

## Dealing with Disappointment

By T. Sean Sullivan

Our most important relationship is with our Creator—God. It is our created purpose to seek this relationship (Acts 17:26-27). However, our Creator understands our need for relationships with our fellow human beings. From the beginning God has seen the need for mankind to not be alone (Gen. 2:18). These relationships can be very rewarding. God gave us marriage (Gen. 2:21-24); He provides for family (Eph. 6:1-4); He spoke often of friendship (Prov. 18:24); and He also provides us with the relationship of brotherhood in Christ (Rom. 12:9-15).

These relationships can also be very painful. Human relationships are based on trust and on occasion that trust is betrayed. This is a possibility of our experience here and we need to know what to do and how to get past this disappointment. The greatest danger in this disappointment is being distracted from our faith. Let's seek God's advice about dealing with disappointment in others. Having become disappointed, what can we do?

### Evaluate

We must evaluate the focus of the conflict. Is the focus of the problem doctrinal? We must not take doctrinal discussions to carnal levels (Eph. 6:12). We do not need to be wrestling in the parking lot over matters of doctrine—there are better ways of establishing God's truth (2Tim. 3:16-17). There is a simple rule we need to know: If two disagree, one can be right and the other wrong or the both are wrong--both cannot be right. God is always right and God must be the standard of all resolution (2Tim. 2:15). Remembering always in all things that we must never concede truth to find peace (James 3:17).

Perhaps the focus of the problem is personal; maybe it is like the conflict between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:39. Sometimes, with these non-doctrinal conflicts some space is required—temporarily, for later resolution. We must let wisdom prevail and we can pursue peace with time.

There are a couple of situations to consider in personal problems—not all of them are easy and only need some time. There are times when it is something that you can “just let go”—we are told that love covers a multitude of sins in 1Peter 4:8. Other times though, it is such as to endanger the other's soul. If so, we need to help them come to correction (Jude 23).

### Communicate

The greatest strain on any relationship is a lack of communication. When communication dies, suspicions begin to live—whenever knowledge is absent imagination shows up to fill in the gaps. How often have you thought you knew what someone else was thinking—or what their motivations were? These are dangerous ideas that we have imagined and we cannot know, until we directly communicate. We must attempt communication. If we have determined that this is a problem wherein their soul will be lost we must not “let it go”.

We must do so properly. We must initiate the proper procedure (Matthew 18:15-17). Taking this one step at a time: Step one: Go to your brother (privately) (vs. 15). You do not tell your spouse, your elders, your other friends, or your favorite Uncle Wilburton. This privacy is to hopefully find resolve without character damage.

Step two—if step one fails: Take objective witnesses (vs. 16). To ensure your understanding and the other side also. To further admonish the erring one's return to the Lord.

Step three—if step two fails: Tell the church (vs. 17). This is where we all get actively involved to help—not to gossip. We all are responsible to do our part to admonish the erring one.

Step four—we must withdraw fellowship from them. This is to shake them up and wake them up (2Thes. 3:14).

#### Refocus

It is hard to deal with betrayal of trust. For some it is too much and they begin to reject more important things in their life. We must be careful not to elevate the problems of this temporary life to conflict with our faith and our hope of Heaven (Rom. 8:18).

People will from time-to-time disappoint us—for various reasons. God will always be true—we need to take on the maturity of this knowledge. Sometimes we tend to paint with a wide brush. Even Christians will succumb to weakness. When a Christian fails and sins, they are not representing every Christian or what Christians are all about. God's way is perfect—we must not confuse our weakness with His plan being flawed. We need to refocus in prayer: for the erring, for all our brethren, and for self (1Thes. 5:17-18); in service: getting busy serving is the best way to heal and move on (Rom. 12:1-2); and in faith: trusting that God will provide if we do not lose faith (Matt. 6:25-33).

#### Conclusion

As long as we live, we have hope. Pray for those who disappoint us in this life. Pray that they will be reunited with God—so they can be reunited with us. It is hard to go through betrayal but our vulnerability is what makes the other side of our relationships worthwhile. Bees can sting—however the sweetness of the honey makes the risk worthwhile. We would never know true friendship, companionship, or love without opening ourselves up to others. Know that God will help you through whatever life deals you (Phil. 4:11-13).

What is your relationship to God? Are you saved? The opportunity is yours today. Do not let any temporary things stop you from having everlasting life—obey today!

#### Sting

“So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1Cor. 15:54-57).

A boy and his father were traveling in a car when a bee flew in through the open window. The boy was so highly allergic to bee stings that both he and his father knew that his life was in danger. As the boy frantically jumped around trying to avoid the agitated bee, the father calmly reached out and grabbed the bee with his hand and killed it. The father took the bee sting so that his son would not be hurt.

Likewise, Jesus took the sting of death for us. We gain the victory through Him. Let us strive to overcome as He did.

## A Moments Wisdom

He that cannot obey, cannot command.

Leaders don't create followers, they create more leaders.

Both optimists and pessimists contribute to our society. The optimist invents the airplane and the pessimist the parachute.

If penicillin can come out of moldy bread, then something good can come out of me.

I have friends in overalls whose friendship I would not swap for the favor of the kings of the world.

Those who treat politics and morality as separate matters will never understand the one or the other.

No man can climb out beyond the limitations of his own character.

Television is an appliance which changes children from irresistible forces into immovable objects.

The primary danger of the television screen lies not so much in the behavior it produces as the behavior it prevents... the talks, the games, the family activities, and the arguments through which much of the child's learning takes place and his character is formed.