

**Definition of Expectation:**

1. a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future.
2. a belief that someone will or should achieve something.

Oxford dictionary phrases it this way: Seek to prevent disappointment by establishing in advance what can realistically be achieved or delivered by a project, undertaking, course of action, etc.

The Oxford dictionary highlights the phrase “what can *realistically* be achieved” which is why we often talk about “unrealistic” expectations- because it is an expectation beyond what we can meet.

**What are some of the expectations we hear? How do we experience these expectations?**

-Expectations of our church:

-Expectations of our families (parents/spouses/children):

-Expectations of others (friends/ employers/ communities):

-Expectations of ourselves:

It is true that we all have needs, and it is true that we are called to be the hands and feet of God in meeting the needs of those around us. Expectations, while they feel heavy and overwhelming

are not the problem. It is what we do with them, how we respond to them, that becomes the problem.

We only see two options with expectations: -fulfill them or fail to fulfill them.

**Fulfilling expectations:**

- What happens when we meet expectations? How to others react? How do we feel?

How do we feel about ourselves?

-What happens when we do not meet expectations? How do others react? How do we feel? How do we feel about ourselves?

-What are the messages we either hear or tell ourselves when we succeed or fail?

Here is the point. Expectations become harmful, bad and destructive when our identity and sense of worth are tied to them. We become good if we meet them and bad if we don't. This makes us slaves to expectations.

**How did Jesus handle expectation?**

Matthew 14: 14-21. Jesus had compassion on the crowds, healed and then fed them.

Mark 1:35-38. He withdrew to pray and even left town despite the fact people were looking for him/expecting him to perform miracles.

John 11: 1-44. He delayed meeting the expectations of Mary and Martha. He did not rebuke Mary and Martha, he was moved with compassion for them, he gently corrected and taught them more about who he was. He was moved with compassion for them but his identity was not tied to their happiness.

**Our responsibility is not to meet the expectations of all that is around us.**

- What is something good that can come from NOT meeting expectations?
  
- What is something bad that can come from MEETING expectations?

The expectations that we carry become like rocks that tie us down. They can be crushing to our souls. The expectations become the measure by which we judge ourselves worthy to be called daughters of God. But this is not our reality. The happiness of others, the success of our performance does not define our reality before God. Who we are is defined by God and He calls us “beloved daughters”, “heirs”, “chosen”, “perfect in Christ”.

**We have a choice.** Expectations are not going to disappear or go away. Our goal is not to be unaffected by the needs we see around us. However, we have a choice with what we are going to do with them. We can choose to pick them up and chain ourselves to the approval of others, or even our own internal approval, or we can lay them at the cross and give them over to God. This is the call of Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gently and lowly in heart, and

you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light". Come daughters of God, hand your burdens over to the Father who wants to give you rest.