



Let God Change You



**Stephen Seay**  
LPCC, Executive Director

I was working with a person today and was struck by a common error many of us do. This person had spent many years in Christian work and had learned to “stuff” her feelings. She tried to wrestle her heart into “behaving.” By that I mean when she would feel an emotion that didn’t live up to the standard of what the Bible said or what she thought she ought to feel she would attempt to “strong arm” or will her heart into feeling what she thought she ought it ought to feel.

I stopped her at one point and asked, “Do you believe feelings are real?” I was quick to explain that feelings are real things and to treat them as if they were like vapor would be a misunderstanding of there nature. Feelings are present and concrete and need to be handled the same way you would handle any other reality.

There are for sure surface feelings that come and go that I have if I haven’t eaten enough or slept enough for example. ( You could make a case that even surface

feelings indicate something too.) The feelings this person was having wouldn’t ever be resolved until she faced them head on, owned them and then found some way of expressing them honestly and nondestructively.

David did that in the Psalms, Jeremiah in Lamentations and Paul in numerous places as he expressed his worship of God. I encouraged her to turn these real things into a prayer. “ Let God change you and stop trying to self sanctify by using your self will.” This person had many decades of what I call “ emotional legalism.” That is she is creating a “law” of how she should feel if I’m a Christian and then trying her hardest to make herself feel those things. There is certainly a place for self will but it isn’t in trying to change my feelings. Only the Spirit of God changes those kinds of things.

*Sincerely,*  
**Stephen Seay**

**Included with this newsletter is an invitation to our Open House, we’d love for you to join us!**

**“A mother of a 10-month old daughter made an appointment with NCCC. She was unmotivated, had no energy and her head was foggy. She was diagnosed with ADHD. She is now focused on her job, quit smoking, and her and her husband started marital counseling. The best part about this story is Jesus, she is now saved and excited for life!”**

**-Shared by a clinician of NCCC**

**“It is difficult to find words to express the gratitude I feel for God’s provision through NCCC. My counselor has been a very patient counselor, seeing with the eyes God has given him, to sense what I needed to hear and learn in order to process the reality of my situation. More than once the holy spirit was present in that counsel. It is my real hope to give back to NCCC in the future, to help another in need.”**

**-A grateful client at NCCC**

# “Losing Your Life” By Renae Broden

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.” Luke 9:24



**What is the pathway to real change in our lives, the kind of change God has in mind?** What does it mean to “lose my life?” In a culture where finding oneself seems paramount, why would I want to lose myself? And what about when I’m suffering? What does “losing my life” mean then? Should I disregard myself and ignore my pain, pressing on as if nothing is wrong in an effort to protect my Christian witness? Would that be the intent of this Scripture passage?

To reflect on that, let’s go back, first of all, to the Truth that we are created in His image, and that we are therefore personal beings, just as He is a person, a personal God. As personal beings we have the gift of awareness, of being able to look inside ourselves. One thing we’ll notice is that God has placed within all of us deep core longings. We long for love, to be known and accepted as known. We long for a sense of significance, that my life will matter. We long for a sense of security, that I will somehow be okay no matter what. Does losing oneself mean that we should pay no attention to these longings? Jesus used the word “thirst” when He said, **“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” (Luke 7:37)** We notice in Scripture that we are not condemned for our thirst or longings, or directed to ignore them, but rather, that they are a means of pointing the way to the One who can meet them. We can see, therefore, that God wants us to acknowledge our longings and keep them alive in our souls. They will ultimately reveal a path to Him.

But here’s the catch ... we don’t have to live very long before we face the fear that our longings will not be met. Deep hurts in relationships, painful losses, abuse, or the everyday ache of living in a fallen world threaten to undo us. It’s terrifying to think of being alone, mattering to no one, or being without any type of security that I’m going to be okay. We as people understandably become very determined to make sure that doesn’t happen. So we are all prone to develop ways to make life work on our own terms, sometimes to the harm of ourselves or others. We get caught in patterns of control or blame or addiction or approval-seeking or denial or trying to do everything perfectly or ignoring our fear and pain, or ... you fill in the blank. We end up feeling overwhelmed, hurt, or just plain angry ... and distant from God. **I believe all the while, He is there, wanting us to draw near to Him,** to lay down all those strategies we have developed to “save our lives,” and to instead “lose our lives for His sake,” and let Him save us.

So, what does it look like to “lose our lives?” It seems that the path toward deep, lasting change in my own life and in the life of those I serve is a bit surprising. God doesn’t want robotic obedience with little regard for our hearts. He invites us to look inside and pour out our hearts to Him (Psalm 62:8), even with raw honesty, when we are racked with the pain of longings left unmet. **He wants us to see that nothing about what is happening in our lives changes His unwavering love for us.** And because of love, He also wants us to see how we tend to go our own way, missing out on real life. He wants us to stop the exhaustive striving to make sure those longings are met our way. That’s when I sense Him speaking to my heart and calling me to listen, telling me to let go, or stop trying to be perfect, or to die to myself and ask Him to show me what it looks like to love. He is calling me to trust and depend on Him.

So come and see us. Encourage others to do so. And as you do, I hope that Northland will be a place where your pain can be understood with care. But you will not be left there. As we come alongside to consider your unique story, we will also help you see what may get in the way of “losing yourself,” that is, **abandoning yourself to God in ways that will bring you the freedom to live out who you were made to be and to genuinely love others from an alive heart.** “He that hath the Son hath life...” (1John 5:12a)