

UNDERSTANDING THE SEASONS OF LIFE

Growing in the Seasons of Life
Rick Warren

"As long as the earth remains, there will be springtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night." Genesis 8:22 (TLB)

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."
Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NIV)

"Everything on earth has its special season." Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NCV)

5 FACTS ABOUT THE SEASONS OF LIFE

1. THEY ARE BEYOND _____
"He controls the times and the seasons; he makes and unmakes kings."
Daniel 2:21 (GNT)

2. THEY ARE OFTEN _____
"He does everything just right and on time, but people can never completely understand what he is doing." Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NCV)

3. GOD HAS A _____ FOR EACH SEASON
"We know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into his plans." Romans 8:28 (TLB)

4. THE SEASONS INCLUDE BOTH _____ TIMES
Ecclesiastes 3:2-8 (NLT) *"There is a time to . . .*

<i>be born/die</i>	<i>plant/harvest</i>
<i>heal/kill</i>	<i>build/tear down</i>
<i>laugh/cry</i>	<i>dance/grieve</i>
<i>gather/scatter</i>	<i>embrace/turn away</i>
<i>search/quit searching</i>	<i>keep/throw away</i>
<i>mend/tear</i>	<i>speak/be quiet</i>
<i>love/hate</i>	<i>peace/war</i>

5. WHAT I _____ IN ONE SEASON, I'LL _____ IN ANOTHER
"Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF EACH SEASON

4 Questions to Ask

1. WHAT CAN I _____ IN THIS SEASON OF LIFE?
"Remember today what you have learned about the Lord through your experiences with him." Deuteronomy 11:2 (GNT)

"This happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead." 2 Corinthians 1:9 (NIV)

2. WHAT CAN I _____ IN THIS SEASON OF LIFE?
"People ought to enjoy every day of their lives." Ecclesiastes 11:8 (NCV)

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV)

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances."
Philippians 4:11 (NIV)

3. WHAT IS _____ IN THIS SEASON OF LIFE?
"Don't be fools; be wise: make the most of every opportunity you have for doing good." Ephesians 5:15-16 (TLB)

4. HOW CAN I _____ IN THIS SEASON OF LIFE?
"Whenever you are able, do good to people who need help."
Proverbs 3:27 (NCV)

"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done."
Ecclesiastes 11:4 (TLB)

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THE SEASON OF LONELINESS

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"It isn't good for man to be alone." Genesis 2:18 (TLB)

The Final Days of Paul's Life
2 Timothy 4:6-21 (TLB)

I. FOUR CAUSES OF LONELINESS

1. _____
"The time has come for me to stop fighting and rest." vs. 7
2. _____
"Please come soon . . . do try to be here before winter." vs. 9, 21
3. _____
"(He) has done me much harm." vs. 14
4. _____
"No one was here to help me. Everyone had run away." vs. 16
"Demas has left me." vs. 10

II. HOW TO COPE WITH LONELINESS

1. **UTILIZE** _____
"Bring the coat . . . and also the books." vs. 13
2. **MINIMIZE** _____
"Everyone had run away. I hope that they will not be blamed for it." vs. 16
3. **RECOGNIZE** _____
"But the Lord stood with me." vs. 17
4. **EMPHASIZE** _____
"And gave me the opportunity to boldly preach a whole sermon for all the world to hear." vs. 17

Stop building: _____

Start building: _____

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THE SEASON OF LOSS

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"Sometimes something useless happens on earth. Bad things happen to good people, and good things happen to bad people." Ecclesiastes 8:14 (NCV)

HOW TO RESPOND TO LIFE'S LOSSES

1. _____ **MY GRIEF**
"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Matthew 5:4 (NIV)
"Pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge." Psalm 62:8 (NIV)
"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed." Psalm 34:18 (NLT)
2. _____ **FROM OTHERS**
"Carry each other's burdens." Galatians 6:2 (GW)
"By helping each other with your troubles, you truly obey the law of Christ."
Galatians 6:2 (NCV)
"Look after each other so that not one of you will fail to find God's best blessings." Hebrews 12:15 (TLB)
3. _____ **TO BE BITTER**
"Others have no happiness at all; they live and die with bitter hearts."
Job 21:25 (GNT)
"Watch out that no bitterness takes root among you . . . it causes deep trouble, hurting many in their spiritual lives." Hebrews 12:15 (TLB)

The antidote:

- _____ **what cannot be changed**
"Reach out to God . . . Then face the world again, firm and courageous."
Job 11:13, 15 (GNT)
- **Focus on what's _____, not what's lost**
"No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you."
1 Thessalonians 5:18 (TLB)

4. _____ **WHAT'S IMPORTANT**
"Jesus said . . . 'Life is not measured by how much one owns.'"
Luke 12:15 (NCV)

"We brought nothing into the world, so we can take nothing out."
1 Timothy 6:7 (NCV)

5. _____ **ON CHRIST**
"I have learned the secret of being happy at any time in everything that happens. . . . I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me strength."
Philippians 4:12-13 (NCV)

How?

- _____ **on Christ for stability!**
"Those who trust in the Lord are steady as Mount Zion, unmoved by any circumstance." Psalm 125:1 (TLB)
"You, Lord, give true peace to those who depend on you." Isaiah 26:3 (NCV)
"Such a man will not be overthrown by evil circumstances. God's constant care of him will make a deep impression on all who see it. He does not fear bad news, nor live in dread of what may happen. For he is settled in his mind that Jehovah will take care of him." Psalm 112:6-7 (TLB)
- _____ **to Christ for direction!**
"'I know what I am planning for you,' says the Lord. 'I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future.'"
Jeremiah 29:11 (NCV)
- _____ **to Christ for salvation!**
"God is our protection and our strength. He always helps in times of trouble. So we will not be afraid even if the earth shakes, or the mountains fall into the sea." Psalm 46:1-2 (NCV)
"We were really crushed and overwhelmed, and feared we would never live through it. We . . . saw how powerless we were to help ourselves; but that was good, for then we put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save us. . . . And he did help us and saved us. . . . and we expect him to do it again and again." 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 (TLB)

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THE SEASON OF PARENTING

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"Children are a gift from the Lord." Psalm 127:3 (GNT)

WHAT KIDS NEED MOST FROM PARENTS

- 1. KIDS NEED _____**
"Practice loving each other, for love comes from God." 1 John 4:7 (TLB)
- 2. KIDS NEED _____**
"You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning."
Deuteronomy 6:7 (TLB)
- 3. KIDS NEED _____**
"Correct your children while there is still hope; do not let them destroy themselves."
Proverbs 19:18 (NCV)

"Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up."
Ephesians 4:29 (GNT)
- 4. KIDS NEED _____**
"Don't scold your children so much that they become discouraged and quit trying."
Colossians 3:21 (TLB)

"If you love someone . . . you will always believe in him, always expect the best of him." 1 Corinthians 13:7 (TLB)
- 5. KIDS NEED _____**
"People ought to enjoy every day of their lives, no matter how long they live."
Ecclesiastes 11:8 (NCV)
- 6. KIDS NEED _____**
"Whoever can be trusted with a little can also be trusted in a lot. . . . And if you cannot be trusted with things that belong to someone else, who will give you things of your own?" Luke 16:10, 12 (NCV)

- 7. KIDS NEED _____**
"The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does."
Psalm 145:13 (NIV)

"It takes wisdom to have a good family, and it takes understanding to make it strong." Proverbs 24:3 (NCV)

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THE SEASON OF FINANCIAL STRESS

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GOD'S GUARANTEE:

"God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:19 (NIV)

THE CONDITIONS: GOD PROMISES TO MEET MY FINANCIAL NEEDS . . .

1. IF I ASK _____

"You do not have, because you do not ask." James 4:2 (ESV)

"You have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy will be the fullest possible joy." John 16:24 (NCV)

2. IF I LEARN _____

"I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of contentment in every situation." Philippians 4:12 (TLB)

Contentment—my happiness doesn't depend . . .

"There is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it."

1 Timothy 6:6-7 (NRSVA)

3. IF I PRACTICE _____

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NIV)

"Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of all your income, and he will fill your barns." Proverbs 3:9-10 (TLB)

4. IF I MAINTAIN _____

"The Lord demands fairness in every business deal." Proverbs 16:11 (TLB)

"Better to be poor and honest than a rich person no one can trust."
Proverbs 19:1 (MSG)

"The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, without painful toil for it."
Proverbs 10:22 (NIV)

5. IF I TRUST HIM _____

"Your heavenly Father already knows perfectly well that you need them, and he will give them to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to." Matthew 6:32-33 (TLB)

"Tell them to hope in God, not in their uncertain riches." 1 Timothy 6:17 (NCV)

"He gives food to those who trust him; he never forgets his promises."
Psalm 111:5 (TLB)

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THE SEASON OF TEMPTATION

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HOW TO HANDLE TEMPTATION

1. _____ **IT**
“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.” Matthew 26:41 (NIV)
“If you are thinking, ‘Oh, I would never behave like that’—let this be a warning to you. For you too may fall into sin.” 1 Corinthians 10:12 (TLB)
2. _____ **RESPONSIBILITY**
“Temptation is the pull of man’s own evil thoughts and wishes. These evil thoughts lead to evil actions.” James 1:14-15 (TLB)
3. _____ **FOR HELP**
“He had the same temptations we do, though he never once gave way to them and sinned. So let us come boldly to . . . God . . . and to find grace to help us in our times of need.” Hebrews 4:15-16 (TLB)
“Call to me when trouble comes.” Psalm 50:15 (GNT)
4. _____ **MY STRUGGLE TO A FRIEND**
“Remember this—the wrong desires that come into your life aren’t anything new and different. Many others have faced exactly the same problems before you.”
1 Corinthians 10:13 (TLB)
“Admit your sins to each other, and pray for each other so that you will be healed.”
James 5:16 (GW)
5. _____ **TEMPTING SITUATIONS**
“One who . . . turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless.”
Proverbs 14:16 (ESV)
“I thought about the wrong direction in which I was headed, and turned around and came running back to you.” Psalm 119:59 (TLB)
6. _____ **GOD’S WORD**
“He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”
1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)

“Accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword.”
Ephesians 6:17 (GNT)

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HOW TO RECONCILE A RELATIONSHIP

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"Those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness." James 3:18 (NLT)

THE CAUSE OF CONFLICT:

- ---

"What leads to strife (discord and feuds) and how do conflicts (quarrels and fightings) originate among you? Do they not arise from your sensual desires that are ever warring in your bodily members? You are jealous and covet [what others have]. . . . You burn with envy and anger and are not able to obtain [the gratification, the contentment, and the happiness that you seek], so you fight and war. You do not have, because you do not ask." James 4:1-2 (AMPC)

"For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will." Romans 8:7 (NLT)

THE CURE: _____

1.

"At one time you were far away from God and were his enemies because of the evil things you did and thought. But now, by means of the death of his Son, God has made you his friends, in order to bring you, holy, pure, and faultless, into his presence." Colossians 1:21-22 (GNT)

"Everyone who believes in him is made right in God's sight—something the law of Moses could never do." Acts 13:39 (NLT)

2.

"If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him, and he will gladly tell you." James 1:5 (TLB)

3.

"If you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and suddenly remember that a friend has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar and go and apologize and be reconciled to him, and then come and offer your sacrifice to God." Matthew 5:23-24 (TLB)

4.

"Why do you notice the little piece of dust in your friend's eye, but you don't notice the big piece of wood in your own eye? . . . First, take the wood out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the dust out of your friend's eye."
Matthew 7:3, 5 (NCV)

5.

"Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry." James 1:19 (NLT)
"We must bear the 'burden' of being considerate of the doubts and fears of others."
Romans 15:2 (TLB)

6.

"When we were unable to help ourselves, at the right time, Christ died for us, although we were living against God." Romans 5:6 (NCV)
"We were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son."
Romans 5:10 (NIV)

7.

Reconciliation = reestablish the relationship
Resolution = resolve every issue

GOD'S GOAL FOR HIS CHURCH

"He has restored our relationship with him through Christ, and has given us this ministry of restoring relationships. . . . He didn't hold people's faults against them, and he has given us this message of restored relationships to tell others. Therefore, we are Christ's representatives. . . . We beg you on behalf of Christ to become reunited with God." 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 (GW)

"God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God."
Matthew 5:9 (NLT)

WHO DO I NEED TO RECONCILE WITH?

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