

# We Learn More From Losing Things

“Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart” (Ecc 7:2).

To lose is to learn. Rarely do we part with anything valuable without growing in wisdom. Yet the experience of loss is one we usually resist and resent. If it's a choice between gaining and losing, we'd much rather be gaining. As for any losing we might have to do, we hope to defer that as long as we can. Nevertheless it's true: we learn more from losing things than we do from gaining them. So Solomon said that it's better to go to the “house of mourning” than the “house of feasting.” That will be our perspective during times of loss if our priorities are what they ought to be.

We humans are both “acquisitive” and “possessive” creatures, aren't we? We love to acquire — to get and to gain — and having acquired at least some of what we want in this world, we feel a sense of entitlement to it: This is mine. I possess it. It would be wrong for this to ever be taken away from me. We are loathe to part with anything we have acquired, whether our money, our possessions, our health, our pleasures, our privileges, or our relationships.

Yet in a “temporal” world, there is nothing that is not temporary. Do you understand what that means? It means that there is nothing that is yours to keep. Whatever you have, you are going to have to let go of it — except God. And I am not talking about what happens at death. If you live very long, you're going to part with most of what you enjoy before you die. And when the things you have cherished are taken away from you, one by one, you will grow in wisdom. You will learn more from losing things than you ever learned by gaining them. And what you will learn is that God is all you have to have. He is the only thing you can't do without.

If nothing ever changed and we were allowed to keep our situations and our relationships as long as we wanted, we'd soon forget about God. Our tendency is to try to “possess” the creation and pay little attention to the Creator. But knowing our nature, God lets us enjoy our boons and benefits for a while . . . and then takes them away from us. With every loss, He is teaching us to fix our hearts on Him. So let me ask you: looking at life like that, is losing what you love in this world good or bad? You be the judge.

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