

Turning Frustration into Godly Challenge

Rescue Mission ministry provides a regular opportunity for frustration! Those who wish to stay the course must figure out how to utilize frustration in a positive way. As humans, we have the ability to have expectations of people and places, and often those expectations, when not met, result in an opportunity for frustration.

One of the first ways I work through my frustrations is humbly remembering how frustrated God could be with me. Do you ever wonder what His expectations might be of you and the ministry He has given you? Our calling is not to do our own work, but His. He has the great advantage of seeing ahead and knowing what advantage might come from the disappointments of the day. His perspective seems always to be one of change and growth for His representatives. The starting point to conquer pitfalls of frustration is to see things from God's perspective. What might He want to be accomplishing in me, or others, as we deal with the frustration?

Consider Jesus and the times when He showed frustration. He desired more of those around Him. Sometimes He allowed His frustration to turn into righteous anger when He saw obvious rebellious sin (Mark 11:15). We will experience frustration and righteous anger when those we have been working with seem to take detours. Can we experience frustration and still love? Do we use our momentary frustration to address needed change?

At times, frustration can be born out of a wrong sense of the value of experiencing failure. If I am afraid of failure for myself, it is hard to let others fail for the benefit of their own growth. If I am frustrated because of my many failures, perhaps I should begin to appreciate that failures merely send me in another direction that could lead to success. This might allow me then to also see others' failures as an opportunity for redirection.

Another source of frustration comes when I look to other things or people instead of God as the source of accomplishment. I am trying to do things in my own strength (Psalm 127:1a) or the strength of others (Psalm 20:7,8).

"And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Corinthians 3:4,5 (KJV)).

Frustration can be an indication that I am moving into a prideful thought pattern. I might think I could do something better than the others around me. Although that may be true, I must be careful to allow others to learn their own way.

My frustration may often be linked to my own desire to be in control. Coming to terms with the fact that I cannot control other people or circumstances, allows me to move toward that faith-building lifestyle of dependence on God. It is hard to stay frustrated when we know that God is in control and is doing what is best for us.

One very difficult challenge is when a client you have been working with messes up. The temptation to make a client's failure my own is too often front and center. Steve Burger, well known for his years of working in Rescue Ministry and leading the International Union of Gospel Missions, shares this encouragement:

"When a client fails, we look at what we may not have done or what we feel we should have done. But we do not "wear it." We will always make some mistakes. Remember, everything you do, you do unto Jesus. Take it to Him and leave it there. The sun always comes up tomorrow! Keep that in mind when everything is seemingly going wrong!" - Steve Burger

*One definition of frustration is
"A feeling of disappointment or defeat at being unable to accomplish one's
purpose."*

When should I be frustrated? To whatever degree frustration causes discontent in my soul regarding lack of growth in me or in another, there can be motivation to correct the situation.

Hopefully, frustration leads me to action. Sometimes that action is prayer. What must not be the result is impulsive reaction. Am I looking at the desired outcome or just focusing on the obstacles?

Romans 8:25 "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

2 Peter 1:6 (A list of qualities that we want but cannot achieve on our own...Let the Lord do this through you...in His way and in His time).

Galatians 6:9 "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."

- G** Give Everything to God.
- E** Earnestly Seek His Wisdom.
- T** Train Yourself to Apply His Wisdom.

- R** Recognize the Emotion in You.
- E** Evaluate the Emotion: Am I justified or is it a selfish emotion?
- A** Address It: Deal with Self, Others, or Things in a Godly Way.
- L** Leave It: Once the problem has been corrected, it is done. It does not need to be emotionally brought up anymore.

- Cord Cochran