

“GOD I'M DISAPPOINTED”

Disappointment is one of the frustrating problems each of us must face. Often I hear people say, "He disappointed me so much." Or have you ever said to someone, "I'M so disappointed in you?" Or even more pointed, "God I'm disappointed." Maybe you like so many just thought it to yourself without mentioning it to any one for fear of the disappointment of not being understood.

If we are to face life realistically, we will have to grapple with the problem of disappointment. It can't be ignored.

What happens inside when we say we are disappointed? The dictionary says it means "to be made unhappy by the failure of one's hopes or expectations." Disappointment then is the sinking feeling we get when our plans blow up in our faces.

From the beginning of history men have had their plans go wrong (even great of faith faced this). The Bible doesn't present these men of faith as cardboard characters with a perpetual smile. On the contrary, Scripture exposes the tender underside of their failures while painting the picture of their accomplishments. The pressing question is not who experiences disappointment, but why? What causes that sinking feeling when things don't pan out?

Disappointment generally falls into two distinct categories circumstances and people.

When things are not as expected, we become disappointed. Abraham experienced this. One day while he was living in the rich alluvial basin around Ur of the Chaldees, God spoke to Abraham and directed him to leave his home for a new land He would show him. Instantly Abraham obeyed, taking his herds ..and immediate' family on a thousand mile journey to this new land. I am sure as he made that long journey on foot, he developed expectation and high hopes about his new promised land.

But the Biblical record of his arrival tersely states: "Now there was a famine in the land- - -" (Genesis 12:10.)

No record is given to Abraham's feelings but its reasonable to assume he was disappointed. As he sat in his tent he must have thought, "I left the beauty of Ur, all my relatives, walked a thousand miles, and what do I get --- a land wasted by drought. This isn't what I expected." (Does that sound about like our nature?)

Disappointment also comes when plans fall through. This frequently happens to parents. Often from the time their child is still an infant, many parents begin to plan the kind of career their child will enter, where he will go to school, and whom he will marry. Disappointment comes when the child announces he wants something different than what his parents planned.

When extensive plans for a vacation have to be cancelled, we are disappointed. But the most painful disappointment comes when people fail us.

Paul experienced this kind of disappointment. He arrived in Troas fully expecting to see Titus (II Cor. 2:12-14), but Titus was nowhere to be found. Titus' failure to keep the appointment caused Paul disappointment.

Disappointment comes when we trust a person to do something and he fails us. Moses experienced such a disappointment. God called him to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, but Moses begged off. "God, you know I'm not an eloquent speaker." Graciously God designated Aaron, his brother, as his mouthpiece. After deliverance was accomplished, Moses and Aaron were in the wilderness with the nation at Mt. Sinai. Moses then left the camp and went up in the mount to receive instructions from God concerning His laws. While there, God told Moses to get back down the mountain before He destroyed the people. Moses hurried back to the camp and found it in an uproar. The people had persuaded Aaron to build a golden calf and thus instituted idolatry. Imagine Moses' disappointment in Aaron and the people of Israel.

Disappointment is part of life, and it's important to know how to deal with it. Failure to cope with disappointment can be devastating.

The first consequence of unresolved disappointment is cynicism. A person in this state feels it futile to rely on anybody; his confidence in people is at such a low ebb he'd rather not believe anything they say. "If I don't expect anything from them, they can't disappoint me."

Disappointment brings discouragement. Constant failure to realize our plans or expectations will cause us to lose confidence and hope, and inability to handle disappointment becomes a great tool for Satan.

A little story about Satan and His tools:

It was advertised that the devil was going to put his tools up for sale. On the date of sale the tools were placed for public inspection, each being marked with its sale price.

They were a treacherous lot of implements -- Hatred, Envy, Jealousy, Deceit, Lying, Pride and so on, comprised the outfit. Laid apart from the rest was a harmless-looking tool, well-worn and priced very high.

"What is the name of this tool?" asked one of the purchasers pointing to it.

"That is Discouragement," tersely replied the devil. "Why have you priced it so high?"

"Because it is more useful to me than the others. I can pry open and get inside of a man's heart with that, when I cannot get near him with other tools. Once I get inside, I can make him do what I choose. It is badly worn because I use it on almost everyone, since few people know it belongs to me."

Disappointment will make us want to give up in despair. "What's the use?" Nothing ever works out for me. Everything always goes wrong. I'm tired of getting my hopes up only to be let down." We will eventually want to crawl off in a corner and let the world go by without attempting to be apart of it.

When disappointment comes, the tendency is to blame somebody else. The man behind bars says, "I got a raw deal," The man whose business fails says, "Its the banker's fault." He wouldn't loan me more money. The person passed over for promotion says "its the boss' fault because he didn't recognize my talents," and so on.

Blaming others for our disappointment is an admission that we have never learned to handle one of the basic problems of life. Failure to deal with disappointment leads to cynicism, discouragement and despair.

The Bible sets forth several principles that when known and applied will keep disappointments from being a problem to you. (Not that disappointment won't come, but they won't get you down -- you can take them in stride.)

Three basic principles are if we want to conquer disappointment. First: Realize God is in control of ALL circumstance. God is sovereign Ruler over the u in verse and cannot be overthrown. Because He is in control of all circumstance, the life of the believer cannot be a series of freak accidents. It is under the direction of the sovereign God, and He makes no mistakes.

What is disappointment to one may well be what makes another happy. The rain at a picnic may make a boy unhappy because it ruined the picnic; on the other hand, it made the father happy because he didn't want to go in the first place. Likewise, rain may make the boy happy because he doesn't have to mow the lawn; it may make the father unhappy because he wanted the lawn mowed. God is in control of the circumstances that come our way and He doesn't make a mistake.

God has a definite plan for our lives -- the very best possible. When we choose to adopt our own plans rather than His, we can look for disappointment. True happiness in the midst of disappointment comes when we know the failure of our plans is in God's control. We have our ideas, but God has a better idea.

A keen awareness that God is in control of circumstances leads to the realization that our disappointments are God's appointments. This will help us beat the "grin and bear it" approach to disappointments. God can use our frustrations for good, if we let Him.

Paul is an excellent example of this. His missionary journeys were cut short and his plans to preach in other regions thwarted by a long imprisonment, We might wonder, "If God was in control of circumstances, why did He permit the fiery Paul to be imprisoned?" Think of the people he could have reached!?

This is one way to look at it, but God had a better idea. Paul's disappointment was God's appointment because in prison Paul had time for God to reveal more of His word to him. During those days of disappointment, Paul penned the "Prison Epistles." thereby bequeathing a rich legacy in the books of Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. These three epistles have been a blessing to multiple millions, infinitely more than Paul could possibly reach had he been given another lifetime for missionary activity.

We often emphasize the statement from Hebrews that Jesus "endured the cross." But He did more than endure; He used the cross to bring about redemption for sinful man.

When God permits our well laid plans to collapse, don't go around suffering like a good little scout. Consider it an opportunity to grow stronger and do something special for God. Out of our frustrations, God wants to make something good. God may have to let us fall flat on OUR plans before we will accept His plan. When disappointing circumstances force a change in our plans consider it a divine opportunity to do something special for God.

Second: RECONGNIZE PEOPLE FOR WHAT THEY ARE -- PEOPLE

This will save you great difficulty. Jesus Christ never expected people to be anymore than they are. He didn't suffer disappointment at the hands of men; He knew men's hearts.

He came to the Jewish nation and presented Himself with the credentials of the Messiah. But the religious leaders to show their appreciation to God -- plotted His death on the cross. There He poured out His life for His followers many of whom turned back from following Him because the way was too difficult.

The night before the cross, Peter, one of the inner three, bitterly spit out the words, "I don't know the man." If ever there was a time when the darkness of disappointment would chill one's soul, it was then. But our Lord was never disappointed in men; He was a divine realist. He knew man's capacity, and never expected people to produce beyond their capability.

Following His first miracle, many people believed Jesus was the Messiah, but this didn't impress Jesus. He knew the fickleness of man's faithfulness:

"Now when in Jerusalem at Passover time, during the festivities many believed in Him as they saw the signs that He gave. but Jesus, on His side, did not trust Himself to them -- for He knew them all. He did not need anyone to tell Him what people were like. He understood human nature." John 2:22-23

Jesus never put man on a pedestal. He knew the marks of sin nature would always be present in man's actions. He refused to be carried away by instant belief manifested over His first miracle. He had a realistic view of man which prevented disappointment.

Conversely, a realistic view of man will insulate you against disappointment when people let you down. It will keep you from looking for perfection in an imperfect specimen. Every person is capable of disappointing you, if you let them. Don't expect people to be what they aren't --

perfect: When you finally realize people are just people, it will make it easier to avoid condemning them for doing things that wreck your plans. With a correct view of man, you will not expect them to do more than they can do.

(Incidentally, each one of us may bring disappointment to others. We're not certainly always the wronged party!)

A realistic view of man will keep us from becoming cynical. It will keep us from giving up on people. Lets face it -people are all we have to work with; let's not give up on them. but don't place your confidence in them either. Our confidence must rest in God, not the people God created.

When Paul came to Troas and didn't find Titus as pre arranged, he was agitated. "I had no rest for my spirit ---." (II Cor. 2:13) But Paul didn't sit around and stew about being stood up; he forged ahead to Macedonia alone and found God led him in a continuous stream of triumphs in Christ.

THIRD: REMEMBER OUR GOAL IN LIFE. Our goal should be to "walk as He walked". We need to pattern our life to conform to Jesus Christ. Hebrews 12:2 says it like this:

"Fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Jesus Christ's goal was to seek and save those that were lost. A cross lay across the path toward that goal. But He was not turned aside from His goal by the suffering and shame of the cross; He endured the cross because He had His eyes firmly fixed on the goal -- eternal redemption. Keeping His eyes on the goal of redemption did not lessen the agony involved, but it did enable Him to keep going until the task was accomplished!

Think about this for a moment. Keeping our eyes on our goal will keep us from being paralyzed by the frustration of disappointment. It will enable us to see beyond the circumstances and people to the prize. If we get our eyes on the disappointing situations, we will make little progress toward living our lives as Christ did.

The man who carries the football has one thing in mind - to get to the end zone. The lineman he faces are BIG and TOUGH How many touchdowns would he score if when he took the ball he thought, "Those guys really look mean." Probably not many. The runner takes the ball, ducks his head, and drives right into the middle of the line on his way toward the end zone.

In the game of life, we face big lineman, disappointment. Don't become defeated; Jesus Christ has opened a hole for us to follow through the line. If we ever hope to keep from being defeated by disappointment, we'll have to keep our eye on the goal as we follow Jesus Christ.

We all face disappointment. Circumstance cause disappointments. People disappoint us. Were it not that God has made a way to escape, we would all be defeated.

When the dark clouds of disappointment fill your sky, apply these simple principles and see how God will clear away the darkness of disappointment.

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