

WHEN PEOPLE DISAPPOINT YOU

Big Idea

This week is Thanksgiving, a time when family and friends gather. Strained relationships can be on our minds. At this time of year it is good to be reminded that we need to have a realistic understanding of people:

1. People will let you down, so stop wishing they won't.
2. People can't meet your needs, so stop wishing they will.

People are going to disappoint us! That is just the nature of being human; but, we must guard against four dangerous reactions to relational disappointments: 1. Hard heart; 2. Proudful spirit; 3. Justified sin; 4. Revengeful attitude.

How are we to deal with relational disappointments? Scripture tells us in Proverbs 19:11 (NIV), "A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to **overlook an offense**." So there are two characteristics that we need to **ask God to help us** to develop:

1. God help me to live with tougher skin.
2. God, help me to love with a tender heart.

Scripture

- **1 Corinthians 4:12-13 (NIV)**
...When we are cursed, **we bless**; when we are persecuted, **we endure it**; when we are slandered, **we answer kindly**...
- **Luke 23:34 (NIV)**
Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'
- **Ezekiel 36:26 (NIV)**
I will give you a **new heart** and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your **heart of stone** and give you a **heart of flesh**.

Discussion Questions

- Can you recall a time when you thought God had perfected in you the ability to overlook offenses/being misunderstood/being disappointed by others – only to have an unexpected reaction to an offense, or being misunderstood, or being disappointed by others? Why do you think that happened?
- Consider reactions in your past when you were offended, misunderstood or were disappointed by others. Can you share a time when you felt that your reaction may have caused someone to question your relationship to the Lord?
- Consider the concepts of emotional maturity and emotional intelligence. How did Jesus' respond to offenses, being misunderstood, or being disappointed by the actions of those around him? What were His behaviors that we might model?

Prayer Focus

Heavenly Father, as we gather with friends and family throughout this holiday season, help us to understand that you can give us the needed grace to deal with difficult individuals. Help us to see the hurts in in their lives and our lives that might be contributing to strained relationships. Please, help us to find ways to humble ourselves and show your love to those who may have offended us or been offended by us, misunderstood us or been misunderstood by us, disappointed us or been disappointed by us.

Next Steps

This week, prayerfully consider how you might be sensitive to those around you so that you can make a difference in their lives for eternity. Think about the upcoming December 10 & 11 Legacy Offering, and ask God to show you what your part should be.

Leader Tip

Consider the effect of your words and actions towards those in your Life Group. Ask the Lord to help you to be sensitive to the work He is doing in their lives, and intentionally build up each other in the faith. Be an encourager to those in your Life Group – they are individuals whom God is allowing you to influence. Think about how contagious that influence can be in this culture!