul of our perspective. The quintessential example of a person facing trouble on the pages of Scripture is Job. He’s the guy who lost his family, his holdings, and eventually large parts of his skin to boils. It was as he was scraping his boils with a shard of pottery that his wife told him to curse God and die. How’s that for encouragement? Job replied that it would be foolish to accept only good from God, but when he finally opened his mouth after days of quiet lament with his friends, Job cursed his very birth. Trouble had taken him this far. To his rock bottom, you might say.

But it is in the troubling darkness of our worst hour that God brings light. He returns our perspective. We weren’t in control of our birth. God gave that to us, just as he gave us the life that has followed, provision by provision. This is where trouble establishes a better perspective. It reminds us to call on God, to count on God. We may lose perspective at first, forgetting that God always has a plan, but once we see that he is in the midst of even our dark days, we gain what we have never had before.

Opening questions What causes you to lose perspective in life? How do you know when this is happening? What does it take to get you back on track?

READING Job 38:1-18; Luke 12:22-31; 1 Timothy 6:6-8

God in his place, we in ours (Job 38)

What marks God’s reminders to Job about the authority the Lord possesses? Can you imagine God addressing your mistaken perspective? What might it sound like? • How do you know when your perspective has been correctly realigned?

Jesus on anxiety (Luke 12)

Trouble and stress can bring anxiety that threatens proper perspective. What did Jesus teach his disciples about facing off against worry? What changes do you need to make in the way you handle anxiety?

Contentment in small things (1 Timothy 6)

How does reducing our life to its beginnings help us find perspective? What hurdles must you clear to find contentment in your life?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2021 Links Players International. An accompanying introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/uIhadPlz18>