Disappointment

How did you imagine your life at the age you are now? Has your life turned out differently than you expected? For all of us, life isn’t and hasn’t been exactly as we imagined it. In some ways it may be better, but in other ways it may fall short and, as a result, you may struggle with disappointment, disillusionment, and discouragement.

When I married my husband at age 20, I imagined myself with a peaceful Christian marriage and home—the complete opposite of what I was raised with due to the presence of alcoholism. It didn’t work out that way. Even though there was no alcoholism, and we were both saved, there was a whole lot of dysfunction. I was disappointed and disillusioned.

Life won’t be tailored to your expectations. Bad stuff happens to Christians and non-Christians alike. Dysfunction affects all of us because sinful people are messed up. If we link our satisfaction in life to our plans working out, the disappointment will cause us to miss out on the growth opportunities from things we would prefer not to deal and prevent us from courageously embracing the life we have.

The Israelites experienced this disappointment and disillusionment during their journey to the Promised Land because it wasn’t what they expected, and as a result, even though they knew God was with them by the miracles he continually did, they yearned to be back in Egypt. When circumstances didn’t match their illusions, they got restless, they stopped trusting God, and they lost their courage.

We too question God and wonder why he doesn’t change the people and things we do not like. We wonder how we got so far off track from our plans. God can handle our questions, our emotions, and our doubts, but he wants something more from us because he knows it is for our good. The secret to dealing with all our disappointments is to recognize them, surrender them to God, and meet them with courage.
We need to recognize the ways disappointment shows up in our lives. It can feel like hopelessness, sadness, regret, self-pity, resentment, loss of pleasure, low motivation, and resignation. We need to grieve the loss of the dream—the ideals we had that haven’t been realized—so that we can adjust our expectations and make them reasonable for where we are now. It doesn’t mean we give up hope and stop having dreams; it means we adjust them so that disappointment doesn’t continually rob us of the ability to live today.

God, 

Help me to surrender my disappointments so that instead of getting disillusioned and discouraged, I will be able to meet life’s challenges with courage.

Joshua 1:9

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”
If you have any questions you would like to ask Karla, please feel free to email her. Portions of your email and Karla's response to you may be used anonymously in future materials. By emailing her, you are giving your implied permission.

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