

2 Samuel 12:11-24

11 “This is what the Lord says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’”

13 Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” Nathan replied, “The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.

14 But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the son born to you will die.”

15 After Nathan had gone home, **the Lord struck the child** that Uriah’s wife had borne to David, **and he became ill.** 16 David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. 17 The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

18 On the seventh day the child died. David’s attendants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, “While the child was still living, he wouldn’t listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we now tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate.”

19 David noticed that his attendants were whispering among themselves, and he realized the child was dead. “Is the child dead?” he asked.

“Yes,” they replied, “he is dead.”

20 Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes he went into the

house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.

21 His attendants asked him, “Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!”

22 He answered, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, ‘Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.’ 23 But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.”

24 Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and made love to her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. 25 and because the Lord loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah. (**“Loved by the Lord.”**)

How can we develop resiliency in the face of tragedy, the loss of a loved one, major financial loss, a radical loss of health, or the death of a long-held dream?

How do we deal with those terrible situations where we feel disappointed with God, that somehow He hasn't lived up to his promises of protection and blessing?

How do we go on loving God and believing in His promises after we have prayed and fasted for a miracle, done everything by the book, and still, the outcome that we feared came upon us?

In similar situations, people can become depressed, angry at life or at God, stop dreaming and expecting great things from

God, or experience paralyzing grief that prevents them from returning to a normal life.

How do we recover and go on with the business of life despite experiencing profound grief and discouragement?

David's experience has some lessons to offer us in this area.

Relate David's story: great sin, murder of a just man—one of his loyal generals, abusing his royal authority and forcing himself on a defenseless woman, undertaking a major political cover-up. God was also incensed that David used God's own enemies to execute his sinister plan of murdering Uriah. In the end God feels personally offended—that David showed no regard for his dignity and holiness. He calls it “utter contempt.”

So, at the moment we encounter David in this text, he has been rebuked by God through Nathan the prophet, and has been warned that he will be punished in very severe ways.

His self-esteem must have been demolished. The expectation of severe punishment that God had warned him about must have been overwhelming. His remorse and repentance were extraordinary, as we can see through Psalms 51.

On top of all this, God decides to take the life of the child, because he is the product of such a terrible sin.

We see David's reaction in this text, and we can learn from him:

1) He does all he can to change the outcome. Does his due diligence before God. He prays and fasts. He acknowledges his sin.

2) He bows his head before the dictate of the Almighty. He doesn't rebel or become bitter.

3) He determines that life must go on. He takes actions that bring him closer to his normal life. He takes a bath, eats and rejoins his family.

4) He uses his conviction regarding eternal life to dilute his sense of loss.

5) Even as we experience and process our grief, we must **act** to whatever degree we have the capacity. Action, engagement in life, oils the machine and warms it up. Action operates on our feelings and leads us out of the morass of despair.

It may be just getting back to work, or going to a family gathering, going back to church, praying or engaging in conversation with a trusted friend or counselor.

6) Be patient with yourself and your feelings. Just as the human body has been given the capacity to heal itself from physical wounds and traumas, so our emotional system and our spirit have been given extraordinary capacities to heal themselves.

Time, and your own natural, God-given inner resources are a powerful ally. With time and patience, all wounds can be healed.

What you experience during the first stages of your loss will in time, if you allow it, give way to emotional and spiritual healing and a new sense of normality.

Don't assume that what you are experiencing in the first few days of your loss, the shock and grief, are going to last forever in that same level of intensity.

You must exercise patience and assume that that moment of healing will come. Just be patient, remain hopeful, and wait until your system—and your spirit—do what they were designed to do.

We see this in psalms 40.

1

**I waited patiently for the Lord;
he turned to me and heard my cry.**

2

**He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.**

3

**He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the Lord
and put their trust in him.**

Trust that God's mercy and compassion will manifest themselves in powerful, visible ways. In the case of David, God gave him **another son, Solomon**.

7) Pray like crazy. Find some Bible passages that are particularly applicable to your situation and pray through them over and over again until God answers.

When we are processing loss and trauma, prayer must become our safety valve, a way to express and process our grief, to massage our souls, to speak to the greatest psychiatrist and counselor in the universe—the Holy Spirit.

8) Confess the goodness of God even if you don't feel it, or you are angry at God. **This is what Job did throughout his ordeal.**

Job 19:

13

**“He has alienated my family from me;
my acquaintances are completely estranged from me.**

14

**My relatives have gone away;
my closest friends have forgotten me.**

15

**My guests and my female servants count me a foreigner;
they look on me as on a stranger.**

16

**I summon my servant, but he does not answer,
though I beg him with my own mouth.**

17

**My breath is offensive to my wife;
I am loathsome to my own family.**

18

**Even the little boys scorn me;
when I appear, they ridicule me.**

19

**All my intimate friends detest me;
those I love have turned against me.**

20

**I am nothing but skin and bones;
I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth.**

25

**I know that my redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.**

26

**And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;**

27

**I myself will see him
with my own eyes—I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!**

9) Let God know how you feel. Talk to him honestly. Don't become so "spiritual" that you end up repressing your true feelings and distorting the process of healing and recovery. God can take it. He is more understanding than you can imagine.

David does this over and over again in the psalms. We see him in real time processing his feelings of abandonment, hopelessness, fear and grief.

10) Talk about your grief with people who will truly listen and who are capable of comforting you. Don't isolate yourself. Seek friendship and community.

11) Avoid the “why me?” Syndrome. Stuff happens. We all experience our share of loss and suffering. Life is like that.

Bad things do happen to good people. You may do everything right and yet negative things will come your way.

The world is a fallen, sad place, distorted by sin, and we will sooner or later be wounded in the crossfire of the struggle between good and evil.

12) It helps to realize that God himself has his own, self imposed limitations. This may sound scandalous, but it's true. God is not the only actor in the human drama. There is God, Satan and we ourselves, each with our own capacity to affect the process of life.

Then, there is the mystery of life itself, and God's own obligation to respect human freedom and to act within the limits of His own justice and integrity.

There's also the fact that many times, suffering and loss are used by God to make us better and stronger, and to prepare for future moments of extraordinary joy and blessing.

13) Know that there is always a solution. There is always a way out. God is an extraordinary provider of solutions that we cannot even imagine when we are going through difficult situations.

We should never lose hope. This is where prayer plays a significant role. Sometimes, our situation seems hopeless and we cannot imagine how anything good can come out of a

certain situation. But God is never out of solutions. If we persist in trusting in Him, He can always bring about something beautiful and surprising, even in the most seemingly hopeless situations.

Despite our discouragement and fear, we must look forward to the inevitable day when, if we don't give up, God will show himself to be fully deserving of our love and trust.

5

**Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
*Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.***