

HANDLING LIFE'S DISAPPOINTMENTS

Bible Study Guide – August 31st, 2008
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INTRODUCTION

This week we will consider a subject that is very familiar to all of us – life's disappointments. We have all had a time in life when things did not turn out as we expected;

- We see this great person we really want to have a date with. We get up the courage to ask them out only to be rebuffed and turned down.
- We did not get the promotion we expected.
- We study hard for an exam and came out feeling really good only to find out when the results come out that we did very badly.
- We see a stunning outfit in a store window. Not wanting to spend the money we go home and talk to our spouse who tells us to go and get it. When we go back to the store it has been sold.
- We have trust in our child when we let them go out one evening. The evening all falls apart when we get a call saying they have been arrested for drunk driving.

We could keep listing scenarios when we become disappointed.

Think of some times in your life when you did not get what you thought you deserved, or a time when somebody let you down, or any time you were disappointed with the outcome of a situation.

In these times we sit back and think, "How did that happen?" We want to lash out at somebody, blame somebody or something, or just remain frustrated and disappointed. Life is at a low point. Somehow you hope that God will even the score. You hope that God may even repay you with something big.

How do you handle life's disappointments? This week's study will look at what Jesus had to say about this type of situation and how we should handle life's "bummer" moments

SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 20:1-16

As you read this scripture consider the following;

- ***What type of person was the landowner?***
- ***What is your initial reaction to the comments of the workers?***
- ***Where the first workers hired justified in their complaint? Should they be disappointed with what they received as wages?***
- ***What do you think would be the reaction of the last workers hired?***
- ***What message do you see in this passage relating to life's disappointments?***

CONCLUSIONS

What we have seen is all a matter of perspective. You could talk to two sets of people in the same place with the same things, and one might feel short changed, one might feel blessed. The question is not what each has or doesn't have. The question is: What is each person focusing on? Often our perspective of God teeters on how things are going on in our lives. If something goes right, we're convinced that God is generous. If it goes wrong then we're pointing fingers and accusing God. It's a slippery slope ... a narrow view of God.

- ***Think of examples of a situation in your life where you think God short changed you.***
- ***Think of examples in your life where you believe God was generous to you.***

Sure God is generous. If we draw up a chart showing God's generosity on one side and times when we think God let us down on the other, it would be a lopsided chart, mostly leaning toward generosity. It's just that we tend to remember the times when we don't get what we want, and don't think twice about when we get what we want. We expect God to bat 100 percent in our favor, always delivering what we request. After all isn't this the way we expect things to be?

- ***Where in your life do you need to recognize and embrace God's generosity?***
- ***Where do you need to let go of the belief that life should be fair?***

Sometimes it just takes a while to process. What seems unfair today will make more sense in time. It makes sense when we realize God is God and he knows what he is doing and is doing what is best for us. If God were just a slot machine we played, or our favorite Grandpa who gave us everything we wanted, he wouldn't be our God – we would be his. So who do we want in control? The creator of the universe ... or us? It's a much better way to let God decide what's fair.