

When the Sting of Discouragement Bears Down on You

What do we do with disappointment? Something doesn't turn out at all like we hoped, and then we feel the sting of discouragement.

We know God has a plan for our lives; we just didn't think it would look like this. But what if we stopped looking at disappointment as a bully and started seeing it as a friend? I reframed disappointment after some serious soul-searching and honest prayer. It changed the way I viewed the bully I had come to loathe. We can make disappointment work for us when we see that God is at work for us.

What is the point in disappointment? Disappointment becomes a friend when we see it as a sign that points to ...

God's Instruction. Disappointment points to places we have misplaced expectations. God wants us to place our hope fully in Him. In Exodus 5, Moses expressed his frustration that despite his obedience, God's people remained in slavery. Rather than look to Pharaoh for deliverance, God wanted Moses to trust in Him. In the following chapters, God gives Moses clear instructions that change the course of Israel's destiny. God listened to Moses, and He listens to us. In the safety of God's presence, mourn your disappointment, release your expectations and listen for His instruction. *The point: Where have I placed my hope?*

God's Protection. Disappointment points to places God protected us from things that weren't His will. We can unwittingly hope for something that God never intended. A closed door may be God's providential protection. Throughout Paul's missionary journeys, God closed doors not as a sign of

rejection but as a sign of protection. Begin to thank God for ways He protected you from things that could have hurt you far worse than the sting of disappointment. *The point: What is He trying to protect me from?*

God's Redirection. Disappointment points to places God wants to move us in a different direction. The book of Ruth shares the story of a woman who lost her husband and moved to a foreign country with her bitter mother-in-law. She could never have imagined the blessing on the other side of brokenness. Don't become stuck in the bitterness of disappointment. Embrace redirection as a sign of God's favor. *The point: In what way do I need You to redirect my life?*

We don't have to lose the battle with the school-yard bully of emotions. We can live "guard down, hopes up" when we see the point in disappointment. Ask God to help you reframe disappointment and inflate your hope. {eo}

Excerpted from Angela Donadio's devotional Astounded: Encountering God in Everyday Moments.