

Meeting the Ups and Downs of Life – Week 9

Lesson 3.3 – When We Wrestle with the Desire for Instant Gratification

We have just a little bit more discussing to do about the temptation of instant gratification.

From last time: Imagine you are married with two children (three and six years old). You live in a small house that feels cramped. The house is in a lower-middle-class neighborhood, which is safe, but you also don't allow your children to play outside alone. Dad works full-time and mom works part-time so that, while still earning an income, she can spend more time with the kids. You're able to pay the bills you have, but it's tight, so you have some concerns about the future. You've talked with your spouse about having more children; your current car isn't going to last forever; you'd like to move to a house that gives you a little more room to operate; you realize that Lutheran grade school, high school, and college tuition payments won't go away anytime soon.

1. In what ways might the desire for instant gratification have an impact on your family?
2. Now imagine that you unexpectedly receive a gift of \$100,000. Describe some of the issues that would arise as you struggle with the tension between your desire for gratification and your desire to plan wisely for the future.
3. This was said in the midst of recent discussions and it's worth bringing up here again—when making decisions, life is not all about money. This discussion should not stop at money either. That's a surface issue of a deeper problem. It can sometimes happen that, no matter what amount of money someone has, they still struggle. Give some reasons why that might happen.

Lesson 4.1 – When a Loved One Dies Suddenly

4. For many people the sudden death of a loved one seems more traumatic than the gradual loss of a loved one due to terminal illness (we'll have another lesson about terminal illness). For what reasons do you think sudden deaths are usually more traumatic?
5. In what ways is the sudden loss of a loved one less difficult than when a loved one dies following a long illness?

Life Example

Robert owned and operated a successful funeral home. Married for 42 years, he and his wife, Darla, had three children. They were active in their local WELS church. They both enjoyed good health, and they looked forward to retirement in a few years. Three days after Christmas, Darla received a phone call from a police officer, telling her that Robert had been taken to a local hospital after being involved in a car accident. At the hospital, Darla was met by a doctor who explained that Robert had suffered such massive injuries that he had died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital.

Reflections of Faith

6. What might be Darla's immediate reaction when she hears the news of Robert's death?

Light from the Word

7. Read **Job 1:21**. Give the background of Job's statement.

a. What is the key message of comfort in this passage?

b. In what ways could this verse be used in Darla's situation?

8. Go to **John 11:25-26**. Knowing the context of these verses, what is the key comfort that you could use in talking with Darla?

9. What difficulties exist for those who grieve as they hear these messages of comfort?

Darla struggled through the funeral. In a constant daze, she wept almost constantly. Nothing her children or grandchildren did or said seemed to offer her any help or comfort. Even though the funeral service was very comforting and Christ-centered, and even though her pastor visited Darla six times during the next month after the funeral, Darla still feels very much in a daze.

10. One place that many Christians turn in the face of death is Psalm 23. Before we read these words, let's consider the life of King David, who wrote these words. Look up the following passages which identify some of the times when David had "walked through the valley of the shadow of death."

- a. **1 Samuel 17:43-44**
- b. **1 Samuel 19:9-12**
- c. **2 Samuel 1:1-4, 11-12**
- d. **2 Samuel 12:13-23**
- e. **2 Samuel 17:1-2**
- f. What helpful insight does all this give as we read Psalm 23?

11. Now, let's go to Psalm 23; list the many reasons David gives for finding comfort in the guidance of the heavenly Shepherd.

12. Use these words to give comfort to Darla. Imagine you're talking to her.

Closing Prayer – 552 The King of Love My Shepherd Is v. 1
The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness fails me never;
I nothing lack if I am his, and he is mine forever. Amen.