

# The Discipline of Disappointment

by Denis Lyle

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*The sermon explores how to navigate the discipline of disappointment through faith and trust in God's greater plans.*

**Scripture:** 1 Chronicles 16:37

**Topics:** "Trust In God", "Sovereignty Of God"

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## Description

Denis Lyle preaches about handling disappointment when God says 'NO' to our plans and dreams, using the story of David's desire to build a house for God as an example. Despite David's holy resolve to build a house for the Lord out of love and gratitude, God responded negatively to his proposal, redirecting the task to David's son, Solomon. Through this, God showed that His 'NO' can lead to a better plan and a superlative response, fulfilling promises beyond expectations. David's humble reaction to God's denial involved reflecting in God's presence, resting on God's promises, and readjusting to God's purpose, teaching us to trust in God's goodness and sovereignty even in disappointment.

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## Transcript

Try and visualise the following scenes in your mind. Scene number 1: A young girl sits in a lonely room thinking of the circumstances that have recently come to pass. Plans had been formulated for a wedding with the boy of her dreams but seemingly out of nowhere, conflicts arose and there will be no wedding. Scene number 2: For years a man has worked hard and performed his job well. Climbing the ladder of success has not been easy. Finally, the opportunity has come for which he has been waiting.

The position he has always wanted has become available. But although he is in line for the promotion a kid right out of University nudges him aside and shatters his dreams. Scene number 3: The waiting room in the Doctor's clinic has been filled with fears: tension, and questions. The name is called and a young couple nervously walk through the door to hear the results of the test. At the Marriage Altar they expected a full, rich, happy life to be theirs. Then a lump appeared. Sitting down the Doctor confirms their worst fears.

Within six these two would say goodbye. Literally, thousands of similar scenes could be played out before our eyes. One common thread weaves its way throughout the fabric of these stories. God has said "NO", to their plans and dreams. All of us know what it means to have our dreams shattered and our plans changed. Sometimes disappointment so crushes a person that he is emotionally handicapped for life. And yet there are people who rise above the broken dreams and live in victory.

David had BIG DREAMS! His dreams revolved around doing something great for God who had been so good to him. David even got tentative approval from God's spokesman, but his hopes were dashed against the breakers of God's will. You see sometimes in His wisdom and love God permits the fond hopes of His people to be dashed to the ground. Today we are going to look at a time when God stamped the box of David's dreams with a bold black NO! How did David handle it How do you handle God's discipline of Disappointment I want you to notice that the story in (2 Samuel 7) opens with: (1) A HOLY RESOLVE Can you picture this scene The kingdom had been united.

Jerusalem had been taken. The Philistines had been defeated. David sat in a beautiful new palace that was built for him by Hiram King of Tyre (5:11) He considered the goodness of God in giving him rest from his enemies (7:1) He recalled the joy he and his kingdom had just enjoyed as the ARK was brought to its new home in Jerusalem (6:17) Then the thought struck him, "Here I sit in a luxurious home while the ARK rests in that drab tent, God deserves better." My, the plan begins to formulate.

David proposed to build a House for God. This was HIS HOLY RESOLVE. Now there seems to be a number of elements in this resolve or decision. There was: (a) A PRACTICAL ELEMENT: David's concern for a House for the Lord was to some extent dictated by circumstances. The Ark of the Lord had been brought to Jerusalem and David had appointed certain Levites "to minister before the ark continually." (1 Chron 16:37) It was at this time there was set up a Plan of Temple service which operated until after the time of Christ when Herod's Temple was destroyed. (1 Chron 23:1) What was happening was this.

An immense body of men were gathering around the Ark, thousands of them all of whom needed accommodation, and this no doubt moved David to make such a decision but I'm certain he had deeper and purer motives. For there was: (b) A DEVOTIONAL ELEMENT: Here. You see here is young man under 40 years of age whose heart is full to overflowing with love to the Lord. (5:5) When David thinks of all that God has done for him he pours out his heart in adoring gratitude to the Lord. Later on in this passage we find him sitting in the Lord's presence saying, "Who am I, O Lord God and what is my house that Thou hast brought me hitherto" (7:18) Whatever rest: prosperity, blessings David enjoyed he ascribed not to his own skill and power but to God's hand on his life.

Now in the light of that he desires to show his love and gratitude by building a House for the Lord. My, do you ever sit in the presence of the Lord and ponder His blessings to you Can you not testify that God's love has surrounded you: God's grace has sustained you: God's hand has strengthened you and in the light of that are you prepared to say, "Here am I Lord I gave myself unreservedly to you!" Is it not the "mercies of God", that Paul uses as a basis for his appeal to the saints at Rome He says, "I beseech you... mercies of God." (Rom 12:1) My, what have you "rendered unto the Lord for all His benefits toward you" (Ps 116:12) (c) SPIRITUAL ELEMENT: Look at (7:2) Now since Nathan was God's spokesman David decided to bounce a new idea off him.

"Nathan, I'm troubled that I have a nicer house than the Ark does". (7:2) Now implied in that statement was that a new majestic home should be provided for the Ark of God. To David it was a principle: he would not do less for God than he would do for himself. He would not do for the House of God less than he would do for his own house. My, it was unthinkable to him that the symbol of the Presence of God, the Ark of the Covenant, should still have only the trappings of Israel's long-past nomadic existence. (1 Chron 16:1) So David determined to do something about it.

Now I wonder are we as spiritual in heart as David was Here he was disturbed by the fact that he lived in a LUXURIOUS HOME while the ARK was placed in a TENT. You see a tent was the lodging place of a nomad. And a nomad was the lowest and least significant member in the social structure of the Hebrew people. Surely thought David the Ark was worthy of a permanent building. Now do you ever think like that Are we ever convicted between what we spend on our homes and what we give to God's cause Is there a striking contrast between what we spend on ourselves and what we offer to the Lord Between what we spend on our families and what we give to the work of the Lord My, the problem that they faced in Haggai's day is one of the greatest problems we face today.

Do you know what it is SELFISHNESS! (Haggai 1:4) No money: time: energy for the work of the Lord but money: time: energy for ourselves: our homes: our families Ill: "To do less for God than you do for yourself shows where your heart is." Here then was David's RESOLVE! As a Servant he wished to honour his Master: as a Saint he wished to glorify his God: as a Steward he wished to dedicate his possessions to the Lord. He wanted to Build a House for the Lord! (1) (2) A HEAVENLY RESPONSE Have you ever stuck your foot in your mouth Leaves a bad taste doesn't it Ask Nathan!

For that night as Nathan lay down to sleep God spoke to him. (7:4) Nathan realised that he had spoken to soon. Now he would have to face David and admit that he had been wrong. You see while man Proposes, God Disposes! How did God handle David's proposal Well, notice: (a) GOD RESPONDS NEGATIVELY: Look at (7:5) In the parallel passage in (1 Chron 17:4) we read, "Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in". God's refusal to let David build a House for the Ark was based on 4 reasons: (1) No Precedent had been established. (5:6) God had never dwelt in a permanent building only a tent. (2) No Request had been made by God for such a Building. (7:7) These plans were David's initiative not God's. (3) No Man of War could build this house.

For this was to be a House of Peace. (1 Chron 22:8 28:3) (4) No Safety for the Ark could yet be assured since Jerusalem was not completely fortified against her enemies. (1 Kings 5:3-4) Now all of this makes sense unless its your idea that has just been shot down. Now there was nothing wrong with David's dream: his motives were pure: his intentions were well-pleasing to God (2 Chron 6:8) but he was not the RIGHT MAN to carry out the job. God wanted a man of peace to build His House.

I wonder has something like this ever happened in your life Has God ever shattered your dreams Has the Lord ever said NO to one of your goals Has He ever come to you with a Negative Has God crossed out your plans Going to the Mission Field... Entering the Lord's Work... Marrying a certain believer who walked close to the Saviour Or was it perhaps that in your heart you had a very real dream of a home and children But the years have slipped by, and God has said, " NO". My, the Lord's mysterious NO is hard to handle but if you really believe that God loves you, wants the best for you... if you trust Him with your life He will show you the better plan He has for you.

You see the Lord did not stop with a NEGATIVE for: (b) GOD RESPONDS POSITIVELY: Look at (7:12-13) God said to David, "Solomon thy son he shall build My house and My courts". (1 Chron 28:6) You see David's dream after all would be realised his project would be fulfilled. The Temple would be built. Initially, his plans had been cancelled, now they are to carried out in splendour. My, when God says " NO", He has a better way. He never intends to frustrate or disillusion us. God only wants to show us something better.

I wonder what the Lord is saying to you this... You see in His will and wisdom God is able to accomplish your plans and fulfil your dreams. Oh, He may do it without your aid or assistance. He may choose to use another instrument entirely. Not David but Solomon was to build the Temple. So (a)(b) (c) GOD RESPONDS SUPERLATIVELY: In a word beyond our expectations. You see rather than David building a House for God, God promised to build a House for David. David wanted to build God a house of stone, but God was to build David a royal house, a family that would reign on his throne.

In essence God said, "Don't be disappointed. Look how far you have come. From Shepherd to Sovereign. From leading a flock of sheep to leading God's people. (7:8) And haven't you enjoyed My Presence with you over the years as we have walked through the valleys and up to the mountains Didn't I help you conquer all your enemies Now you sit as undisputed King in Jerusalem. Your name has become great. Are you still disappointed" But My, God did not stop there. The curtain of time was folded back and the prospects were awesome.

PROPHETICALLY, this is known as the Davidic Covenant and its important to notice that 5 promises were made to David and Israel. (1) A Promise of Residency: "May dwell ..". (7:10) (2) A Promise of Security: "Neither... "(7:10) (3) A Promise of Posterity: "I... seed... "(7:11-12) This clearly has reference to David's physical descendants for David's line would always be the royal line. (4) A Promise of Authority: "I... throne". (7:13) David's throne was to be established forever. (5) A Promise of Perpetuity: "And ... house "(7:16) The ultimate fulfilment of these promises is in Jesus Christ. (Lk 3:31) Do you recall the message of the angel to Mary "And the Lord God shall gave unto Him (Christ) the throne of His father David". (Lk 1:32) And it is our conviction that Christ will fulfil this Davidic Covenant when He sits on David's throne and rules during the Millennial Kingdom.

Prophetically, here is God's future programme for Israel but Practically is this now what God does for us Not only does He bring to pass the desires of our hearts, but often in His grace and goodness towards us he adds the "superabundance of His generosity". He "does exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think". (Eph 3:20) My, are you experiencing the Discipline of Disappointment Has God said NO to you recently Are you now discovering that He is providing a better way " Disappointment...

His appointment Change one letter, then I see That the thwarting of my purpose Is God's better choice for me. Disappointment... His appointment No good thing will He withhold From denials oft we gather Treasures of His love untold." Now how have you handled broken dreams When God said "NO", to you, how have you responded David's response to God's NO was godly, gracious and full of trust. For not only we see here (1) (2) but: (3) A HUMBLE REACTION How did David react Did he become bitter in heart Did he argue and protest Did he blame God Did he pout or pray Did he sulk or seek There's a beautiful phrase in (7:18) David: (a) REFLECTED IN GOD'S PRESENCE: The word "sat", means to "tarry/linger".

He was not in a hurry. He searched for appropriate words. My, the promises had not bloated him they humbled. Look at his expressions, "Who am I... "(7:18) "What is my house... "(7:18) "What can David say more unto thee... "(7:20) Is this not how we should approach God When David heard of all that God had done for Him in the PAST: and all that God would do for him in the FUTURE: he was overwhelmed. There was no complaint because his desire had been refused, but humility as he reflected on the Goodness of God.

My, has God said NO to you Then before you turn away, before there creeps into your life some bitterness: just sit down before the Lord and think about His Goodness to you! Thats what David did. He

(a) and then David: (b) RESTED ON GOD'S PROMISES: For as he faced God's denial he was brought to a place where he began to claim the promises of God for himself. (7:25) Whatever you need this... there is a promise in God's Word which will exactly meet it. Do you need PEACE The Lord Jesus says, "My peace I give unto you". (Jn 14:26) Do you need GUIDANCE God says, "I will instruct...

"(Ps 32:8) Do you need GRACE The Lord says, " My grace .. "(2 Cor 12:9) You see when God says NO to your dream He wants to teach you that every need of your soul can be met by His precious promises. David (a) (b) and then he: (c) READJUSTED TO GOD'S PURPOSE: III: "Fight the will of God and it will break you: accept the will of God and it will make you". David knows now that its God's Purpose that Solomon build the Temple (7:13) but this did not prevent David from gathering the materials.

He says: "I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God". (1 Chron 29:2 22:4 2 Sam 24:24) My, disappointments are not only opportunities for MATURITY, but they are also opportunities for MINISTRY. Can I ask: what have you been doing in the years since God's NO came to you Have you been Idle or Involved Have you been giving of your substance to forward the work of the Lord Have you been enlisting others to serve in God's vineyard (1 Chron 22:15) My, if you cannot build you can gather the materials: if you cannot go you can send someone else.

If God has said NO to you, then will you help someone else fill that place on which you had set your heart The Discipline of Disappointment! Are you presently experiencing it Has God recently said NO to you Then be alert for God may be about to give you something better.

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