

My hopes and disappointments open my heart to God's blessings

A meditation by Marie Paul Curley, fsp

"I can't bear to be disappointed!"

As a child I learned not to set my heart on anything for fear of being disappointed. I have since tried to open myself to anticipation, sometimes successfully. Vacation is one of the things that I let myself build up hopes for—I am rarely disappointed.

A couple of years ago, I managed to juggle the gaps in my own various commitments and a friend's crowded schedule to arrange a week of vacation together at a rarely-available beach house. Several days beforehand, my friend suddenly cancelled on me. I was angry, hurt, and bitterly disappointed, especially since it was impossible to reschedule.

Disappointment is difficult for me because it's so painful to accept that I can't have what I counted on. And the many other feelings that accompany disappointment—such as anger, sadness, betrayal, and hopelessness—make disappointment even harder to handle.

I know now that squelching hope isn't the answer because it denies the goodness of life and closes me to unexpected joys. But I'm still tempted at times to avoid hoping, just so I won't have to bear the pain of disappointment.



From God's Heart to Yours

“Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you... If you...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Lk 11:9-13)

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Hidden in the Darkness

Having needs and desires is a part of being human; sharing them with another is an act of trust in the one we share them with. Jesus encourages us to trust God with our wants and needs, because God delights in providing for us.

But just as we can be disappointed by something or someone we trust, we can also feel disappointed by God. We have all had the experience of praying for something and not receiving it. One way we can react to our disappointment is to doubt that we are worth listening to. We can even twist the words of Jesus to “prove” that God isn’t listening to our prayers: we asked God for something and we didn’t receive it.

Going deeper into Jesus’ words, we realize that Jesus doesn’t promise that we will receive exactly what we ask for. Rather, Jesus promises that we will receive something—and if it’s not what we asked for, it will be even better—the gift of the Spirit of God. We have every reason to hope!

God continually provides for us far beyond anything we could hope for: we just need to have eyes and hearts open to receive God’s blessings. When we deny our hopes and desires out of fear of feeling the honest pain of disappointment, we may become closed or sour, not ready to accept the unexpected gifts that God wants to give us.

The anger and hurt that accompany disappointment may be hard to cope with initially, but we don’t want to close ourselves off completely from the hope that our desires will be fulfilled. Hope makes us receptive. Unfulfilled longings can remind us that we are incomplete by ourselves, that we need God. When we are aware of our emptiness, we have room to receive the surprises God wants to give us.

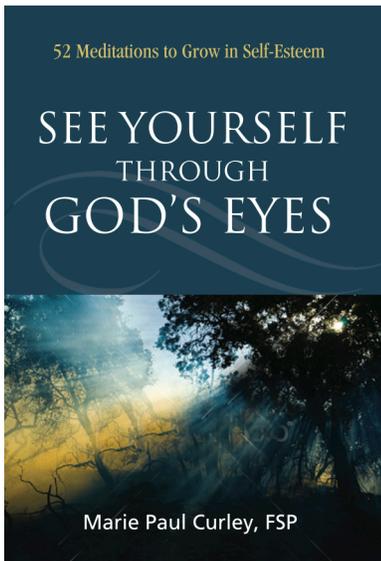


Through the Day

Lord, I wait on you to fulfill my deepest desires.

This sample meditation is an excerpt from Part 2 of the book, *See Yourself Through God's Eyes: 52 Meditations to Grow in Self-Esteem* by Sr. Marie Paul Curley, fsp.

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Using meditations, Scripture passages, stories, and prayers, *Sr. Marie Paul Curley* offers a way to develop a personal relationship with God and to discover God's unconditional love for us. Sr. Marie Paul writes from her own experience, creating a guide to fostering healthy self-esteem and a sense of personal affirmation for even the busiest reader.

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