

The Challenge of Expectations

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Introduction: We need God's wisdom to know how to live this life.

- A. God has given us minds with a great capacity to learn and live life wisely. **(Prov 1:7)**
 - 1. Our minds can also be easily deceived to the point we create our own "reality."
 - 2. Truly our lives can be described as a battle for the mind. **(Prov 4:23)**
 - 3. We are battling a capable adversary who can take our minds away. **(Jn 8:43-44)**
- B. When we put justice and mercy as a priority we then will be testing our own thoughts and motives on the basis of truth. **(Hos 2:19; 12:6; Mt 23:23)**
 - 1. Have you ever been denied "justice?" Why is this challenging?
 - 2. Why do we need to receive "mercy?" How many judge with no mercy?
 - 3. If we do not build a doctrinal core based upon these principles, then we can easily become unmercifully angry with others. How many have become: "judge, jury and executioner?"

I. The danger of false expectations of God

A. Many "reason" like Ted Turner:

"Turner mentioned that he was raised in a God-fearing family and had a sister who was ill. Her illness progressed; she became critical. He prayed desperately the Lord would spare her life and make her well. She died. Then Ted told the audience that from then on he knew, even as a kid, there was no God up there. What kind of loving God would have allowed his sister to suffer and die?"

- 1. Why not carefully examine this question rather than emotionally writing off the existence of God?
- 2. Asaph, the Psalmist, was tempted to think like this until He turned his mind to how God works in this world! **(Ps 73:11-17)**
- B. Many rejected Jesus because of false expectations about the Messiah.
 - 1. Jesus came to rule in the hearts of men and not as a political leader succeeding in carnal warfare!
 - 2. Jesus knew that He was "popular" with men like this! **(Jn 2:23-25)**
 - 3. These that praised Him so highly were quick to abandon Him when their false expectations were not met. (Ex. New preacher at church)
- C. Jesus true followers also had false expectations. They were able to overcome them.
 - 1. They did not believe it was possible for Jesus to die. Judas likely also believed this! **(Lk 9:44-45)**
 - 2. It is better to learn from God's word before you place so much on false expectations and suffer for it. Jesus worked with His disciples on this. **(Jn 15:19-21; 16:1-3)**
 - 3. A good heart will seek God's light and learn from failure. **(Lk 7:20-23)**
 - 4. Satan uses disappointment to drive people deeper into darkness.
- D. What are some common false expectations with God?
 - 1. Many are like Naaman. **(2 Kgs 5:9-13)**
 - 2. God will allow the shallow-minded to stumble. God will not submit to the proud man who makes demands of Him. **(1 Cor 1:22-23)**

II. The danger of false expectations of God's people

A. God's people are not perfect but they are growing. People are not to be the focus of your faith.

1. Some people preach themselves! They will disappoint others. **(2 Cor 4:3-5)**
2. God wants you to build a doctrinal core in His Son!
3. A woman who knew who Jesus was and knew what she dearly needed from Jesus would not be turned away! **(Mt 15:22-27)**
4. Peter, while possibly confused, knew where he wanted to be while many others turned away from Jesus. **(Jn 6:66-68)**
5. How do you react to hypocrites in the church? What false expectations cause some to quit? **(Rom 3:4)**

B. Some have false expectations of the assembly.

1. Many are taught that all teaching must be "positive" and those that plainly rebuke in public teaching are "negative." **(2 Tim 4:1-4)**
2. Those with a doctrinal core understand that proper teaching with create pain in those are walking in darkness. They preach in love in light of the judgment.
3. In recent years the strongest reactions I have received from contrasting God's plan of salvation with denominationalism has come from my brethren!
(Ex. Reaction to the book "Muscle and a Shovel.")

C. False expectations in marriage must be overcome!

Unspoken, half-hidden expectations about married life put wives and husbands to the test in the Realization stage. These "rules" form in childhood and our teen years as we watch our parents' marriages and absorb silent imperatives about the roles of husbands and wives from society; from our cultural and religious affiliations; and from TV shows, movies, and books. Previous romances and even friendships further shape our expectations. And at a deeper level, we often believe our spouses will somehow intuit and heal our deepest psychic wounds.

1. It is very difficult to work with others with false expectations when there is a lack of communication, mercy and justice!
2. God's love and mercy for us teaches us how to communicate and serve.
(1 Pt 3:7-9)

III. How to overcome false expectations

A. Make an absolute commitment to knowing God and seeing yourself as God sees you.

1. When we become a Christian our hearts have been opened and changed.
(Heb 4:12-13)
2. We learn to value ourselves by what God has done and is doing in us.
(Eph 3:17; Col 2:6-7)
3. Many have to overcome difficult backgrounds. Consider the struggle of children raised in alcoholic homes. They have low expectations of themselves and others. They often rapidly discard relationships as they "live down" to these expectations. Correction is feared and those who try are discarded.

B. Build a doctrinal core that you will not forsake regardless of emotion. **(Eph 4:13-15)**

1. Build relationships with people like this.
2. Do not forsake them!

Conclusion: Our God will bless all who humbly keep seeking Him and His ways!