

Learning from Life's Wins and Losses

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: 10X²

Text: Proverbs 24:16

All of us like to win. Life is full of wins but as anyone knows life is also full of losses, hurts, setbacks and pain. There is a marked **difference** between people who learn from their losses and those who do not. Those who are 10X get this. The person who takes something worthwhile from the bad and difficult times strips them of their control over their mind, bodies, hearts and souls.

Most people don't want to confront their losses. Most are embarrassed by them. Most people don't like to talk about their failures and mistakes. Those who are 10X **approach** losing differently. Many people have the philosophy – Sometimes in life you win, sometimes you lose. The better way to think about things is – Sometimes you win, sometimes you **learn**. Many of life's greatest lessons are gained from our losses if we approach them the right way.

If we do not handle our losses the correct way, they can cause us some difficulties:

1. Losses can cause us to become emotionally **stuck**.

~ Les Brown – The good times we put in our pocket. The bad times we put in our heart.

We need to make sure that we **guard** what we allow into our heart. **Proverbs 4:23**
Life is filled with would haves, could haves and should haves. We all do stupid things. We can continue to mentally punish ourselves and allow the devil to condemn us or we can choose to allow those lessons to make us more careful and attentive. Satan is the accuser. We should strive to be like Jesus who forgives.

2. Losses can cause us to become mentally **defeated**. Life is filled with losses, big and small. We live the womb. We grow up and we lose the dependance we have on our parents. We lose jobs, possessions, money. We miss opportunities, friends and family pass away, we also lose the health of our youth. Some losses affect our mental health. Some of us handle it well, some do not. Some losses are good, they are **blessed** subtractions.

What distinguishes those who thrive from those who do not is the capacity to **manage** disappointment and loss. This is a challenge for everyone, make no mistake about it. Too often losing can go to our **heart**. This can defeat us because we have a difficult time coming up with solutions to life's challenges.

~ Wallace Hamilton – The increase of suicides, alcoholics and even nervous breakdowns is evidence that many people are training for success when they should be preparing for failure. Failure is far more prevalent than success; poverty is more common than wealth and disappointment is more normal than arrival.

We need to **expect** mistakes, failures and losses in life. The righteous fall but they have learned how to get back up. We need to take them as they come and not allow them to back up.

3. Losses create a gap between I should and I did. Winning and good choices create a positive cycle in our lives and this creates confidence. Losses can also create a cycle, a negative one. This creates insecurity and doubt that leads us to hesitate when making decisions.

There are eleven traps that we can fall into that make us stuck:

- The mistake trap – this makes us gun shy, we get afraid to do something wrong.
- The fatigue trap – I’m tired. Losses wear us out and wear us down.
- The comparison trap – we feel other people are better qualified, more talented and better able than we are. This makes us feel inferior.
- The timing trap – we start looking for the perfect timing and perfect time.
- The inspiration trap – we lose our sense of motivation. Losses can demotivate us.
- The rationalization trap – we believe that things really are not that important. Losses can make us lose perspective.
- The perfection trap – we feel that things are either perfect or they are no good at all. This leads to analysis paralysis.
- The expectation trap – many things we have unrealistic expectations. Most things worth doing are harder than you thought they would be. Life is rarely easy. Losses highlight the difficulties of life.
- The fairness trap – things happen to us. Life is not fair. God is not fair. He is just and gracious. Instead of asking “why me” we should ask – “what now”.
- The public opinion trap – this is when we are concerned about what other people think. This is fear based and can leave us paralyzed. We give people control over what we do based on what they think and feel. **Proverbs 29:25 (NKJV, AMP)**
- The self-image trap – if I fail this means that I am a failure. This is simply not true. We did fail at that thing but that is not a reflection of how God views us. Even when we were sinners Christ died for us. Sin means to miss the mark – yet God saw us valuable enough to die for.

4. The first loss often isn't the biggest loss. When we experience loss we have a choice. If we respond to it the right way, the loss becomes smaller. If we respond to it the wrong way or fail to respond to it that loss will grow in importance and in size.

For instance, when we compare ourselves, we rarely do it on a level playing field. We either compare our best with someone's worst, including intentions, or we compare our worst to someone's best. The most important person that you talk to after Jesus is yourself, so be careful what you say. We learned this as children in song, 'Oh be careful little mouth what you say'.

5. Losses never leave us the same. All losses hurt. All losses make an impact on us. But we must not allow them to control us. The way to move past our losses is to learn from them and allow those lessons to make us better. This is called failing forward. Loss isn't really a loss if you learn from it. **Proverbs 24:16** The question is – are you ready to learn?