

How to Handle Anger from Disappointment

Disappointment – unmet expectations

No one is immune to disillusionment. All of us have expectations of other people, ourselves and even God. When life doesn't go as we hoped, some degree of disappointment is normal. But at times, that disenchantment, bitterness and regret can develop into anger.

Disappointment in God - Has life or the Lord disappointed you in some way? What happened? How you feel today.

Read Jonah 3-4. - The people of Nineveh were enemies of Israel. They were an exceptionally cruel, wicked, and idolatrous people who sought dominion over the entire region. They employed brutal warfare to conquer others.

Why did God not do as Jonah had prophesied (Jonah 3:5-10)?

Why did Jonah get so angry (4:1-3)? What do you think he had hoped would happen?

Disappointment in People - Think about a time when you were angered by another person because he (or she) didn't meet your expectations. Why do you think your disappointment turned to anger?

Read Luke 10:38-42

Can you relate to Martha's frustration (vv. 39-40)? Why or why not?

What was Martha's root problem, according to Jesus (vv. 41-42)?

Disappointment in Yourself - If you are angry with yourself because of past sins or mistakes, confess your shortcoming and remember that the Lord's love for you is unconditional. Why can you be confident that God doesn't hold your sin against you see Romans 8:12 and 1 John 1:9, below.

Romans 8:1-2 - ¹There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

1 John 1:9 ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Read Matthew 27:1-5.

What did Judas realize (vv. 3-4)?

What indicates that he could not forgive himself (v. 5)?

Handling Disappointment Correctly - Now that we have realized some of the sources or roots of our disappointment(s) – how do we handling them correctly? Depending on the nature of the disappointment, your response should include some of the following. (The order will vary.)

Express your feelings to the Lord. God already knows how you feel and why. But pouring your heart out to Him prepares you to experience His love and comfort.

Read Psalms Ps. 22:2, 6-8, 11-18

What reasons did David have to be disappointed?

David responded to hardship by trusting in the Lord and praying for deliverance. Why is this a good way to diffuse anger caused by disappointment?

Remind yourself that God is still in control AND He has the highest good in mind for you.

In times of trouble, we can choose to focus on the spiritual truths God is teaching us. Recall a disappointment that developed your character. What did you learn through that experience?

Read Psalms 22:4-5, 9-10

As a part of declaring trust in the Lord, what did David recall? How could you apply his approach to your life?

Read Romans 8:28-29

People often interpret Romans 8:28 to mean that if one option doesn't work out, a better option will come along. But from the Lord's perspective, our character development - rather than our comfort or desires - is of the highest importance.

What is God's ultimate goal for believers (Rom. 8:29)?

When the opportunity to fulfill a dream has passed, ask the Lord for a new goal. – avoid frustration.

Proverbs 13:12 says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life." If you need a new vision for your life, ask the Father to give you one.

Read Psalm 37:1-6.

Why should we not fret when others mistreat us (vv. 1-2)?

What should we turn our attention to instead (vv. 3-4)?

What does God promise if we will do that (v. 5-6)?

Reaffirm your hope in God as your provider - Disappointments can serve as reminders to place our hope fully in the Lord. If we cast our anxiety on the Lord we can experience supernatural joy and peace as we place our trust in our heavenly Father, see Phil. 4:6-7, below.

Philippians 4:6-7 ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Read Matt. 6:30-34

What needs does the Father promise to meet?

Move on. - God doesn't want us to get stuck in the past - either regretting mistakes and lost opportunities or reminiscing about "the good old days." Why is it so important that we "forget the former things", see Isa. 43:18-19, below.

Isaiah 43:18-19 - ¹⁸Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. ¹⁹Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert

There are good things God wants us to remember from the past, lessons learned, positive change in character but He does not want us to focus or dwell on our past disappointments.

What new venture or challenge do you think the Lord wants you to focus on?

When life takes an unexpected turn, we don't have to respond in anger. Ask the Lord for fresh hope and a new vision. That's a prayer He will be sure to answer.

Prayer: Father, teach me to deal with disappointments in a healthy way. When they make me angry, show me how to respond so that I will not give Satan a foothold in my life. In Jesus name I pray. Amen