

Finding Peace When I am Disappointed with God

Lesson 4 of 4 in the series: "Finding the Missing Peace"

A. We live in a fallen world where it's hard to find peace but easy to become disappointed with God.

"I have no peace, no quietness. I have no rest; only trouble comes." Job 3:26 (NLT)

"Don't call me Naomi (pleasant),' she responded. 'Instead, call me Mara (bitter), for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the Lord has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?" Ruth 1:20-21 (NLT)

"There was a man named Elkanah who... had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not. Each year Elkanah would travel to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of Heaven's Armies at the Tabernacle... Peninnah would taunt Hannah and make fun of her because the Lord had kept her from having children. Year after year it was the same—Peninnah would taunt Hannah as they went to the Tabernacle. Each time, Hannah would be reduced to tears and would not even eat."

1 Samuel 1:1-7 (NLT)

"I have had enough, Lord,' (Elijah) said. 'Take my life..." 1 Kings 19:4b (NLT)

B. We struggle to find peace because we don't understand why Almighty God allows so much pain and suffering in our lives.

"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away when I groan for help? Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer. Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief."

Psalms 22:1-2 (NLT)

1. When God doesn't do things the way we think He should, it's not because He is unable to do so but because He is carrying out His plans.

"I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.' From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do." Isaiah 46:9b-11 (NIV)

2. God doesn't explain all of His plans to us because they are too complex for us to grasp.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'" Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)

"...I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me." Job 42:3b (NLT)

3. God doesn't explain all of His plans to us because we grumble, stubbornly refuse to follow the plans He has already shown us, and blame Him when we suffer the consequences of our disobedience.

"And the Lord said to Moses, 'How long will these people treat me with contempt? Will they never believe me, even after all the miraculous signs I have done among them?" Numbers 14:11 (NLT)

Life Application: We don't need to understand God's plans to have peace; we just need to trust Him.

"You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!" Isaiah 26:3 (NLT)

"For we live by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV)

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Job 13:15a (NKJV)

"This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: 'Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. But you would have none of it.'" "

Isaiah 30:15 (NLT)

C. Three things we can do to find peace even when we are disappointed with God:

1. We can cry out to God.

"I cry out to the Lord; I plead for the Lord's mercy. I pour out my complaints before him and tell him all my troubles. When I am overwhelmed, you alone know the way I should turn... I look for someone to come and help me, but no one gives me a passing thought! No one will help me; no one cares a bit what happens to me. Then I pray to you, O Lord. I say, 'You are my place of refuge. You are all I really want in

life. Hear my cry, for I am very low. Rescue me... Bring me out of prison so I can thank you. The godly will crowd around me, for you are good to me.” Psalm 142:1-7 (NLT)

2. We can praise God even when we DON'T feel like it.

“Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name.” Hebrews 13:15 (NLT)

“Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NLT)

“Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ...No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.”

Romans 8:35,37 (NLT)

3. We can surrender our wills, our plans, and our understanding of how things ought to be.

“Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” Luke 22:42 (NLT)

“Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” Proverbs 19:21 (NIV)

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Connect Group Questions

1. “We don’t need to understand God’s plans to have peace; we just need to trust Him.” Is this kind of trust easy or difficult for you? (See Isaiah 26:3, Job 13:15, 2 Corinthians 5:17, & Isaiah 30:15)
2. People in the Bible went through times of deep disappointment with God.

- David (Psalm 22:1-2)
- Naomi (Ruth 1:20-21)
- Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1-7)
- Elijah (1 Kings 19:4)

Why do you think the Bible is so transparent about disappointment?

3. Are you currently dealing with disappointment? How can you trust that God has a purpose for your life even in the middle of a disappointment? (See Romans 8:28)
4. Why doesn’t God tell us all of His plans? (See Isaiah 55:8-9, Job 42:3, & Numbers 14:1-11)
5. Discuss the following things we can do to find peace even when we’re disappointed with God.

- We can cry out to God. (Psalm 142:1-7)
- We can praise God even when we DON'T feel like it. (Hebrews 13:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
- We can surrender our wills, our plans, and our understanding of how things ought to be. (Luke 22:42, Proverbs 19:21)

Which of these suggestions seems most difficult to you? Why?

6. Spend some time as a group encouraging each other and praying for each other. Be sure to begin your time in prayer with praise and thanksgiving.

Quotations to Consider

“...I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39 (NLT)

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Tell Aaron and his sons to bless the people of Israel with this special blessing: “May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace.” Whenever Aaron and his sons bless the people of Israel in my name, I myself will bless them.’” Numbers 6:22-27 (NLT)