



Dealing With Disappointment

Quick Backdrop

You've already been dealing with it most of your life. From the moment you were first told you could not have something you wanted until this moment right now, you have been dealing with disappointment. Granted, the situations have changed. As a toddler it was making that last-second grab for candy in the grocery checkout lane. As a teen it may be a bad grade on a test, not being cast for the part you wanted in the play, getting cut from an athletic team, the breakup of a relationship or friendship. In the raw moments of disappointment, we ask hard questions: Why me? Why did this happen? How could this have been different? We also feel raw hurt, which can be depressing. Fortunately, we have great help from God's Word when we are disappointed. We also have great company.

But first, let's just call it out. What's a recent, or active disappointment, something that has left a sting? _____

Digging In

Take a moment to reflect on the passages below. Use these prompts to help your heart and mind to notice the detail:

1. Draw a frowny over anything that sounds like disappointment.
2. Draw a smiley over any reaction to the disappointment.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

¹⁷ Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. ¹⁹ The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.

Psalms 18:3-6

³ I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies. ⁴ The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. ⁵ The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. ⁶ In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.

Genesis 37:3-4; 23-24 (Joseph and his brothers, the early years)

³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. ⁴ When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— ²⁴ and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

Genesis 50:18-21 (Joseph and his brothers, the later years)

¹⁸ His brothers then came and threw themselves down before [Joseph]. "We are your slaves," they said. ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?" ²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹ So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Taking It Inward

How would you describe the disappointment felt by the people represented in these passages? If you were repeating their disappointment back to them in a way that shows understanding (in good listener fashion), what would you say?

How did each person respond to or manage their disappointment?

How would you describe your response to your disappointment? Circle any that apply and please add your own?

anger | frustration | depression | feeling defeated | utility
resolve to improve | motivation | inspiration

Putting Into Practice

How can you use the examples in these passages to help manage the disappointment you noted at the open of this devotional? What parallels do you see?

With Joseph we see a high-level response to disappointment and possibly THE response God is pointing us to: to redeem the disappointment, to use for good the situation that did not turn out like you'd wanted. In fact, redeeming loss is one of God's best works. Take a moment to write out (e-note/doc or on paper) your thoughts on how you can redeem your disappointment(s).

It's apparent from Scripture that God expected us to face disappointment. Below are just a few passages that can speak encouragement into your personal disappointment. As you read these, journal your thoughts on what God is saying to you about navigating disappointment in your life.

Fold or Cut