

# DISAPPOINTMENT

**Y**ou're twenty-eight years old, hosting the afternoon drive-time show on a 50,000-watt AM radio station in the nation's fifth largest market. Marquis names in music and film stop by for guest appearances. Some insist on buying your dinner at their nightclub gigs there. You have open invitations to the broadcast booth and press box at the local pro sports games. In fact, you're the P.A. announcer for one team and are asked to announce another's old-timers game. Your name and picture are on the city buses. You're tied with the morning show for your station's highest-rated daypart. Your career seems to be stylin.'

One Friday at 7 p.m., as you hand off your listeners to the evening jock, your program director says, "I hate it, but I have to let you go."

Blind-sided .... Shocked .... Having an out-of-body experience .... Disillusioned .... Disappointed? Dang tootin.'

How do you break the news to your two children and pregnant wife? How do you deal with your own confusion, sorrow, and grief?

**DISCUSS: What do we do when people or circumstances disappoint us? Can we rise above it and move on?**

**DISCUSS: Describe what triggers your disappointment in others? in yourself?**

**DISCUSS: What can we learn from being let down?**

We're tempted to become disappointed when:

**1-We have expectations, realistic or not, for them or you, that are not met.** (They are also imperfect, fallible and human.)

**2-We mistakenly set goals for others instead of desires.** (Goals are reachable targets that we set for ourselves; desires are aspirations we have for others, over which we have no control.)

**3-We haven't fully communicated with the offending person.** (The tool, Quick Listening, will give each of you the satisfaction that you've been fully heard. The purpose is to be understood, not necessarily to reach agreement. James 1:19-20)

**4-We're humiliated, misunderstood, misquoted, mischaracterized, criticized or compared with someone else and found wanting.** (People are "walking billboards" that often carry messages that predict future behavior. We'd be disappointed less if we'd correctly read a person's billboard.)

**5-We may forgive, but forget? Are you kidding!!** (You have not forgiven if you insist on resurfacing the hurt.)

**6-We play “coulda-shoulda-woulda” and “if only.”** (The past is only something to be learned from, not amended or relived.)

**7-Instead of realizing that someone or something may eventually disappoint us, we blissfully believe that life is just a bowl of cherries.** (Bobb Biehl cautions, “To be disillusioned, you must first have an illusion. Starting today, build your life on the bedrock of truth, not the thin air of illusion.”)

What questions should we ask during times of disappointment?

**A-What’s at the core of this disappointment? Should it be discussed openly? Can it be resolved?**

**B-Why can’t we just forgive and forget?** (God does. He dealt once and for all with the forgiveness issue at the cross where His Son Jesus died a horrid, sacrificial death which totally paid every human’s sin debt to God. From that moment on God “remembers” our sins no more, and He removed our sin penalty from us “as far as the east is from the west.”)

**C-Can trust and openness ever return?**

**D-Is it worth swallowing one’s pride and hurt to salvage that relationship, or should we just cut and run?**

Paul, to Christ’s followers: *“Don’t hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you’ve got it in you, get along with everybody. Don’t insist on getting even; that’s not for you to do. I’ll do the judging,” says God*” (Romans 12).

Jesus taught, *“If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him - work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you’ve made a friend. If he won’t, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won’t listen, tell the church. If he won’t listen to the church, start over from scratch, confront him with the need for repentance, and offer again God’s forgiving love”* (Matthew 18).

Paul: *“(Unconditional) love ... doesn’t fly off the handle, doesn’t keep score of the sins of others ... puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best”* (1 Corinthians 13:).

Jesus’ radical approach: *“If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat. Live generously. ... Help and give without expecting a return. ... Don’t pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults ... Be easy on people; you’ll find life a lot easier”* (Luke 6).

Let's look at one Bible character who's a case study for what to do when family, workplace and life have seemingly dealt you a bad hand. Joseph was born in 1914 B.C., three centuries after Egypt's Old Kingdom Pyramids were built.

*Israel (also known as Jacob) loved (seventeen-year-old) Joseph ... When his brothers realized that their father loved him more than them, they grew to hate him - they wouldn't even speak to him. ...*

*... they ... grabbed him, and threw him into a cistern. ... His brothers pulled Joseph out of the cistern and sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites who took Joseph with them down to Egypt. ... In Egypt the Midianites sold Joseph to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, manager of his household affairs (Genesis 37).*

When Joseph spurned Potiphar's wife's tantalizing enticements, she had him tossed in jail for several years. He'd been unfairly accused.

*... Pharaoh had a dream ... He sent for all the magicians and sages of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but they couldn't interpret them to him.*

Joseph had accurately unpacked some fellow prisoners' dreams, so Pharaoh sent for him.

*Joseph said to Pharaoh, "... God is telling Pharaoh what he is going to do. ... Seven years of plenty are on their way throughout Egypt. But on their heels will come seven years of famine...*

*So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "You're the man for us. God has given you the inside story - no one is as qualified as you in experience and wisdom. From now on, you're in charge of my affairs; all my people will report to you. Only as king will I be over you."*

*... During the next seven years of plenty the land produced bumper crops. ... Then Egypt's seven good years came to an end and the seven years of famine arrived, just as Joseph had said. All countries experienced famine ... Soon the whole world was coming to buy supplies from Joseph (Genesis 41).*

Among them were his estranged siblings. Having had God resolve his anger toward them, Joseph said:

*"I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into Egypt. But don't feel badly, don't blame yourselves for selling me. God was behind it. ... God sent me on ahead to pave the way and make sure there was a remnant in the land, to save your lives in an amazing act of deliverance. So you see, it wasn't you who sent me here but God" (Genesis 45).*

*... Joseph's brothers talked among themselves: "What if Joseph is carrying a grudge and decides to pay us back for all the wrong we did him?" ... Then the brothers ... threw themselves on the ground before him and said, "We'll be your slaves." Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid. ... Don't you see, you planned evil against me but God used those same*

*plans for my good, as you see all around you right now - life for many people. Easy now, you have nothing to fear; I'll take care of you and your children" (Genesis 47).*

Joseph's life is an Imax journey from beloved son, to hated brother, slavery in Egypt, falsely accused and jailed (where prison became God's schoolhouse), called to rescue the nation, promoted to the #2 ruling position in the land, fully restored with his family, and an exemplar of God's "50/20 Law:" "You meant to hurt me, but God turned your evil into good" (Genesis 50:20).

Bill Pollard writes in *Serving Two Masters*, "Forgiveness is a needed virtue in all aspects of life ... To have an open environment that builds relationships of trust, people need to know there can be forgiveness even though the consequences of a mistake or failure must be dealt with and resolved. ...

"There is only one relationship I am aware of where forgiving and forgetting come together simultaneously. It occurs when a person chooses to have a relationship with God through the power and work of His Son Jesus Christ. When that occurs ... our sins and failures are not only forgiven but are forgotten by God who removes them as far as the east is from the west (1 John 1:9; Psalm 103:12). It is a miracle only God can perform. As He forgives, He forgets."

**DISCUSS: Is there anyone you should forgive or ask for forgiveness? How can you restore mutual trust?**

When disappointment comes, it's not what you feel that matters; it's what you know. And now you know these four truths:

**1-God loves you and the other person unconditionally.**

**2-God forgives AND forgets.** The most misunderstood Person to ever set foot on this planet said, with nails driven through His hands and feet, "Father, forgive them because they have no clue about what they're doing." Without forgiveness, bitterness always stalks.

**3-Bobb Biehl says, "You're God's student, not life's victim. Look for the 'life's lesson' in your disappointment."**

**4-It will all end well for Christ's followers.** (Check out this glimpse of heaven in Revelation 21: "{God will} wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death is gone for good -tears gone, crying gone, pain gone...Look! I'm making everything new.")

His Deal

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