

## Dealing With Disappointment

(This outline was written on 2-2-2017)

### I. What is disappointment?

1. Disappointment *n.* - 1. The fact of disappointing; the frustration or non-fulfilment of expectation, intention, or desire.
2. Disappoint *v.* - 1. The fact of disappointing; the frustration or non-fulfilment of expectation, intention, or desire. 2. a. To frustrate the expectation or desire of (a person); to defeat, balk, or deceive in fulfilment of desire. *Const. of, in, with.* Also absol., to cause disappointment.
3. To break off (what has been appointed or fixed); to fail to keep or comply with (an engagement); to fail to fulfil an appointment with (a person).
3. Appointment *n.* - 1. A pointing out, indication. *Obs. rare.* 2. The action of agreeing, or coming to an arrangement; an agreement, pact, contract. *Obs.* 4. *spec.* An agreement or arrangement for a meeting; engagement, assignation.
4. Frustration *n.* - The action of frustrating; disappointment; defeat; an instance of this.
5. Frustration makes a man feel defeated.
6. Expectation *n.* - 1. The action of waiting; the action or state of waiting for or awaiting (something). Now only with mixture of sense 2: Expectant waiting. 2. The action of mentally looking for some one to come, forecasting something to happen, or anticipating something to be received; anticipation; a preconceived idea or opinion with regard to what will take place.

### II. Disappointment and frustration can often be the result of sin or foolishness.

1. God *disappoints* the wicked (**Job 5:12; Psa 17:13**).
2. God *frustrates* the plans of sinners (**Isa 44:25**).
3. Those that don't seek counsel before making important decisions are destined for disappointment (**Pro 15:22**).

### III. Frustration and disappointment are not always caused by sin though.

1. It also happens to the righteous when they are doing the will of God.
2. When Israel was rebuilding Jerusalem after the Babylonian destruction, their enemies frustrated their efforts (**Ezr 4:3-5**).
3. Jesus felt disappointed with His disciples, saying "How long shall I suffer you..." (**Mat 17:17**).
4. Paul was disappointed with the Galatians who had been seduced into believing another gospel (**Gal 1:6**).

### IV. Men will disappoint us, but we can always have high expectations of God who will never disappoint.

1. If we wait upon God our expectation will be realized (**Psa 62:5**).
2. If our expectation is to be with Christ in heaven, we will never be ashamed (**Php 1:20-23**).
3. The expectation of the wicked shall perish (**Pro 10:28; Pro 11:7**), but such is not the case with God's children (**Psa 9:18; Pro 23:17-18; Pro 24:13-14; Jer 29:11**).
4. The wicked can only expect wrath from God (**Pro 11:23**).

### V. Expectation

1. Disappointment is directly correlated with expectation (see definition).

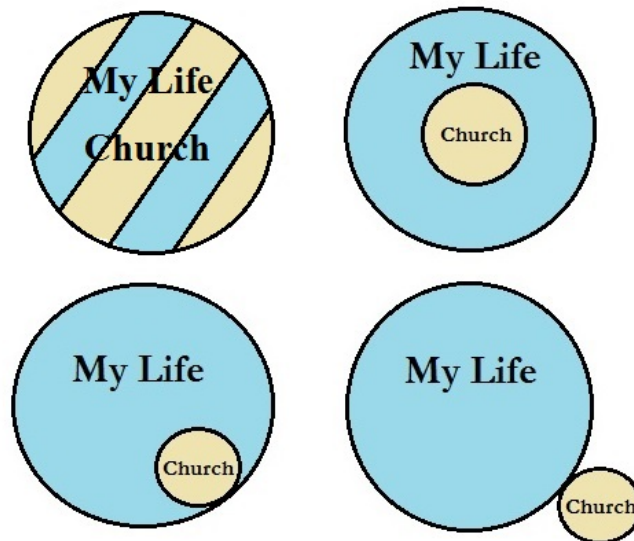
- A. If a man has no expectations, he will experience no disappointment or frustration.
  - B. When disappointed by people, we are often tempted to have no expectations of them in the future to prevent us from being disappointed again.
    - i. This is not wise.
    - ii. Some expectations of Christians are merited and necessary.
    - iii. We should expect Christians to keep God's commandments; and to not do so is to help to retard their spiritual growth and cause them to be under God's judgment.
  - C. It is better to have realistic expectations of people.
    - i. This means that you have low expectations of people who have continually disappointed you.
      - a. I have had a note taped to my monitor since my first year in the ministry which says "Expect little from people."
      - b. This will help to alleviate disappointment.
      - c. To continually hope that someone is going to change and do what they should (or what you think they should) when they have consistently showed you that they will not is a sure recipe for disappointment: *hope deferred maketh the heart sick (Pro 13:12)*.
    - ii. You can have higher expectations of others who have proven themselves to be reliable and virtuous.
      - a. Those who have a reputation for wisdom and honor should be held to a higher standard (**Ecc 10:1**).
      - b. You *should* be disappointed with someone who lets you down who normally would not.
      - c. Being disappointed with such a man will encourage him to be a better man and will not be done in vain.
    - iii. Just remember though that "the best of men are men at best."
      - a. We are all dust and but flesh (**Psa 103:13-14; Psa 78:37-39**).
      - b. We shall have judgment without mercy if we show no mercy (**Jam 2:13**).
      - c. Remember that you have done the very same things that others have done which have disappointed you (**Ecc 7:21**).
2. A preacher or a teacher would be wise to adopt the method of teaching that I learned at Mathnasium tutoring math students: "repetition without expectation."
- A. Just keep preaching and repeating the truth without an expectation of change in the hearers.
    - i. If they do change, you will be pleasantly surprised.
    - ii. If they don't change, you will not be disappointed.
    - iii. This will help you to not burn out.
  - B. A pastor sets himself up for failure and despair if he expects to bring all church members to full Christian maturity.
    - i. There are some Christians who are going to be 30-folders (**Mar 4:20**).
    - ii. Others will be 60-folders (**Mar 4:20**).
    - iii. A few will be 100-folders (**Mar 4:20**).
    - iv. A pastor will be continually frustrated and disappointed if he tries to make 30-folders into 100-folders.

- v. One of the reasons that some 30-folders will never be 100-folders is because they think they already are (**Rom 12:3; Gal 6:3**).
- C. When a pastor preaches to and counsels with a 30-folder who he thinks should be a 100-folder and he doesn't change after a sufficient amount of time, the pastor should stop expecting the man to change and ask God to convict and change him if it is His will to do so.
- D. "You can't fix people that don't want to be fixed; you can't change people that don't want to change." (Pastor Phil Jonker)

VI. The ministry can be a very disappointing job.

- 1. For a pastor, his work is not just his job, it's his life and his very identity.
- 2. When he sees church members being luke-warm toward church and church things, he often feels very disappointed.
  - A. If some church members acted the same way with their family and friends as they do with their church brethren, they wouldn't have any friends and their family would avoid them.
  - B. There are at least four types of Christians in churches which are described in the graphic below.

**Which Graphic Describes Your Christian Life?**



- C. The first graphic describes the Christian whose life is the church.
  - i. He will do more than is required or expected.
  - ii. He will be at every church service, Bible study, and gathering, even if it means skipping other things in his life to do so.
  - iii. He prioritizes church brethren over his own extended family and friends.
  - iv. He reads and studies his Bible daily and tries to apply what the pastor teaches in his own life.

- v. He listens to every sermon attentively, reads everything the pastor writes, and often gives feedback.
  - vi. He would move to another state in a heartbeat to be a resident member of another church if something happened to his church.
  - vii. This Christian is a blessing and extremely valuable to his pastor and is one of the members that keeps the pastor motivated to press on.
- D. The second graphic describes the Christian for whom church is very important and is a central focus of his life, but he still maintains a separation between life and church.
- i. He will do what is required and will have good attendance at church and Bible studies.
  - ii. He will attend church gatherings if there is nothing else going on with his family or in his social life.
  - iii. He nods his head when the pastor preaches and would never give the pastor any trouble, but often doesn't make the changes in this life that need made.
  - iv. This Christian makes his pastor happy most of the time and is not much of a source of disappointment for him.
- E. The third graphic describes the Christian for whom church is a part of his life, but it is over off to the side and is not the central focus.
- i. He misses plenty of church for personal and recreational reasons.
  - ii. He does only what is required and rarely attends any Bible study or get-together that is not mandatory.
  - iii. He brushes off anything that the pastor teaches that would require that he makes changes in his life.
  - iv. This Christian is more of a source of disappointment for his pastor than he is a source of joy because his pastor's expectations of him are often broken.
  - v. This Christian causes his pastor plenty of tears and sorrow.
- F. The fourth graphic describes the Christian for whom church is barely a part of his life. An outsider looking at his life would not see the church in it.
- i. His church attendance is poor; he does just enough to not get excluded.
  - ii. He never attends anything church related if he is not forced to, and even then he might not.
  - iii. He couldn't care less about what the pastor preaches or counsels.
  - iv. He would happily welcome the opportunity to be a non-resident member if something happened to his church or if a job opportunity took him away from church.
  - v. This Christian is not much of a disappointment for his pastor because his pastor expects little to nothing from him.
  - vi. The pastor wouldn't even feel sad if this brother left the church.
- G. Which type of Christian are you?

- VII. No other person on earth can fulfill our deepest desires.
- 1. We long to be understood.
  - 2. We long to be appreciated.
  - 3. No person is as interested in you and your work as you are.

- A. "Stop a minute to contrast your keen interest in your own affairs with your mild concern about anything else. Realize then, that everybody else in the world feels exactly the same way!" (Kenneth M. Goode, *How to Turn People into Gold* - found on p. 151 of Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*)
- B. All will at times let you down, but not God.
- C. People will be bored when you talk to them about what you are most interested in, but God always has an open ear.
- D. People will not care to read the books you write, buy the products you produce or sell, or use your services.
- E. When your family, friends, brethren, and those closest to you let you down, it is time to turn to the Lord, as the old hymn says.

Living below in this old sinful world  
 Hardly a comfort can afford  
 Striving along to face temptations sore  
 Where could I go, but to the Lord?

Refrain:  
 Where could I go, oh where could I go?  
 Seeking a refuge for my soul  
 Needing a friend to save me in the end  
 Where could I go, but to the Lord?

Neighbors are kind, I love them everyone  
 We get along in sweet accord  
 But when my soul needs manna from above  
 Where could I go, but to the Lord?

Life here is grand with friends I love so dear  
 Comfort I get from God's own word  
 Yet when I face the chilling hand of death  
 Where could I go, but to the Lord?

*Where Could I Go*, Old School Hymnal, p. 528

- 4. Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you (**1Pe 5:7**).
- 5. Jesus cares, as the old hymn tell us.

Does Jesus care when my heart is pained  
 Too deeply for mirth or song,  
 As the burdens press, and the cares distress,  
 And the way grows weary and long?

Refrain:  
 Oh, yes, He cares, I know He cares,  
 His heart is touched with my grief;

When the days are weary, the long nights dreary,  
I know my Savior cares, He cares.

Does Jesus care when my way is dark  
With a nameless dread and fear?  
As the daylight fades into deep night shades,  
Does He care enough to be near?

Does Jesus care when I've tried and failed  
To resist some temptation strong;  
When for my deep grief there is no relief,  
Though my tears flow all the night long?

Does Jesus care when I've said "goodbye"  
To the dearest on earth to me,  
And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks—  
Is it aught to Him, does He care?

*Does Jesus Care*, Old School Hymnal, p. 380

VIII. Pride is a cause of disappointment.

1. If a man thinks highly of himself or his work, he is setting himself up for disappointment.
2. As stated before, no other person is going to be as interested in a man's work as himself.
3. When others don't share the same interest or enthusiasm in a man's work, he will be disappointed.
4. But if the man did not think highly of his work in the first place, he would not have been disappointed when others didn't think so highly of it.
  - A. This even applies to the work of the ministry.
  - B. Pastor's must not think highly of their work.
  - C. "We must also put away all notion of self-importance. God will not bless the man who thinks himself great. To glory even in the work of God the Holy Spirit in yourself, is to tread dangerously near to self-adulation. "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth," and be very glad when that other has sense enough to hold his tongue." (Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, p. 223-224)
5. Consider David's counselor, Ahithophel.
  - A. Ahithophel's counsel was highly esteemed (**2Sa 16:23**).
  - B. He suffered such disappointment when his counsel was not followed that he committed suicide (**2Sa 17:23**).
  - C. Had Ahithophel not been proud, others' rejection of his counsel would not have given him such disappointment.

IX. Never measure your worth by how successful you are at something.

1. Our worth is not determined by our work, but by God's work.
2. We are valuable in God's eyes regardless of how successful we are in this world.
3. By God's grace we are:
  - A. Chosen by God (**Eph 1:4**).

- B. Predestinated to be children of God (**Eph 1:5**).
  - C. Sons of God (**1Jo 3:1-2**).
  - D. Loved by God (**Rev 1:5**).
  - E. Justified by God (**Rom 3:24**).
  - F. Sanctified by God (**1Co 6:11**).
  - G. Cherished by God (**Eph 5:29**).
  - H. The apple of God's eye (**Deu 32:9-10**).
  - I. Complete in Christ (**Col 2:10**).
4. If we view ourselves the way that God views us, we will not suffer nearly as much disappointment in ourselves.