

July 23, 2018  
By Ken Korkow

## WHEN OTHERS DO NOT MEET OUR EXPECTATIONS

Do you ever get disappointed with someone? Frustrated? Or angry?

Some time ago I was trying to help a man in midst of great personal struggles. His once-successful business was a mess. His checks were bouncing and he had many creditors coming after him. His marriage was ending. And topping it off, he had just failed an alcohol and chemical abuse rehabilitation program, and was now in the hospital because of his “binge” drinking.

We had been meeting for months, but increasingly it seemed like the time had been a poor investment on my part. I was mad at him – and mad at myself – because my “best efforts” were not resulting in any visible or positive impact. Why would this guy not listen to the wisdom I had to offer to him?

I was trying to teach him, convinced that if he would stop resisting, my counsel could help in turning his life around. Then, in the midst of my “teaching,” he taught me. He provided an important, very valuable life lesson when he said:

"If your happiness is dependent upon your ability to get someone to meet your level of expectations, then you are destined to a life of unhappiness."

Wow! Even with all of his problems, this friend had briefly become the teacher and I the student. This insight is one I have never forgotten, and it has made a profound difference in how I approach others as I seek to counsel, mentor and point them to a better life – ultimately, one guided by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Article from CBMC International**

Distributed to and For Use by Members of **CBMC Hong Kong Ltd:**

Room 905, Nathan Center, 580G-K, Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong

TEL.: (852) 2805 1923 Fax (852)3747 6218 ▪ E-MAIL: enquiry@CBMC.org.hk

To support CBMC HK Vision, please download Offering Form <http://www.cbmc.org.hk/images/download/online-offer.pdf>

What about you? Can you relate to this situation I experienced? What is the source of your happiness and/or unhappiness? Is it dependent on other people, especially to meet your level of expectations for them? As my troubled yet wise friend observed, people will always fail us in meeting the expectations we create for them.

But if you have fallen into this trap, don't feel badly. You have lots of company, including important biblical personalities. In the 15th chapter of the book of Acts, we read the apostle Paul and his mentor, Barnabas, had a falling out over Barnabas's nephew, Mark, also called John. Because Mark had abandoned them on an earlier missionary expedition, Paul had decided he was not a faithful man and should not rejoin them on future travels. Mark had clearly not met Paul's expectations.

Barnabas, however, saw potential in his young relative. Going counter to popular opinion – as he had with Saul (Paul) after his conversion many years earlier – Barnabas determined to stay with Mark and encourage him in his spiritual journey. Years later, Paul makes no mention of Barnabas but writes to his protégé, Timothy, *“Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry” (2 Timothy 4:11)*. Not only that, but this Mark is credited with being the author of the gospel of Mark.

This teaches us two things: First, even when people do fail to meet our expectations for them, this does not mean God is finished working with them. Perhaps we have done all we can do in their lives, and the Lord will bring others alongside to help them move farther along in their personal journey. And second, our expectations should not be in people, but in God alone. As *Nehemiah 8:10 tells us, “...Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!”*

*Ken Korkow lives in Omaha, Nebraska, U.S.A., where he serves as an area director for CBMC. This is adapted from his “Fax of Life” column. Used with permission.*

**Article from CBMC International**

Distributed to and For Use by Members of **CBMC Hong Kong Ltd:**

Room 905, Nathan Center, 580G-K, Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong

TEL.: (852) 2805 1923 Fax (852)3747 6218 ▪ E-MAIL: enquiry@CBMC.org.hk

To support CBMC HK Vision, please download Offering Form <http://www.cbmc.org.hk/images/download/online-offer.pdf>

## Reflection/Discussion Question

1. How did you answer the question – have you ever been disappointed with someone, frustrated or angry because they did not meet your expectations? Describe a situation like that and how you reacted to them.
2. Can you remember a time when you failed to meet someone else's expectations? What was your response – did that make you feel badly, or did you fault them for expecting too much of you?
3. Do you agree with the statement that if our happiness is dependent upon our ability to get someone to meet our level of expectations, then we are destined to a life of unhappiness? Why or why not?
4. What are your thoughts about the final statement, that instead of expecting others to be the source of your happiness, “the joy of the Lord is your strength”?

## NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

*Psalm 100:1-5; Philippians 1:3-11, 4:4,8-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4*

**Article from CBMC International**

Distributed to and For Use by Members of **CBMC Hong Kong Ltd:**

Room 905, Nathan Center, 580G-K, Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong  
TEL.: (852) 2805 1923 Fax (852)3747 6218 ▪ E-MAIL: enquiry@CBMC.org.hk

To support CBMC HK Vision, please download Offering Form <http://www.cbmc.org.hk/images/download/online-offer.pdf>