

PAUL TAUTGES

MEDITATIONS ON LOSS, GRIEF, AND HEALING

A SMALL BOOK FOR THE

HURTING

HEART

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for the Hurting
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Meditations on Loss,
Grief, and Healing

PAUL TAUTGES



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Introduction

Loss comes in many forms: loss through the death of a spouse, child, or other loved one; loss of relationships through conflict, betrayal, estrangement, divorce, or a move across the country; loss of financial security due to business failure, foreclosure, or long-term unemployment; loss of health or personal dreams because of disability or terminal illness. And the list goes on. Whatever your grief, whatever your pain, whatever your loss, there is comfort available.

This comfort is rooted in the character and work of the Trinity. God the Father is attentive to your every loss, and he loves and cares for you. Jesus Christ the Son of God is the compassionate and understanding Savior who experienced grief in every way imaginable. And

the Holy Spirit is the heaven-sent comforter who brings you into the body of Christ, and skillfully applies the words of Scripture to your heart for the sake of inner healing.

In this small book, I will come alongside your hurting heart to direct you heavenward by ministering Bible truths to your mind and soul. Read slowly, one meditation a day is probably best. Take time to read thoughtfully and prayerfully. Each meditation will end with a suggested way to apply scriptural truth. You may want to keep a journal for the purpose of interacting with these truths and responding to the applications. It is my prayer that the God of all comfort will comfort you in all your affliction (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).

Day 1

God Is Near

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves
the crushed in spirit.

Psalm 34:18

In the aftermath of painful news—in the midst of the fog of disillusionment—one thing is clear. You are never alone! God is close by. He is “near to the brokenhearted.” God never leaves us to suffer alone. He “daily bears us up” (Psalm 68:19).

The promise cited at the top of the page brings tender comfort to the heart. The word “near” is used in the Bible to refer to the next of kin who takes upon himself the needs of another family member.¹ What a comforting word picture! In times of deep loss, when your heart is broken and your spirit is crushed, the

Lord himself draws near and says, “I will never leave you” (Hebrews 13:5).

This promise of God’s presence is for every Christian because Jesus, by his death and resurrection, has made sinners right with our holy God (1 Timothy 2:5). In Christ, God selects us “for adoption to himself” (Ephesians 1:5). Through this new and right relationship with God, we become brothers and sisters of Jesus (Hebrews 2:11). He becomes our “next-of-kin” who carries our burdens.

In Christ, God has drawn near to us in order that we might draw near to him. Personal faith in Jesus, the “great priest over the house of God,” compels us to continually “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:19–22). However, drawing near to God through faith in Jesus is not a one-time event, but a learned habit. I trust you’ll see this throughout our fifty-day journey together.

Yes, conversion takes place in a moment in time. When we turn to God, we are instantly delivered “from the domain of darkness” and transferred “to the kingdom of his beloved Son”

(Colossians 1:13). But saving faith doesn't stop there; it's a lifelong walk.

God draws us near, and he draws near to us. He wants to listen to the cries of our heart (Hosea 7:14). He invites us into his presence. He's always there, always shouldering our burdens. He's the "God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction" (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).

Are you crying out to God? Then you can know that he hears you. "This is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him" (1 John 5:14–15). Therefore, you can trust that he is present with you.

Day 2

Your Tears in His Bottle

You keep track of all my sorrows.
You have collected all my tears in your bottle.
You have recorded each one in your book.

Psalm 56:8 NLT

Your tears are important to God. They must be. He collects them in a bottle. Tears are a gift from God, a means to embracing your pain, releasing emotion, and revealing the depth of your love. Poetically, if God collects all the tears you cry during your life's journey, if he keeps track of all your sorrows, then surely he cares about them. He is aware of what causes them. God records them all in his book!

Psalm 56 is a lament, a passionate expression of grief. In this case, it's a musical expression of deep sorrow and humble prayer. As such, David

turns toward God and begins with a simple plea, “Be gracious to me, O God” (Psalm 56:1). However, as he pleads with God for sustaining grace, David also draws strength from the assurance of divine care and protection. “This I know, that God is for me,” he reminds himself (Psalm 56:9).

Interestingly, the apostle Paul encourages believers in Jesus Christ the very same way. He brings the same stabilizing truth to our minds. “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:31–32).

Something bad has happened to you and you have suffered loss. As a result, you may be tempted to think of God as being distant or even against you. But if you belong to him, through repentant faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, there is nothing that can ever separate you from his love: not heartbreak, not distress, not disability, not death, not loss of any kind, nothing (Romans 8:38–39)!

How do I know this is true for you or for me? We know it because God gave his one and only Son to purchase us from the slave market

of sin, in order to adopt us into his family (Galatians 4:5). If God did not hold back his only Son, but gave him up as a sacrifice, you are right to conclude that he will not withhold himself or his love from you. There is no need you have which he will not work overtime to meet. There is no hurt you cannot take to him.

Have you talked to God about your loss? You might want to memorize 1 Peter 5:7: “Cast all your cares on him, for he cares for you”!