

Frustration

Have you been frustrated about something, or are you currently? You are not alone. Maybe you are frustrated about your job because you have been due for a raise or promotion and it's not forthcoming. Maybe you have prayed for a change in your child for many years, but things are still the same and even sometimes worse. Or you thought your marriage should have been heaven on earth, but all you see is trouble. Frustration arises when there is a delay or perceived resistance to the fulfillment of our desires or goals. Uncurbed frustration will lead to discouragement and doubt.

In Numbers 21:4, the children of Israel were frustrated and became discouraged because of the journey. For nearly forty years, Israel had been itching to enter this land flowing with milk and honey, and they were so close. But the Edomites denied them passage through their land. This, of course, would have shortened their journey and expedited their entrance into the Promised Land; instead, they had to go around the land of Edom, and the souls of the people became dejected. They reverted to their familiar way of venting their frustration by murmuring and complaining. "*Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?*" (Exodus 14:11, 17:3; Numbers 11:20, 14:2, 20:4, 21:5).

Since none of us is immune to frustration, what should we do when it comes?

1. Calm down: The Bible says, "*Be still, and know that I am God*" (Psalm 46:10). Sometimes frustration comes when we focus on ourselves. Remember, joy comes when you put Jesus first, others second, and yourself last.
2. Wait on the Lord: Psalm 37:7 says, "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him." The LORD said in Jeremiah 1:12, "I am watching over My word to perform it." God planned your life, and He will bring it to pass at His appointed time, but you must wait patiently.
3. Pray: Go to the throne of grace in prayer because there you will obtain mercy and find grace (Hebrews 4:16). Grace gives you empowerment to deal with every situation.
4. Submit: Yield to the Holy Spirit as He guides you: do not lean on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6).
5. Give thanks to God: Believe that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Scripture says, "*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Doubt:

If you do not get rid of frustration, it will lead to doubt. Israel doubted God's protection and provision. Had they forgotten so quickly who parted the Red Sea before them? While they walked safely through the sea, their enemies perished! Or who rained down manna freely for

them to feed? How about the water that came out of the rock at Meribah? How about the victories over their enemies, who outnumbered them and probably had better weapons? How about the ten plagues of Egypt, and how they were set free from Egyptian slavery? Who did all these things for them? Didn't they remember that it was the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the true and living God? And if they were to perish in the wilderness, would He have asked them to leave Egypt?

However, before we point accusing fingers, we must look into our own lives and see where we sometimes doubt because of delays. How about when you are embarking on a journey and doubts fill your mind about whether you will be safe? Have you forgotten that the God who keeps you does not sleep nor slumber? Or have you feared that your business was going under, forgetting that God who gave you success in the past years doesn't change? Has doubt come into your heart when you see the ministry you labored over not growing according to your expectations? Is God not the One who gives the increase? The apostle Paul said, *"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase"* (1 Corinthians 3:6). Has doubt set in that your children will not turn out the way you have trained them? How about Isaiah 54:13, where God promised, *"All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children"*? Or regarding your health, how about God's word to you that says, *"I am the LORD who heals you"* (Exodus 15:26); and also, His promise, *"For I will restore health to you"* (Jeremiah 30:17)? If you are going through several afflictions, remember Psalm 34:19, *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all,"* and Hebrews 13:5, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

Dealing with Doubt:

I believe the only One who ever walked this planet without an iota of doubt was Jesus Christ. We all have doubts at some point, but we must promptly get rid of them. Rev. Billy Graham said, "You cannot prevent a bird from flying over your head, but you can prevent it from making a nest on your head." It is our responsibility to cast out doubts from our minds.

Even John the Baptist, whom Jesus described in Matthew 11:11 as the greatest born of women, had doubts. He sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask Him if He was the Messiah to come or if they should still be expecting someone else. Remember, John had baptized Jesus at the River Jordan; he had seen the heavens open, and the Spirit of God descend like a dove to light upon Jesus, and heard a voice from heaven saying, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17). And in John 1:29, it was the same John the Baptist who said, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* So, what happened? At this time, John was imprisoned by Herod because he criticized him for marrying his brother's wife. John had been chosen by God for the ministry of preparing the way before the Lord Jesus but had barely started when he was thrown into prison.

This, of course, had to be frustrating to John and make him wonder if Jesus was really the One to deliver Israel. What was Jesus' response? *"Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them"* (Luke 7:22). Why did Jesus not respond directly by saying,

“Yes, I am the One,” but instead refer him to Scriptures about what the prophets said concerning Him (Isaiah 35:5-6)? I believe Jesus is teaching us here that when we are in doubt, we should turn to the Word of God.

What can we learn from John’s approach to doubts?

1. Talk to Jesus through your prayers, and the Holy Spirit who lives in you will guide you.
2. Go back to His Word, the Bible, and if you are still not clear, talk to a minister or an elder in Christ.