



Love, Dates & Heartbreaks: When Dreams Can't Come True

We've acknowledged that success is usually the result of preparation— not the product of good intentions. But what happens when all of our preparation seems futile, when it becomes clear that our dreams may not come true? The stories of many of the men and women who first followed Jesus remind us that a broken heart does not necessarily mean that we are broken. Instead, it offers an opportunity to acknowledge our inability to predict the future and manipulate its outcomes. It's a perfect place to surrender to the God who is actually in control; to lean in, look up, and reach out.

Start Talking

1. What's the craziest dream you had about your life as a little kid?
2. If you had to choose a single season to live within year-round, which would it be?
3. If it was up to you, when would the Pumpkin Spice Lattes become available each year?

Looking Back

1. Last week, we discussed Paul's idea that Christians should offer their lives as, "living sacrifices." What did you rearrange in your life this past week in pursuit of that goal? How did it go?
2. Did you identify any areas of your relationships where you were, "conforming to the pattern of the world?" What did you do to break those habits?
3. What beliefs about relationships did you seek to renew or transform? How is it going?

What About You?

1. Do you put pressure on yourself to "achieve" relationship goals by a certain date?
2. How do you deal with the disappointment when/if it doesn't happen?
3. What is the most difficult dream you've had to deal with not coming true?
4. Do you ever find yourself tempted to believe that if you do the right things, God will reward you by granting your desires?
5. Where do we get this idea? What's wrong with it?



6. What do you find most difficult or painful about the process of dealing with dreams that didn't come true?
7. Do you think we have control over the outcomes in our lives in the first place? Why or why not?

Look It Up

Read the Following Passages: Luke 1:38, 22:42. John 3:27. 1 Samuel 21: 8–9. 2 Samuel 15: 23–27, 29–30.

1. What dreams had to die in order for Mary to embrace her role as the mother of Jesus? What do you notice about her reaction to the new reality she found herself in?
2. What temptations do you imagine John the Baptist faced as he realized that his days on Earth were coming to an end? What do you think it takes to access John's ability to peacefully accept his lot?
3. How did Jesus respond to God in the hours leading up to his crucifixion? What does this tell us about how we can respond to suffering?
4. Early on in his life, David was certainly unafraid to seize control and take action in order to get his way. How did his reaction to the rebellion of his son Absalom represent a change in his character? What was different about him?
5. What do each of these people have in common in their situations? In their responses to their situations?

Putting It All Together

1. Are there any areas of your life where you are tempted to let fear or disappointment take over and cause you to fight for control? What are they? In what situations is the temptation strongest?
2. What would it take for you to be able to trust that, "a person can only receive what is given them from heaven," and say, "your will be done, God, do with me as you see fit?"
3. How can you prepare to take this posture towards disappointment even when things are going well?
4. Is it still worthwhile to express our desires to God, even while admitting that our desires aren't God's primary decision-making criteria?
5. What can you do this week to be more honest with God about your desires?
6. Would you be bold enough this week to offer those desires, dreams, and plans to God and invite Him to do with them as he sees fit?

