

When You Don't Win

Ahhhhh, cake walks. The anticipation of maybe, just maybe, hearing your number called and getting to choose the cake of your dreams.

I actually remember one particular cake walk from sometime when I was in elementary school. I won! I walked over to the table and chose the cake I had had my eye on all night: a sheet cake decorated in myriad colors with the word "Mexico" and all kinds of squiggles and designs. That. cake. was. beautiful!

Recently, my children participated in a cake walk at a party. Timmy became discouraged the first few times he didn't hear his number called, so I picked him up and walked around with him. I held him for several rounds, and as time went by, and most of the other kids won cakes, Timmy began quietly fussing (read: whining). I reminded him that it's not possible to win all the time and reassured him that he still had a chance.

And then ... victory on number 19!

By this point, Timmy was hanging his head and fussing continuously. "You won, Timmy!" I exclaimed. He continued to whine. "Timmy, you won!" I repeated. More whining.

I began to walk away from the game, toward the prize table, because I was embarrassed. Did he not understand that he had won? What was the problem?

"Timmy, why are you fussing?" I asked quietly. "You won!"

"I wanted to win lots of times," Timmy said, disappointed.

My first thought was: Be grateful you won at all!

My second thought was: Yeah, I understand, buddy. I hate it when I don't win as often as I'd like.

Like in life. I know it's not realistic to expect to get what I want all the time. But I'd like to. And sometimes, when I don't, I get disappointed.

Here are some recent times I can remember not getting what I wanted:

- My child embarrassed me in public.
- I tried to learn a particular skill, and it didn't turn out well at all.
- I didn't receive an invitation I was hoping for.
- Someone assumed the worst about my character.

These are not the only unpleasant things I've faced in the past few weeks; there have also been some that were traumatic.

But in the same time period, I've also encountered these circumstances:

- My child spent time drawing a sweet picture for me and telling me how much she loved me.
- I received a compliment from a student who enjoys my teaching style.
- I was invited to have lunch with a friend.
- Several family members went out of their way to verbally affirm their confidence in my character and their love for me.

So, I have a choice. I can complain that I had to face the first set of circumstances, or I can rejoice that I experienced the second.

It's the same choice you have when you're disappointed.

Grieve if you need to; it's OK!

But don't forget the good things.

Job 1:21 says, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath

taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (KJV).

*Adapted from **Megan Breedlove's** blog, Manna for Moms. Megan is the author of Well Done, Good and Faithful Mommy and Manna for Moms: God's Provision for Your Hair-Raising, Miracle-Filled Mothering Adventure (Regal Books.) She is also a stay-at-home mom with 5 children.*