

Dorothy Lester loved the spring. The weather was glorious.

She straightened items on the shelves and prepared for the store's daily opening. A knock on the glass window interrupted her work and she turned around.

It was Doris Austin.

"Why hello dear! Come in, come in." Dorothy said.

"Thank you, Mrs. Lester. Pastor Meyer's wife wanted me to prepare a short life testimony to share at Wednesday's Bible Study. Would you be so kind as to review it for me? I do so want to make sure it's acceptable."

"I'm sure its fine, my dear. But I would be happy to read it and give you my insight."

Dorothy accepted the paper.

"Oh, thank you ever so much, Mrs. Lester. May I come back to tomorrow?"

"You may."

"Thank you again. Bye." With that, Doris was gone.

Mrs. Lester opened the store, counted her till and sat down. Waiting for customers and seeing none, Dorothy Lester pulled out Doris Austin's testimony. She began to read.

*Suffered at the Hands of Loss – Saved by the Hands of Christ*

*Everyone defines "loss" differently. For me, the temptation to let loss define my life was blunt and fierce. After losing three children – one to a tragic accident, one to suicide and one to murder – I did not believe I had reason to believe God existed or that His Word was truth.*

*My first marriage was tormenting and frightening. My parenting was non-existent, narcissistic and selfish. If I was not tempted to define my life with loss, the temptation for regret was there instead.*

*God's Word says that He does not give us more than we can handle. After the death of my daughter Beatrice, I decided that life could not bring any more suffering than what I had experienced. I was constantly questioning, constantly worrying and constantly in a state of despair. I began to be dominated by loss.*

*The reins of my life were held by the devil himself and I believed that God hated me.*

*But through my life's gentle blessings, I have realized that God's love for us should not be based on the conditions of our lives but rather that we have life and with it, beautiful subtle generosity.*

*I am a very blessed woman. I have been married to Lance Austin for ten years and during that time we have grown together spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically.*

*My eldest child Christopher and his wife Maxine have given me a beautiful grandson, Millard Harold Lane who we affectionately call "Mel". Chris lost his best friend in a fire and learned the hard way that life is not as horrible as we make it out to be. Christopher suffered at the hands of loss.*

*My son Frank was murdered. Frank felt the only family and acceptance he could obtain was from the Ku Klux Klan. Realizing he was wrong and attempting to escape from their hold, they turned on him and ended his life. Frank suffered at the hands of loss.*

*My daughter Beatrice died in a tragic accident while doing something she enjoyed with someone she loved. Beatrice suffered at the hands of loss.*

*My son Julius and his wife Bailey are about to bring me another grandchild. Julius is the youngest mayor in Illinois' history but has had his fair share of tribulations. From learning that people are not always what they seem to always fighting for what is right, Julius has emerged with scars on his heart. Julius suffered at the hands of loss.*

*My daughter Virginia and her husband Kurt are an amazing couple. Virginia has suffered from rape, false murder accusations, the death of her first husband Jerry, and kidnapping. Her strength and perseverance has been, is and always will be an inspiration to me. Virginia suffered at the hands of loss.*

*My twins, Minnie and Martha, could not be more different. I do not know Minnie's whereabouts. I only pray that she is safe and happy. Martha and her husband, Daniel, are raising Minnie's daughter, Sandy. Martha has suffered from neglect. She was punished for everything Minnie did. Regardless of who disobeyed (though most of the time it was Minnie), both girls were punished. I never saw Martha as an individual. She is an amazing daughter and an even more amazing mother. Martha and Minnie suffered at the hands of loss.*

*My son, George and his fiancé, Phoebe are extraordinary. George was involved in a gang. During an attempted escape from arrest, he was bit by a police dog and lost his leg due to infection. He was incarcerated and became a new man during his time in jail. George has suffered the hands of loss.*

*My daughter Susan died from suicide. No one ever acknowledged her. No one gave her the attention and love she so desperately needed. Including me. Susan suffered at the hands of loss.*

*My youngest child Gertrude and her husband Malcolm are the most loving, caring and compassionate individuals you could ever meet. Everyday, Gertie struggles with people's opinions and judgments of her marriage to a Negro. But Malcolm could not be any more a part of our family than my own sons. Gertrude suffered at the hands of loss.*

*While my ten children and I have suffered at the hands of loss, we are not victims. We may have suffered at the hands of loss, but we have been saved by the hands of Christ.*

*It is just as Jerry once said: 'Life will give us problems no matter what. It's how we overcome them that make us heroes to those who look at this time in history.'*

Dorothy Lester smiled and wiped a tear from her eye. She folded the paper and placed it back in her pocket.

The testimony was perfect.