

The Human Mind

The Discipline of Renewing It Daily

Session 10

1) Reacting to Loss

James 4:13-7

We live every day with the assumption that tomorrow will be the same. We make plans for the future with the thought that we will have our health and the same job, family, and friends.

James is not trying to take away our freedom to decide, but he is showing us that it is not just what we want that matters. We need God's grace to complement our efforts and ought to rely not on them but on God's love for us. As it says in Proverbs: "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth"

- John Chrysostom (AD 347-407)

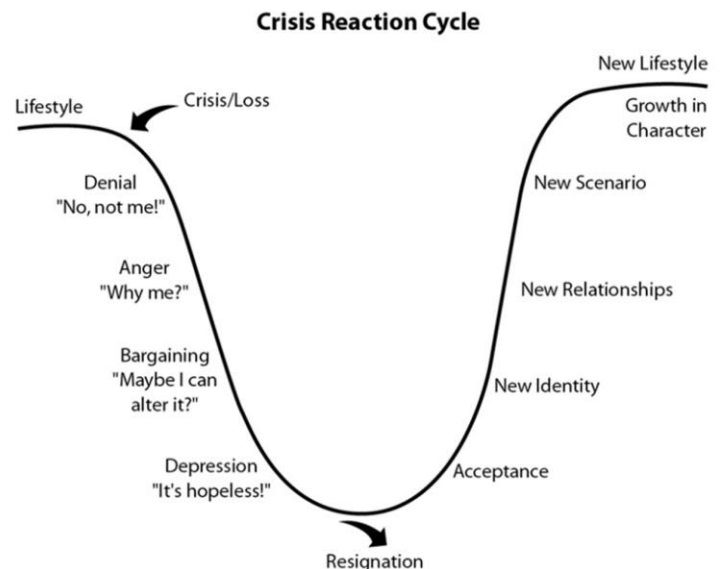
2) The Process of Learning to See Life From God's Eternal Perspective

On Three Occasions, Jesus informed the disciples that He was going to Jerusalem, when He would be betrayed & crucified.

(Mark 8:31-32; Mark 9:32; Mark 10:32-34)

We all go through a similar reaction when a crisis abruptly ends an established lifestyle. Usually, the crisis is defined by a significant loss that can be real, threatened,

The information for this session and a number of the *Your Mind*", (Bethany House Publishers; Minnesota,



or imagined.

“Our first response is denial, which can last for 3 seconds or 30 years. Our initial reaction is a sense of disbelief-- "No not me!" Then we get angry and wonder, "How can this happen to me?" The anger often turns to bargaining as we think, "Maybe I can alter what happened." Finally, we feel depressed when we are unable to reverse the consequences of the loss. Reaction to losses is the primary cause for depression. No crisis can destroy us, but it will reveal who we are."

- Neil Anderson

“Learning to overcome losses is a critical part of our spiritual growth. Everything we now have in this temporal world we shall someday lose. The critical questions are whether we are going to choose the path of resignation and allow the loss to negatively affect us for the rest of our lives, or whether we are going to accept what we cannot change and grow through the crisis. A wise person once said, "A bend in the road is not the end of the road unless you fail to make the turn."

- Neil Anderson

3. The Danger

Permanence- The speed of our recovery is greatly affected by whether we think the consequences of the crisis will have short-term or long-term negative effect on us. The loss is permanent, but it doesn't have to affect us permanently. There is potential to grow through every crisis.

Pervasiveness- You will recover slowly if you think your whole life has been ruined as a result of the crisis. If you experience one loss, you are not a loser. If you fail to accomplish one goal, you are not a failure. If you get laid off at work, you are not unemployable. It is natural to grieve for what you have lost, and grieving is an important part of the recovery process. However, a prolonged depression due to significant losses signifies an undue and unhealthy attachment to people, places, and things that you have no right or ability to control.

Personalization: Blaming yourself for every loss will keep you in a rut. If you experience loss in one area, don't generalize it and create a total crisis. Keep your loss specific. If you experience a crisis today, don't allow it to affect you tomorrow. Keep short accounts. If the world is disintegrating around you, don't accept the blame when it's not appropriate. If you are suffering the consequences of a bad decision, then change what you can, minimize your losses, and move on.

The information for this session and a number of the other sessions can be found at *Neil Anderson, "Renewing Your Mind", (Bethany House Publishers; Minnesota), 2014.*

4. Commitment to Overcome Depression

"Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we being renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16) In other words, there is hope if you turn to God and assume responsibility. How do you do this?

1) Commit yourself to complete recovery:

Decide to believe that you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you (Philippians 4:13), and then do it. You can't look for somebody else to cure you, or blame someone else for your lack of follow through.

2) Commit yourself to pray first about everything:

The old nature will seek every possible natural explanation and cure first. Jesus told us to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and "all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33). The first thing believers should do about anything is pray.

3) Commit yourself to having an intimate relationship with your heavenly Father:

This requires repentance and faith in God. To be mentally healthy, you must have a true understanding of who God is and be rightly related to Him.

4) Commit yourself as a child of God:

To have a biblical understanding of who you are in Christ and know what it means to be a child of God. You cannot consistently feel or behave in a way that is inconsistent with what you believe about yourself.

5) Commit your body to God:

If the previous four steps are not impacting the renewal of your mind, then consult a medical doctor for a complete physical examination. There are many forms of biological depression that can be diagnosed and treated.

6) Commit yourself to the renewing of your mind:

Mental depression stems from a negative view of yourself, your circumstances, and the future. These false perceptions can only be overcome as you are transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2) and by choosing to believe the truth (Philippians 4:6-9).

7) Commit yourself to good behaviour:

Make realistic plans to be involved with your family and church members. Live a responsible life by following through on your commitments. Schedule meaningful activities and exercise.

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8) Commit yourself to overcome every loss, whether real, imagined, or threatened:

Be aware that abstract losses such as reputation, social standing, and friendships are harder to identify. You can choose to overcome every loss by deepening your walk with God, reaffirming who you really are in Christ, growing in character, and by developing a more Christian lifestyle.

5. Reflection

We know that God invests our pain and trials for our good. How has God used past hurts or disappointments in your life?

How has he “invested” your past in your future?

If you don’t sense that he has yet invested your past—how could he invest your past? How might he invest past hurts and trials for your good and his good and the good of those around you?

What lifestyle changes do you need to make in order to live a healthy life?

Are you willing to assume your responsibility for your health and to take whatever steps it takes to be mentally and emotionally healthy? Why or why not?