



LOOKING AT LIFE

# Help!

## I May Lose My Job



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**THE LAST THING PETER EXPECTED** to happen when he came into office was to be retrenched. When the clerk sat down at his computer and tried to log on to the office system and nothing happened, he told his colleague, “Maybe the system is down again.” But she had no problem logging in.

Half of Peter’s colleagues, however, were having the same problem. Puzzled, their supervisor went to check. She came back with shocking news—half the department had just been retrenched. Peter went home dazed. “What am I going to do?” he said to his wife. He was the sole breadwinner, and they had two young children.

Sanjay was a bit more prepared. His employer, a recruitment company,

had long wanted a younger team and indicated it would drop older workers like him. For months, Sanjay had been bracing for the bad news. But when the boss finally came to him and said, “Sorry, your position isn’t part of the new structure,” Sanjay broke down. He couldn’t help but feel that he was no longer useful, despite his experience and skills. “Am I old and useless?” he wondered.

These were the kind of stories that worried Ling, a technician. Her industry wasn’t doing well, and rumours were swirling round that her employer might downsize to save costs. Every day, she and her colleagues came to work wondering if it would be their last day. It was worrying because it would be hard to find another job, given her limited skills. But her friends didn’t seem to think it was a problem. “Just get another job,” some said. Why did they not understand her anxiety?

## Job Loss: A Real Fear

**IF THESE STORIES STRIKE** a chord with you, you’re not alone. With much



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instability and uncertainty in today's economy and job environment, many of us face the threat of losing our jobs. Whether we are highly-skilled or lowly-paid, working in small or big companies, we have the same fear—being told one day that we are not needed any more.

Retrenchment can cause us anxiety about our finances because it will affect our ability to take care of ourselves and our families. But unlike people who quit to find better jobs, we don't have the opportunity to look for jobs ahead of time. Worse, we may not be able to find another job for a long time.

If you feel overwhelmed by anxiety and fear, be assured that it is a normal response to a very real problem. Many people feel the same way; you are not alone.

Sometimes, the issue may also be more than about money. Retrenchment can make us feel like we have done something wrong or are not as good as others. We may wonder if we will be the first to be retrenched because we are less capable, skilful, or useful, or simply older than others. We may even



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feel resentful when others seem to have “safe” jobs. Retrenchment can have a big impact on our sense of self-worth.

Jack, for instance, fell into depression when he lost his job as an accounts manager and had trouble finding a job. “No one wants a middle-aged man any more,” he kept telling his wife. “What can I do? Who will help me?”

Are you asking the same questions?  
*What can I do? Who will help me?*

## What We Need

**PERHAPS THE HARDEST PART** about job insecurity is realising that we can’t do much to help ourselves. Not because we are incapable, but because our situation depends completely on others. Retrenchment has nothing to do with how hard we work or how good we are; rather, it has to do with the global and local economy, the state of our own industry and company, and the business decisions of our employers.

So, apart from financial security itself, what we need is the security of knowing that we can get help if we do get retrenched; comfort and



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encouragement to help us cope with the anxiety we feel now; and the assurance of our continued worth. Imagine, then, having someone who can give us:

**Security:** If we can't be sure about keeping our jobs, then what would help is the assurance that we can find another job soon—or that someone will be able to help us get over the period of unemployment so that we can still take care of our family. It would be assuring to know that we have someone to turn to for help. Someone who can say, “Don't worry, I'm in control.”

**Comfort:** What if there's someone who can truly understand our worries, fears, and anxiety? Someone who can understand exactly how we feel, and listen and empathise instead of giving unhelpful suggestions or advice? That may also help us.

**Assurance:** While society places great emphasis on our role as earners and providers, we need assurance that losing our jobs doesn't make us any less valuable. It would help if someone can assure us: “You are still a good worker and valued person in my eyes.”

Who can give us such help? Most of us may not know someone “powerful” enough to help us get a job. For comfort, we can go to our loved ones and friends, but we may not want to burden our own family members—and friends may not always understand our anxiety and fear. And it can be hard to find assurance of self-worth, especially in a society that tends to prize success.

## Someone Who Can Make a Difference

**SO WHO CAN HELP US** and give us true security, comfort, and assurance? Is there someone we can turn to, knowing that this person will always be there to help us and provide for us? Is there someone who can assure us that we are truly valued, no matter what happens?

We believe that there is indeed someone who can do all this—the Creator God, the God whom Christians believe in. Knowing him and believing in him can make a difference in life, because this God has promised to help us and provide for us in his way and timing. As the Creator and Provider, he

can also give us true security, comfort, and assurance.

Let us tell you a bit more about him:

**He is all-powerful:** This God, who created the world and everything in it, is an all-powerful, all-knowing God who is in control of everything on earth. He is also a good God. He is wise, righteous, and truthful, and will never do wrong. And he is eternal—that is, he is there forever. All this means that God is totally trustworthy.

**He loves us:** Because he loves each one of us as his child, God is deeply concerned about our lives. He feels our pain and worry, understands our deepest fears, and knows exactly how we feel about our jobs and about ourselves.

**He is interested in each one of us:** This God is not a distant supernatural being who lives high above us and is not interested in human beings. Rather, he is an all-loving God who, having made each of us individually, cherishes every single one of us. You and I are valuable to him. It doesn't matter how good we are at our jobs or how much we earn. We are precious to him as children are



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to their parents; God loves us for who we are to him, not for what we are able to do.

Can we see this God? Some 2,000 years ago, God came to earth in the form of a man called Jesus. He lived as a man and suffered as a man, so he understands our anxieties and fears. The Bible, which Christians believe is the inspired word of God, tells us: “Cast all your anxiety on [God] because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Knowing God does not mean that things will magically change and your life will now be perfect. You would still have to cope with job insecurity, retrenchment, and other practical worries. But you will be able to depend on God, knowing that he can give you the strength to deal with your anxiety, and the wisdom to take the right actions. You will find comfort and assurance in knowing that because he loves you and cares for you, he will help you through this difficult period. And you will be able to go through this challenging journey knowing that you are not alone and that you are deeply



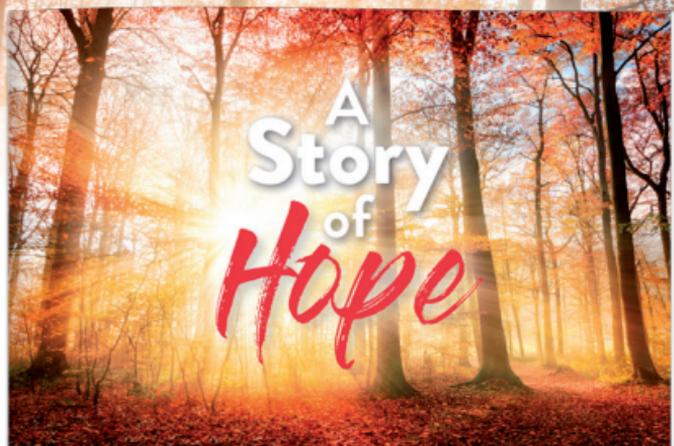
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loved and treasured, no matter what happens in your job and in your life.

We invite you to talk to a Christian friend or attend a church to find out more about Jesus.

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