

Published based on [The Crucible of Deep Disappointment](#)

The Crucible of Deep Disappointment



On December 4, 2010, my husband and I watched Auburn play South Carolina in the college football SEC championship game. Since I am a huge University of Alabama fan, just watching the game was a reminder of my deep disappointment that Bama was not playing instead of Auburn. However, after touching base with my personal counselor and getting some therapy, I was able to work through my feelings and watch the game anyway (just kidding!).

Auburn was favored to win, yet the game was not too one-sided until the third quarter at which time Auburn began to blow South Carolina out of the water. When the score became Auburn 35, South Carolina 14, anyone watching could almost tangibly feel South Carolina become hopeless. There was a definite turning point when disillusionment overcame South Carolina. And just in case you don't know, the final score was Auburn 56, South Carolina 17, and I offer my congrats to Auburn.

I began to ponder this idea that there is a point at which disillusionment and disappointment become overwhelming. A point at which hopelessness sets in. A point at which we feel that we are being crushed as in a crucible.

The writer of Proverbs puts it this way: Hope deferred makes the heart sick. (Proverbs 13:12).

The Message gives us this rendition, "Unrelenting disappointment leaves you heartsick."

If you have lived long enough, you have probably experienced this feeling. Heartsickness. Hopelessness. Disillusionment. Despair. Deep disappointment.

Sometimes this deep disappointment is in our own self. At other times, it is in other people, and if we are truthful, at times it is even with God Himself.

What leads us to such a place of desperation and how do we move through and past it? Following are a few of my thoughts on what leads us into deep despair.

1. Unfulfilled expectations. We have many expectations in our relationships. Many of them are unspoken and often, unconscious, but when they are unmet, we feel it. I think of Jesus' disciples who expected the awesome exhilarating ride of his ministry to end with him setting up an earthly kingdom. Certainly they experienced overwhelming disillusionment and discouragement as they watched him die on the cross and be buried.

2. Sin and its consequences lead us to despair, whether our or sin committed against us such as betrayal and broken trust.

3. Unmet needs, whether physical, financial, or emotional.

4. Pain and suffering.

How can we move beyond despair, disillusion, and disappointment? Here are some principles that I have found to help.

1. Find strength from the Word of God and His Spirit.

2. Look for the handiwork of God in it. I admit that sometimes it is almost impossible to see where God is in desperate times. Yet God has redemptive purposes in every situation. Pain and suffering open us up to carry more of God's heart and His ever expanding plans.

3. Stay connected to people who care. During difficult seasons of our lives, we need the loving care of others to help us. Even as I say that, I know that some of you are crying, "But I don't have anyone who cares!" I so long for that to not be true for anyone! I have stopped and prayed for you at the moment I am writing this.

4. Be kind to your own heart. Sometimes we are pretty tough on ourselves, believing that we should be "doing better", and while self-pity can certainly creep in, there is an appropriate measure of kindness that we can give ourselves. The truth is that some days, weeks, months, and even years are just plain ole difficult. One honest look at the Bible gives plenty of examples of God's people going through difficulty.

5. Resist the "quick fix" mentality. While my heart wishes that I could make all your problems disappear immediately, I know that much of the deep work of God in my own life has come during the darkness, the trials, and times of suffering. None of us would wish to stay in tough times, but if you find yourself there, know that God is faithful and if He has chosen not to deliver you immediately, He will walk with you as you travel through the valley.

6. Be honest. Honestly offering God your anger, doubts, fears, and even complaints, is, well, HONEST. God is honest. He can work with your honesty. Acting “religious” and pretending that we are not struggling is not helpful. God is bigger than our doubts and struggles. He is committed to working ALL things together for our good.

7. Know that much of the life of faith is unseen, unknown, and takes us down paths where we’ve never traveled before. The writer of Hebrews tells us that faith is the evidence of things not seen.

8. Hang onto the prophetic glimpses that you have been given into your future. When Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden, God gave them prophetic hope for the future. When Joseph was in prison, I believe he held onto the prophetic dreams that God had given him years before. Many times we have glimpses into what we believe God has shown us for our future. We often misinterpret those prophetic glimpses. They become increasingly clear over time.

If you find yourself unable to believe, read the Word, or offer any prayer to God, He is still on the throne. He is still able to do more than you can imagine. He is able to carry you when you have nothing left. I’ve been there before. I can testify to you that it all did not depend upon me and my strength. God is strong, loving, committed, faithful, and is not offended by our despair. He often brings us to the end of ourselves in order to reveal Himself as the true lover of our very soul. The crucible of discouragement brings us to the core of who we are and what we believe about who God is, and it is in that place that true transformation can occur.

You can also find this article published on [The Crucible of Deep Disappointment](#), and on the tag pages [despair](#), [disappointment](#), [discouragement](#), [Hebrews](#), [Proverbs 13:12](#).