

# We Can Overcome Disappointment, Failure, and Grief

Message 3 of 3 in the series: "With God's Help, We Can!"

## A. We live in a fallen world where everyone experiences disappointment, failure, and grief.

"For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up. **A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance.** A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. **A time to embrace and a time to turn away. A time to search and a time to quit searching.** A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak. **A time to love and a time to hate.** A time for war and a time for peace."  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (NLT)

"Then he said to the woman, '**I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy**, and in pain you will give birth. And **you will desire to control your husband**, but he will rule over you.' And to the man he said, 'Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, **the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.** It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. **For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.**'" Genesis 3:16-19 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** With God's help, we can overcome disappointment, failure, and grief. "Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. **But take heart, because I have overcome the world.**" John 16:33b (NLT)

"...for **everyone born of God overcomes the world.** This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4 (NIV)

"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)

## B. Three ways God helps us overcome disappointment, failure, and grief:

1. When we bring our disappointments, failures, and griefs to Jesus, He gives us rest for our souls.

"Then Jesus said, '**Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.** Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and **you will find rest for your souls.** For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.'" Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

"**The Lord is close to the brokenhearted**; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed."  
Psalm 34:18 (NLT)

"The Lord *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. **He restores my soul...**" Psalm 23:1-3a (NKJV)

**IMPORTANT!** The Lord understands our pain and sorrows better than we can possibly imagine.

"You keep track of all my sorrows. **You have collected all my tears in your bottle.** You have recorded each one in your book." Psalm 56:8 (NLT)

"He was despised and rejected—a **man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.** We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; **it was our sorrows that weighed him down.** And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!" Isaiah 53:3-4 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** We can talk to God even when we are confused, disappointed, or angry about how He's handling things. "O Lord, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way? **How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul**, with sorrow in my heart every day? How long will my enemy have the upper hand? Turn and answer me, O Lord my God!" Psalm 13:1-3a (NLT)

2. Because of our new life in Christ, our past disappointments, failures, and griefs DO NOT define us.

"...**anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person.** The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

**“Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.”**  
Philippians 3:13b-14 (NLT)

“And I am certain that **God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work** until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.” Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

3. God can and does use failures, disappointments, and grief for good.

“And we know that **God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God** and are called according to his purpose for them.” Romans 8:28 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** The price of spiritual maturity is pain. “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that **the testing of your faith produces perseverance**. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be **mature and complete**, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4 (NIV)

**IMPORTANT!** In the future, we will view many things that deeply disappoint us now as providential blessings. “The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. **Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand.**” Psalm 37:23-24 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** God comforts us in our troubles so we can bring comfort to others. “All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. **He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others**. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NLT)

*Note:* We don’t have to say all the right words to bring comfort to others because we aren’t trying to eliminate their sorrow. We’re offering to share it. “When three of Job’s friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him... When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. **No one said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was too great for words.**” Job 2:11a & 12-13 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** God uses disappointments, failures, and grief to remind us that this world is not our home. “For this world is not our permanent home; **we are looking forward to a home yet to come.**”  
Hebrews 13:14 (NLT)

“I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, ‘Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. **He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.**’ And the one sitting on the throne said, ‘Look, I am making everything new!’ And then he said to me, ‘Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.’” Revelation 21:3-5 (NLT)

“For **our present troubles are small and won’t last very long**. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!” 2 Corinthians 4:17 (NLT)

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### Connect Group Questions:

1. Describe a time when you were deeply disappointed with the way God was handling your life. What did you say to Him? Is it OK for believers to tell God that we are angry/hurt/frustrated with Him? (Psalm 13)
2. What does it look like when Jesus gives us rest for our souls? (Matthew 11:28-30, Psalm 23:1-3 & 34:18) Have you experienced this?
3. Do you see yourself as an overcomer of the disappointments, failures, and grief in this world? (John 16:33, 1 John 5:4, Romans 8:35-37) If not, how does someone become an “overcomer”?
4. Discuss the following quotation from Joseph Bayly’s book, *A View from the Hearse*. He and his wife, Mary Lou, lost three of their children: one son following surgery when he was only 18 days old, another son who died at age five from leukemia, and a third son who died at age 18 in a sledding accident. “I was sitting, torn by grief. Someone came and talked to me of God’s dealings, of why it happened, of hope beyond the grave. He talked constantly; he said things I knew were true. I was unmoved except to wish he’d go away. He

finally did. Another came and sat beside me. He just sat beside me for an hour and more, listened when I said something, answered briefly, prayed simply, left. I was moved. I was comforted. I hated to see him go.” How can ordinary people bring comfort to a grieving/hurting friend? (Job 2:11-13, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

5. Discuss the following statements:

- Because of our new life in Christ, our past disappointments, failures, and griefs DO NOT define us. (2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 1:6 & 3:13-14)
- The price of spiritual maturity is pain. (James 1:2-4)
- In the future, we will view many things that deeply disappoint us now as providential blessings from the Lord. (Psalm 37:23-24)
- God uses disappointments, failures, and grief to remind us that this world is not our home. (Hebrews 13:14, Revelation 21:3-5)