

Individual and Family Development

Dr. Wells

Esther Oliveira

Week 1

Loss is at the heart of life and growth. When I read that, I think about what Jesus says: “When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn’t grow into a plant unless it dies first.” We had lost many people, and our lives had been changed forever, but we had grown in other ways. We learned the value of life and how precious people are.

An ambiguous loss is a loss that has no resolution. A loss that remains unclear.

1 – The physical loss:

The body is lost, and the family never knows where the body is.

During the pandemic, many families were prevented from seeing their loved ones; they never collected their bodies from the hospital to have a proper funeral or a memorial service. Or maybe a person that got lost in a kidnap and their family never found if there are alive or dead. The loss of the ones during 9/11 and the tsunami in Japan. Many families never had the chance to say good bay. It is a severe loss, and a chapter in the life of loved ones will never be closed.

2 – The Psychological ambiguous loss:

For people with dementia, like Alzheimer, the body is there in front of you, but they lose their capability to communicate and express their feelings. Or people that struggle with addiction can’t speak or have a normal relationship with their family anymore. It is a loss that often makes us realize that we take many of our relationships for granted. We recognize that we should have that conversation with our daddy or brother and know it is impossible.

The silence now is too loud and sometimes unbearable. So many words of affection, love and even disapproval should be addressed, but the chance has gone, and the uncertainty of the future holds a terrible loss.

Another loss we have faced is the loss of dignity and respect from our society that black people have lost for so long. The discrimination and unpunishment from their prosecutor have been unrealistic and unbearable. I was very inspired and touched by the words of Henry Bibb. What a resilient history.

3 – During the pandemic, we had a physical loss, where we couldn't meet for our services; our kids couldn't go to school or even have play dates with their friends. We couldn't meet a friend for coffee or have family gatherings. Many marriages and party were canceled. Families had to adapt to a new way of school, parents had to change their schedules, and many had to learn the best way to teach their children. The pandemic brought many insecurities among our society, our leaders, and the healthy departments that maybe we will never be able to counter trust again.

One way we find meaning in death is when we understand that we are saying farewell and seeing each other again. We must be resilient to continue our lives, keeping the great memories of our loved ones. Many questions will be unanswered, given space for our faith to grow and trust in the sovereignty of God.