Turning Disappointment into God’s Appointment

Disappointment = the state of having expectations or wishes unfulfilled.

Proverbs 13:12: “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.”

What do we expect?

♦ Health for ourselves and our family
♦ Physical provision
♦ Happiness
♦ Absence of trials and struggles
♦ God’s specific direction in our decisions

1. Health: We expect not to get sick and if we do to be healed.

Do these Scriptures guarantee we will be healed?

♦ Deuteronomy 28:21-22: Diseases are one of the curses of disobedience to God’s law.
♦ Galatians 3:14: God has redeemed us from the curse of the law.
♦ Isaiah 53:5: By His wounds, we are healed.
♦ Psalm 103:3: He heals all my diseases.
♦ I Corinthians 12:9: The gift of healing is one of the gifts of the Spirit.
♦ James 5:16: Pray for each other that you may be healed.

Are we healed by having enough faith? Is it faith in faith or faith in God being able to do anything He wants to do?

♦ Mark 5:34: The woman with the bleeding disorder was healed because she had faith.
♦ Matthew 8:5-13: The Centurion’s servant was healed by a word from Jesus because he believed.
♦ Matthew 9: 27-30: Jesus told the blind men: “According to your faith it will be done to you.”
♦ Matthew 17:20: Faith as small as a mustard seed will move mountains, because nothing is impossible with God.

What is the truth?

♦ 2 Corinthians 12:9: God refused to remove Paul’s thorn in the flesh because “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”
♦ Not everyone is healed. All who believe are saved; but not all are healed.
♦ Romans 8:18-23: The world is still under the curse of sin until its redemption.
♦ We need to ask for God to heal us and know He can, but recognize it isn’t guaranteed.
2. Physical Provision

Do these scriptures guarantee we will always have abundant provision?

- Matthew 6:25-34: Jesus tells us not to worry about our lives and what we will eat or wear, but we should seek God and His kingdom first and our needs will be provided by God.
- Philippians 4:19: “God will meet all your needs.”
- John 10:10: “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (abundantly).
- 3 John 2: “I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.”

What is the truth?

- Philippians 4:11-13: Paul had times when he had plenty and when he went without.
- Acts 11:27-30: There were poor believers in Jerusalem that needed help.
- 2 Timothy 2:3-4: We are told to endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus
- Perspective: The Christian life isn’t about physical abundance but spiritual abundance and service.

3. Happiness and life without struggles and trials

Do we think God has promised us the American dream?

What is the truth?

- Proverbs 14:10: “Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can share its joy.”
- Ecclesiastes 3:12: Solomon concluded that when life goes well, it is the gift of God.
- Nehemiah 8:10b: “The joy of the Lord is your strength.”
- John 16:22: Jesus promised no one will take away our joy.
- Romans 12:12: “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”
- John 16:33: “You will have tribulation but be of good cheer because I have overcome the world.”
- 1 Peter 3:17: “It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”

4. God’s specific direction for our decisions

Does God have a specific will for my life that I need to find out before making decisions?

God’s will refers to His specific sovereign plan

- Ephesians 1:11: “In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.”
- Romans 15:2: Paul asks the Roman Christians to pray, “so that by God’s will I may come to you.”
James 4:15: We should say, “If the Lord wills, we will…”
Genesis 12:1-3: Abraham was called to go to a new country, so God could make Israel into a nation.
Jesus’ birth and death on the cross.
End-time prophecies.
God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (Exodus 14:4); Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 9:34).

God’s will also involves following His general commandments

1 Thessalonians 4:3: “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified.”
1 Peter 2:15: “For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.”
Matthew 7:21: “Jesus said, ‘Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my father in heaven.’”
2 Peter 1:3-10: We have been given everything we need to live godly lives.
Some examples of general commandments: love others, be kind, compassionate, forgiving, truthful, initiate reconciliation, be like Christ, share our resources, do our best, witness, be sexually pure. That makes decisions in areas like these simple.

What part does personal choice play?

1 Corinthians 7:27-28, 39: Believers can choose to marry or not and who to marry.
Exodus 9:34: Pharaoh hardened his own heart.
Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8-9: There are many things we can decide for ourselves according to our individual consciences.

Conclusion: The Bible tells us that God is sovereign and His will and purpose prevail. We also live in a sinful world and are affected by it. God doesn’t cause bad things to happen and He doesn’t approve of them, but He does allow them (Lamentations 3:33). We also have personal choice and freedom to make decisions, but God has a sovereign override.

How does God communicate His will to me?

Psalm 23: He is our Shepherd who guides us in paths of righteousness.
James 1:5: We should ask God for wisdom and expect it.
John 16:8, 12: The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth and convicts us of sin.

These are ways we use to find God’s will with making decisions:

1. Thoughts
Romans 12:2: Don’t be conformed to the world but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you can test and approve what God’s good, pleasing, and perfect will is.
Acts 20:23: The Holy Spirit warned Paul that chains and afflictions were waiting for him in Jerusalem.
2 Corinthians 10:5: Take your thoughts captive to be obedient to Jesus Christ.
2. Specific scriptures

- Logos = expression of thought; God’s general word. (John 2:22: They believed Jesus’ words.)
- Rhema = The now or personal word of God, a specific scripture or word. (Ephesians 6:17: Sword of Spirit is the word of God.)
- Matthew 4:5-11: Satan tempted Jesus by trying to get Him to act on a verse taken out of context.

3. Emotions

- Philippians 4:7: Peace will rule in your hearts through Christ Jesus.

4. Fleeces

- Judges 6:36-40: Gideon put out a fleece to get God’s answer.

5. Casting lots

- Exodus 28:30: The priests used Urim and Thummin.
- Proverbs 16:33: “The lot is cast into the lap but its every decision is from the Lord.”
- Acts 1:26: The disciples cast lots to see who would replace Judas as the next apostle.

6. Words people speak to you

- 1 Corinthians 12:8: Words of knowledge.
- Deuteronomy 18:20: A prophet who presumed to speak for God was subject to being put to death.

7. Circumstances

- Acts 8:26-39: Philip appeared to explain the Scriptures to the Ethiopian eunuch.
- We assume that when particular things happen that God is directing us.

8. Dreams, Visions, Angels and Voices

- Pharaoh had dreams from God.
- Acts 10:1-7: Cornelius’ vision of an angel who told him to send men to Joppa to find Simon Peter.
- Acts 10:9-16: Peter’s vision showing him all animals were clean to show him salvation included the Gentiles.
- Acts 18:9: The Lord spoke to Paul telling him to stay in Corinth to teach and he would be safe.
- Acts 9: The Lord spoke audibly to Saul on the road to Damascus.
**Summary:** God does at times speak to us in these ways, but we must be careful not to be presumptuous in our interpretations and to use wisdom, otherwise we will assume God is leading when He is not and get disillusioned thinking He has misled us.

**Do this to test your decisions to see if they are in God’s will:**

1. Pray and submit them to God.
2. Make sure they don’t go against the Word of God.
4. Check circumstances. If it is right, it’ll be possible.
5. Use your mind to make the decision given all the information.

**When we are disappointed because an expectation isn’t fulfilled about our health, physical provision, happiness, or trials, we can respond in several ways:**

- Enter into disillusionment and despair.
- Get angry with God and question our faith.
- Accept the disappointment as His appointment.

**Scriptures to support accepting the disappointment as His appointment:**

- James 1:2-4: Consider trials joy because the testing of your faith produces maturity.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
- Job 13:15: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.”
- Romans 8:28: For God works all things for good.
- 2 Corinthians 4:17: Our afflictions prepare us for an eternal glory.
- 1 Peter 4:1: Suffering helps us to be done with sin.

All Scriptures are taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
Application Questions

1. What are your expectations regarding your health and the health of your family? How have you been disappointed in God in this area?

2. What are your expectations regarding physical provision? How have you been disappointed in God in this area?

3. What are your expectations regarding your happiness? How have you been disappointed in God in this area?

4. What are your expectations regarding the absence of trials and struggles in your life? How have you been disappointed in God in this area?

5. What are your expectations regarding knowing God’s specific direction in your decisions? How have you been disappointed in God in this area?

6. What can you do to turn your disappointments into his appointment?