

What Do You Do When Things Don't Work Out The Way You Want?

There are different levels of disappointment in life. Many are temporary with no long-term effects on our lives. Some are deeper and take longer to get over. Then there are those which are hard to cope with and linger for a long time. A long-term illness, betrayal by a close friend, dealing with death tends to be in the later category.

In 1 Samuel 15 and 16 we see Samuel the prophet mourning over God's rejection of King Saul. "Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons." (1 Samuel 16:1) Let me give you four things to do "When things don't work out the way you want."

Don't spend too much time regretting what you did or didn't do. Perhaps Samuel was blaming himself for not being a better father to his two sons. It was due to his son's disobedience and lack of reverence for God, that the men of Israel asked for a king. Or maybe Samuel was thinking he could have done something more for Saul that would have made a difference. Paul spoke of his personal battles with sin in Romans 7. We can all relate to Paul in he regretted somethings he did and somethings he shouldn't have done. I have to think one of the things Paul regretted was his persecution of Christians. Most of us are like Paul in this regard. While Paul remember his failures, he did not wallow in them. "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead" (Philippians 3:13) We have to learn the same lesson. Sin needs to be was away by the blood of Christ, Acts 22.16. Sometimes we as Christians need to repent and confess our sins to God, 1 John 1.7. But once forgiven we must leave them behind.

We have to go onward. "Fill your horn with oil, and go" (1 Samuel 16.1b) God had more for Samuel to do than live in the past. He was to go and anoint the next King of Israel! We can not change the past, nor can we stop time and

remain where we are at this minute, we must go and fill our horn with oil and go. After a funeral we have to go back to work, take care of our families, and serve God. Ultimately, we are to “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12.13).

Things aren't so bad they cannot be worse. That was a favorite saying of our mom. There were times I doubted the truthfulness of that statement but she was right. Even in bad times there are still blessings to be thankful for. In this dark hour, Samuel was being called to go to the house of Jesse and anoint another king, a better king. "And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'" (Acts 13:22) The worst thing that can happen to us is to be lost, separated from God for eternity, Matthew 25.41, 46. We can change that by obeying the Gospel of Christ. All other disappointments will be meaningless if we go to heaven.

Finally, realize you are still loved. God still loved the people of Israel and was still working to fulfill His covenant with them. When we read of Jesus leaving heaven to come here to live, we see God's love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) When we read of Jesus' death on the cross, we see the terribleness of sin. When we read of Jesus' resurrection and the Gospel being preached on the Day of Pentecost, we understand the power and preciousness of His blood. "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18-19)

God created us to have a relationship with Him. This life is to prepare us for the Judgment Day. Our eternity awaits. We don't want to be disappointed as we stand before God. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6) – Dennis Tucker