

**Roger Oxford: 9/22/20**

### **Loss and Growth**

Recently, I lost a friend to COVID-19. He was seventy-six years old, well educated and married to what he referred to as “his young bride”. A very painful loss of a good man and a good friend.

As I have grown older, I have learned that loss is as much a part of life as growth. Sometimes loss is replaced by growth as a natural result of that loss, other times, growth is brought about by our choosing to accept that loss and learn to use it as a tool. Sometimes our loss is balanced by our growth, sometimes not. In many cases, our reward from that growth far exceeds the loss.

Judith Viorst, in her book, “*NECESSARY LOSSES*”,

She addresses the loves, illusions, dependencies and impossible expectations that we all have and have to give up in order to grow.

Matthew 10:39 states, Whoever finds their life will lose it and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. The life we lose is a life of worldly focus, the life we find is growth in Christ.

James 1:2 tells us to consider it pure joy when we are faced with trials of many kinds. Personally, I have wrestled with finding joy while standing in the fires of trials and tribulations. I doubt that I am alone in this statement.

The losses we endure, sometimes, creates stumbling blocks on the road of growth in Christ. I believe the “joy” that is mentioned in James 1 is based in Christian maturity of learning to recognize the stumbling blocks and having faith in Christ so we can create stepping stones from those stumbling blocks.

In Christ, our losses to the world, whether it is the loss of a friend, impossible expectations or our worldly focused life, will be replaced with growth that will exceed all expectations. It is by the loss of our worldly self that we can find joy and true growth in Christ.