

THE DANGER OF DISAPPOINTMENT
Next Steps Devotional Guide
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Instructions: This devotional guide can be used individually, by families or in a small group as a way to reinforce the biblical truth you learned from the sermon. If you are using this at home, spread the points throughout the whole week. If you are using this in a small group, divide people up into sub-groups to discuss and share and bring them back to the whole group to share. Do not force anyone to share. Be sure to pray in your group.

1. Everyone has disappointments — even Christians. We get our hopes up only to have them dashed. Think back over your life. What were some of your disappointments — big and small — that you remember? Why were they a disappointment.
2. In the last presidential election, many conservatives were disappointed. On top of that, everyone was still and still is dealing with COVID. In the last 1.5 years it has become common for liberal District Attorneys to refuse to prosecute criminals with horrendous and heinous crimes. Victims do not get justice. In addition to that, we have had to endure continuing rising of gas prices, inflation, and interest rates. Read [Psalm 33:12a](#) and [Ezekiel 21:13](#) in your sermon notes. Do you believe there is any connection from these two Scripture passages and the “state of our union?” Why or why not?
3. Have you noticed God often has different ideas, than you do about your life? Have you ever been disappointed with God? Why or why not?
4. God’s Word gives us ways to deal with disappointment. When we experience disappointment, it is natural to have some fear with that.
 - a. God commands us not to be fearful or afraid. It has been said there are 365 “*fear nots/do not be afraid*” in the Bible — one for each day of the week. What do you think about this?
 - b. Read [2 Timothy 1:7](#) in point #1 in your sermon notes. If God has given us a spirit of power, of love and sound judgment, then why do you think we experience fear, timidity, and cowardice when disappointed?
 - c. Presidential election concession speeches are fairly new. The very first one was in 1952, given by Adelaide Stephens, who conceded to Dwight Eisenhower. As you reflect back over your life, has anyone who disappointed you give you a “concession speech”? If so, who and why? Have you? If so, to who and why?
5. There is a hymn we sing, “Trust And Obey.” Most people do not even know how we got this hymn. The origins go back to 1887. The evangelist and preacher Dwight L. Moody was having a crusade in Brockton, Massachusetts. Rev. Moody had invited a singer by the name of Rev. J.H. Stammis, a Presbyterian minister to sing. During a testimony time of sharing, a young man stood up and said, “*I am not quite sure— but I am going to trust, and I am going to obey.*” Stammis jotted down this statement and when he got home, wrote the hymn.
 - a. When we are disappointed, especially with God, we struggle to trust that God is in control. Reflect back over your life when you struggled trusting God. Was there any kind of disappointment connected to it? If so, what?
 - b. Pastor Kelly said, “History is “His-story.” We are not making our history, but are part of God’s. Read [Job 25:2](#) in point #2 in your sermon notes. Even though God is in control, we still have the freedom to choose, but our choices are not unlimited. What have been some of the challenges for you to be in “His-story”?
 - c. One of the most shocking passages in the Bible is [Psalm 75:6-7](#). Read it in point #2 in your sermon notes. This verses says God “*promotes one and deposes another; God decides who will rise and who will fall; God puts one down and lifts another up.*” When it comes to world leaders, CEO’s, and etc., do you think of God ever doing this? Why or why not. If you do, then does this give you delight or disappointment and why?
6. One of the biggest challenges we face when dealing with disappointment is we can be like Chicken Little — “The sky is falling” when in reality it is not. The reason we do this is because we tend to not always see things from an eternal perspective. Yet, God has been directing history since the creation of the world. We tend to think that the most important thing that is happening is happening right now.
 - a. In the Old Testament, one of the best examples of this is a prophet named Habakkuk. The question he asked God is one that many have asked God about our country and other countries. Read [Habakkuk 1:2](#) in point #3 in your sermon notes. When have you asked God the same question and why? Did you get an answer? If so, what was it?
 - b. God is never deaf to our questions, especially the questions we have when we are disappointed. God responds to Habakkuk in [Habakkuk 2:3](#) in your sermon notes. Read God’s response in point #3. When you read this, how does God’s answer to Habakkuk help you when you are disappointed?
 - c. Read [James 5:7](#) in point #3 in your sermon notes. This refers to “seasons.” God says there are different seasons in life and unfortunately, we cannot skip seasons. There are even seasons in nations. How could you use [James 5:7](#) to help someone who is in a “season of disappointment?”
 - d. [Romans 8:28](#) is an often overused and misused verse. Read it point #3 in your sermon notes. Not everything is good. Rape is not good. Racism is not good. Abuse is not good. God promises to bring good out of everything — even the bad we experience. Yet, this promise from God to bring good out of a disappointment or something bad is based on two conditions according to [Romans 8:28](#) — those who love God as Jesus defined in Matthew 22:37-39 and those who are fulfilling God’s individual purpose for their lives. So, what does this mean for your own life when it comes to disappointments and bad experiences?

- e. As mentioned earlier in this devotional guide, we are often guilty of being near-sighted when it comes to disappointments and bad experiences. Read 2 Corinthians 4:18 in point #3 in your sermon notes.
 - i. When it comes to the current political environment, some of you may be spending too much time thinking about this. I am not downplaying the effects of the political chaos, the rising gas prices, inflation and rising interest rates have on us. But they are temporary compared to eternity. For example, without looking it up or asking anyone, who was President in 1877? The 1877 presidential election was the single most contested election in America's history. It was a real nail biter. America had to wait until the following March to find out who was the next president. And for some it seemed like the nation was falling apart. Okay, you can now look it up. When have you had to wait and it seemed like your world was falling apart? How did you handle it? What did you learn from it?
 - ii. Sometimes we are the source of our own disappointment because our expectations are too high or unrealistic. When has this been you and how did you handle the fall-out from it?
7. It is common that when our plans to do not align with God's plan, we can start experiencing discouragement and disappointment. When this happens it is easy for us to jump to conclusions. We see this in today's political climate. Both sides make accusations. Both sides are shouting, "You're being unfair." Accusations, whether by Democrats or Republicans, whether by CNN or FOX, does that mean are a fact. It is just an accusation. Just because someone keeps repeating something over and over does not make it true. There must be proof. Even rhetoric is not proof — rhetoric is just words
 - a. Read Proverbs 25:8 in point #4 in your sermon outline. We've all at times had "egg on our face" because we jumped to conclusions. When is a time this was true for you and why?
 - b. Read Ecclesiastes 12:12 in point #4 in your sermon outline. Solomon is giving advice to his son. If you are on social media, you have seen this. With the recent Supreme Court ruling on abortion, social media lit up. Have you ever had someone come after you on social media? If so, why and what was your response? Have you ever gone after someone on social media? Why?
 - c. Read Proverbs 14:15a both the Paraphrased Version and The Message Version. When the 2020 presidential election was taking place, a preacher in CA stated that if Biden won, then the very next day COVID would disappear because he believed it was a ruse. Well, it didn't. Why do you think people make such statements only to have egg on their face?
 - d. Read Proverbs 23:23a in point #4 in your sermon notes. I get sent stuff all the time from people is "true," but when I do some fact checking such as with www.snopes.com, I learn it is either false, exaggerated or a flat out lie. When someone tells you something, do you do whatever is necessary to verify it before sharing it? Why or why not?
8. Part of maturity is learning through your experiences, especially the painful ones and the disappointing ones. God wants us to learn from our fears, our failures and our frustrations. Read Deuteronomy 11:2a in point #5 in your sermon notes. What have you learned from your experiences with God.
9. Read Isaiah 42:24-25 and Jesus' words in Matthew 12:25 in point #5 in your sermon notes. When you look back over the last 1.5 years, what lessons you can extract from the political incivility, the economic insecurity, inflation, rising gas prices and interest rates and the division in our country?
10. Read Romans 15:2 in point #6 in your sermon notes. We people come after us, we are commanded to show sympathy and empathy to them. Our nation is divided like never before in her history. There are a lot of hopeless and depressed people out there we disagree with in life. Yet, our witness needs to be one that is winsome. See, we always think our fears are very realistic and everybody else is irrational. Lashing out never wins nor helps anyone. How can you be sympathetic and empathetic to someone who has lashed out against you?
11. When we are experiencing disappointment, many times that is all we can see — the disappointment.
 - a. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18 in point #7 in your sermon notes. This passage does NOT say, "Give thanks FOR all circumstances . . ." It says, "Give thanks IN all circumstances." What is the difference and why?
 - b. COVID affected everyone, whether you got the virus or not. There were the shutdowns of schools, businesses and churches. I was grateful that during this time we had a skeleton crew show so that we would livestream our service with everyone being home. During this time, what were you thankful for from God?
 - c. Think back to times of disappointments in your life. What can you see in them that you are thankful for in spite of those disappointments? You may want to write them down?
 - d. Read Revelation 3:20 in point #7 in your sermon notes. The Bible says, "Our real politics (citizenship) is in heaven, not earth. In the New Testament times, one of the reasons Rome turned to persecuting and killing Christians is their refusal to say, "Caesar kurios," Caesar is lord. Southside, our real allegiance is to Jesus Christ, not Trump, not Santis, not Biden, not Pelosi, not the Republican Party, not the Democratic Party and not to whoever. Our allegiance is to Jesus Christ. There are Christians in this country who will no longer say, "The Pledge of Allegiance" because our nation's legalization of abortion and gay marriage. Southside, our real citizenship in heaven. Our loyalty and allegiance is to Jesus Christ, our King of kings and our Lord of lords. Where in your life have you had conflicts or disappointments or struggles with loyalty to our country for example verses loyalty to God?
 - e. Read James 1:22 in point #7 in your sermon notes. The danger of disappointment is allowing it to make you bitter rather than better; to make you cynical rather than caring; to make you skeptical rather than sympathetic; to make you look more like our culture than Christ. That's the danger of disappointment. When, have you see this? What did you learn from observing this? Will you promise to do James 1:22 regardless?