

“Dream, Discern, Disappoint, Appoint, Do Your Part”

1 Thessalonians 5:12-24

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PART 1 – Dream and Discern, vv. 19-22

Parenting can be really hard sometimes. And I have to confess that as we’re getting to know our children, there may be times that we are tempted to put you into a box.



Perhaps there is something that we excelled in as a kid and we want you to excel in that, too, and so we try to put you in the *Be Like Me* box. Or maybe there is something that we were really not good at as a kid – or that we didn’t get to do ... and we want you to have every opportunity to do what we didn’t do well, or didn’t get to do and we put you in the *Don’t Be Like Me* box. Or maybe you are louder than the other kids and we really don’t want people to call you bossy or obnoxious and so we tell you to tone it down. Or maybe you are quieter than the other kids and we really don’t want you to be left out and so we tell you to speak up.

As important a role as we have as parents to coach you and to help you take good steps forward in life, there are times that we come dangerously close to quenching your spirits. Sometimes, we even crush your spirits, even though we don’t set out to. And so we need this word from the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 5. Do not quench the Spirit.

We must be careful not to quench or crush or stifle or put in a box your small ‘s’ spirits, because through you and in you in the very ways that God created you, God is revealing his capital ‘S’ Spirit and when we put you in a box, we may be – unwittingly – putting God in a box. Putting the Spirit in a box.

On our best days, as your parents, Sunday school teachers, mentors, prayer partners, friends, we want to see you for who God created you to be... we want to see your 😊 true colours.



We want to hear what you have to say and what you believe. We want to know how you feel and what your deepest desires are.

And as that emerges, we – all of us – are partners with you in doing two things: First of all, we will discern along with you what comes through you that is of God... cuz not all of it is, of course, from any of us... no matter our age and maturity... Paul writes (Message translation): “don’t be gullible. Check out everything, and keep only what’s good. Throw out anything tainted with evil.”

And secondly, not only do we not quench the Holy Spirit in you, we do what Paul wrote to Timothy about – we fan into flame the gift of God which is in you (1 Timothy 1:6)! Dream your dreams! See your visions! Be who God created you to be!

PART 2 – Disappoint and appoint, vv. 15-18

If you were here last week, you heard me say that sometimes we like to believe the lie that if we are in Christ, nothing bad will ever happen to us. Wrong. Not true.



Isaiah 43 says, *When you go through fire and flood... I will be with you.* Another lie we like to believe is that if we are in the church, everyone is going to be nice to each other all the time. Wrong. Not true. We are going to wrong each other. Or, as Peterson translates it, we are going to get on each other's nerves. *When you get on each other's nerves*, he writes... This is going to happen. We will wrong each other. We will hurt each other.

A couple weeks ago, I mentioned it in passing, but I'm going to mention it again... Nadia Bolz Weber, a Lutheran pastor who planted a church called, "House for All Sinners and Saints", said in a podcast that people avoid community because people are disappointing. She said,

By being in community, we take turns being the ones who are disappointing... You know, maybe it's that guy's turn to be disappointing, but next week it'll be me. So it's that culture of turn-taking when it comes to being the ones who need grace, or who are giving grace, or who remind each other that grace is a thing. That's why I think communities that are set up, like, here are the designated helpers and the healthy people, and here are the designated problem people. That's BS. Everybody's both.¹

We are all sinners in need of grace. We are all going to take turns disappointing one another, we are all going to get on each other's nerves. That's what families do. "*When you get on each other's nerves*, don't snap at each other. Look for the best in each other, and always do

¹ <http://everythinghappens.libsyn.com/the-insight-of-outsiders-0>

your best to bring it out.” When you wrong one another, don’t return wrong for wrong. When you disappoint someone, apologize. In so far as you are able, ask for the impact that your behaviour had on the other person. Listen to that impact. Ask for forgiveness. And then move on, looking for the best in the other.

I was doing a little thinking about the word, disappoint. There are two meanings to this word. If I disappoint you, I might have failed to meet your expectations. OR – if I dis-appoint you, I might remove you from the appointment or the status or the rank that you had (image of Samuel dis-appointing Saul as king). Dis. Appoint. If you disappoint me, you either have frustrated my expectations. OR – you could dis-appoint me... removing me from the appointment or status or rank that I once had.

So, I did that fun little word origin thing to simply say – though there will be disappointment in this place in the way we usually mean it (I will disappoint you, you will disappoint me... we’ll even be disappointed in God and imagine that God is disappointed with us), we are never dis-appointed from our status as children of God – children of the King - who have been called and appointed to a task – a task of being a disciple – a task of being an active part of a Christian community...



You are APPOINTED. a task – a call to Rejoice always – this is your appointment. A call to pray continually – this is your appointment. A call to give thanks in all circumstances... this is your appointment, this is God’s WILL for you in Christ Jesus.

PART 3 – Doing Our Part, vv. 12-13

There are going to be times, not only that each of us is going to be disappointing, in general, but that we are going to be disappointing specifically by being idle or disruptive (as it says in the NIV) , by freeloading or straggling. In those times, we need the community around us to coach us, to admonish us, if necessary, to guide us into deeper obedience, to encourage one another to do our part. There are ways that we can do this with one another that are shame-inducing – and we want to steer clear of that... but there are also ways that we can do this (this coaching, encouraging, etc.) for one another that are inspiring – gently encouraging. We can spur one another on to doing our part through love and good works (Hebrews 10:24) by sharing our stories of service. When you share stories of what God is doing in you and through you, I am motivated to join in.

We can spur one another on to doing our part through love and good works by recognizing that our life together is infused with grace.... Being attentive to each one's individual needs... That we are not meant to all be working at full speed all the time, but that there are rhythms here—rhythms of work and rest... periods of heavy responsibility and lighter responsibility... Times when we deliberately increase the tension and times when we celebrate how far we've come... Times when we comfort the afflicted and times when we let the Spirit afflict us in our comfort. Times when certain gifts are needed for certain tasks, and then other times when other gifts are needed for other tasks.

We also spur one another on to love and good works when we express to one another our gratitude for what someone else does. “And now friends, we ask you to honour those leaders who work so hard for you... Overwhelm them with appreciation and love.”

It is that spirit of gratitude that is one of the fires of this service today... (volunteer appreciation, leading to ordination of deacons)