

Week 8, 8/19/18
What She Said!
Thursday

The Origins of Relational Disappointment **Ellen Dykas – Guest Writer**

Today's Treasure

*Satisfy us in the morning with Your steadfast love,
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*
Psalm 90:14

Escape. Vacation. Getting away from it ALL! Life sometimes feels like too much, doesn't it? I mean, the pressures of ministry, financial burdens, health trials and tough relationships can tempt me to a) dream up a fantasy career (that will be easy and allow me to be a financially stable stay-at-home-single), or b) COMPLAIN.

Jesus promised something that is difficult to accept: that in this life we'll have trials, disappointments and pain (John 16:33). Relational trials and disappointments are the most painful for me. Health trials scare me and financial stress can lead to anxiety. But stress in key relationships? Deep disappointment by someone? Those can really break my heart.

What leads to disappointment in our relationships?

Disappointment is a common human experience because of sin. The ravages of the fall have left sin's mark on everything and everyone. Our desires don't align with God's will perfectly. Our expectations usually aren't purely anchored in God. Our relationships aren't satisfying and if we're honest, we often don't wake up singing joyfully, "Satisfy me with yourself O God!"

It helps me, when facing disappointment in a relationship to consider from where it is coming. In other words, what leads to me experiencing someone not loving me, or being there, listening, caring, knowing, pursuing me, etc., in the ways I want? Consider these for yourself.

1. *Are your desires and expectations off-track from the gospel? Are you living out of a 'me-centered' or 'other-centered' focus that has pushed Jesus out of His rightful place? Some people live in consistent hurt and anger because people aren't*

responding to them the way they want. God says “The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.” (Proverbs 29:25)

2. *Is it possible that this person is oblivious or unable to love you as you desire?* Sometimes people just have no clue what our desires are because we’ve not communicated clearly. Perhaps we’ve feared vulnerability, or pride has kept us from honestly expressing a need.

I have many relationships, which have become “technology-mediated”. We send texts, voice recordings and videos back and forth rather than having an actual conversation. It is wonderful in one way, because this quick style communication has allowed me to stay in touch with people in ways I couldn’t before.

Sometimes though, I feel sad, and unpursued when all I’m getting from someone is a text, rather than a phone call. One friend had no idea that her flood of texts did not communicate love to me, but rather distance. I needed to have an honest conversation with her about my desire to actually talk, voice to voice! Thankfully she responded gently and lovingly. But the reality is that in her current season of life, she is *unable* to have frequent phone or Skype-dates with me. I’ve needed to accept this and not manipulate or demand.

People can be *unable* to love us the way we want, due to their own brokenness. They just don’t have it ‘in them’ to reciprocate or relate to us deeply.

3. *Finally, is God stepping in-between you and this person?* This can be hard to swallow, but it has brought peace to my troubled, craving heart to accept that God does cause space to be between me and certain people. A man I wanted to marry. A friend from whom I wanted more attention. A ministry leader I longed to know and spend time with. Disappointment, was God’s appointment for me, and probably for these people as well, for reasons I may never know. Trusting God and resting in Him helps me in the not-knowing.

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

God is up to something bigger in our lives than we can understand, and when we face disappointment in a relationship, we can choose to trust in Him, or trust in ourselves. We really can wake up asking God to satisfy us with His unfailing love, and to grow us in wisdom for discerning where the seeds of disappointment are in our hearts.

