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# 1 SAMUEL 16:1-7

1 Samuel Series

Let's take a moment now and I want to pray as we get ready for this word from the Lord that He's given to me this week and that you're about to hear. I'm excited to share it with you. So let's take moment and come before Him.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I want to thank you for the events of our weeks. For some it's been more challenging than others, so coming to this service provides us with an opportunity to renew our relationship with you – for some to get reacquainted with that relationship, others just to dedicate themselves to you, but all of us to drop off some of the other stuff around us and focus on you for a few minutes in a way that will prepare us to handle the challenges of this upcoming week. Lord, we come before you humbly, knowing that we're in need. We come and ask you to guide us and lead us and to train us this morning as we look at your word. In Jesus' name, amen.

God spoke to me this week and I'm excited to share with you what He shared with me. But it wasn't the way I had anticipated. I was really eager to start this passage in 1 Samuel 16. As you know, we've now come to the place where we start the story of David. I've been looking forward to this ever since we started the book. We look at the book of 1 Samuel and we're going to come to David and his life. He's the guy that ends up being the hero who kills Goliath. He's the one who is raised up at a young age. He's the one who's trained by the Lord to do these great things. He's the one who fails with Bathsheba or he's the one who has problems with his son Absalom. But in the midst of all of that, he has a heart that's after God. So I'm really looking forward to teaching more about David.

But I got into 1 Samuel 16 and verse 1 just hit me right in the face. I stopped there because God spoke to me in this passage in 1 Samuel 16:1. I'm going to look at this with you because there's a Samuel lesson here that all of us need in our lives. Every one of us needs this lesson. So I'm learning about it this week and I expect you'll be learning it as well.

Look at verse 1 of 1 Samuel 16. *The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."*

As I started reading that I see the Lord is challenging Samuel because he's mourning maybe too long. He's saying get up and go anoint. You've got more work to do. So I'm thinking in my own life that there are some times when we find ourselves challenged because we're struggling with the same thing Samuel dealt with.

Look at Samuel's life for a moment. Up to this point we see that God raised him from a boy. He's speaking to him as a young child. He grows up and he's now the prophet for the land of Israel. God says, "I'm going to have you anoint Saul." So Samuel invests all this energy into Saul and it's just this special thing because now Israel has this new king. But Saul continually makes mistakes, and God now in the last chapter removes the kingdom from Saul. Samuel is discouraged by this. In fact the Bible tells us that all night (maybe you've experienced this when you're just disappointed in something) he wasn't able to sleep. He just wrestled with the Lord all night. Early in the morning he confronted Saul and then we know the kingdom was taken away from Saul.

But now it seems that he'd been disappointed too long. What I mean by that is he went to his town of disappointment and he lived there too long and he needed to move to the next place. He was stuck where he was and this line had been crossed now in his life where He's saying you've been here too long. You've got to do something else. You've got people to anoint and you're stuck with disappointment.

So I spent my week thinking more about disappointment. How do we handle disappointment? We're trying to look at 1 Samuel and how we stay on target with life. Last week we talked about dealing with failures and successes. But this week I want to talk about disappointment because we all face disappointment in our lives. Sometimes it's the big disappointments of some kind of a health crisis or a loss of a job or something that just takes a long time that we have to wrestle with that disappointment. Sometimes it's a short-term disappointment that's like a weak disappointment.

I had one of those this week, a weak disappointment. An electrical circuit went bad. Now if you know anything about electric, when the electronic circuit goes off you go down and you flip the switch and it comes back on. It didn't come back on. It went off again. What that means is there is a problem in my electrical circuit that I've got to fix.

Fixing an electrical circuit is not easy because you don't know where the problem is. There are all these different appliances on this thing, plugs, whatever, that need to be addressed. So I started working on this. Twelve hours I spent working on this problem.

As you prayed for me last week I started training thirty-one coaches from seven different countries this week. This was the week I started traveling, so I was speaking this week in Charlotte and next week I'm speaking in Florida. And I'm really excited about things we're doing in Calvary Chapel. And twelve hours? I mean there's a lot I can do in twelve hours of my time.

I had some great help. Like Tim Brown helped me. Ed Miller helped me for six of those hours trying to help me solve my problem. We're troubleshooting trying to find it. I did call an electrician. I know you're saying, "Why don't you just call an electrician?" I called two of them! But they couldn't help me this week. And I kept getting these ideas about how I could solve the problem. So I continued to work on it.

But that was a lot of hours. Twelve hours of my time. Still not completely fixed, but we'll come back to that in a minute. Twelve hours of my time. That's called what I would say a medium disappointment. When I could be doing so many other things, but this is something that had the potential to ruin my week.

There are things that could ruin your year or ruin your life, they could ruin your week. And then there's those daily disappointments that we experience in life where your mate buys the wrong kind of coffee, or doesn't make the bed the way you like, or you can't find your keys. Those are the daily disappointments that we all face in our life. We have to wait for an appointment we didn't think we were going to have to wait for. We get a bill in the mail. Those are the daily disappointments. Now I'm convinced, if we're going to stay on target in our lives, we all must respond to disappointment as Christians as opposed to people who are not Christians.

Now Christians face disappointments differently. I just want to take you through a plan. I can't even call it a plan. I don't have a plan yet. All I have are some tools. Some tools to handle disappointment that I want to share with you because I think we can learn from Samuel's mistake. Samuel was stuck there and he was disappointed and he was mourning about this and God's saying, "Well how long are you going to do this? You've got people to anoint. I've got something for you to do." All of us have this ability to anoint somehow. I don't know what it is for you that God has gifted you, but He wants you to go out and do something. If you're stuck in the disappointment town, then bad things happen and we start thinking negatively or we start getting anxious or we start getting angry and bad things start happening in our lives. So I want to park here before we go a bit further and I just want to talk about Samuel's challenge that he was facing.

He was a godly man. "But how long are you going to mourn?" the Lord says to him. I believe that what He's saying to him is you need to move on, Saul. I would suggest that there are some of you that maybe this is a word from the Lord for you today. Maybe you've been in years of counseling and the Lord's saying, "Okay, time to move on." Maybe there's something that God wants you to say, "Hey, you need to forget that hurt from the past. You need to move on. You need to let it go and you need to go forward and be stronger in your life." Samuel had expectations.

I would suggest that disappointment can be defined this way. Disappointment is sadness (or sometimes anger in some of us, depending on your personality) resulting from unmet expectations. "I didn't plan for this to happen!" we say in our lives. "This isn't what I hoped for my life." So when this disappointment happens in its various forms (long-term, short-term, whatever), then we experience this emotion inside.

For Samuel it was this mourning. It was this sadness that he experienced. He needed to go on, get over it, move forward because you have people to anoint. There are people waiting in our lives around us to be anointed by us. We're the ones that God placed there, but we're stuck because of disappointment that's ruining our day. We can't sleep at night because of a particular problem. Now I would suggest that if we can learn how to deal with the daily ones, then we'll learn how to deal with the medium sized ones in our lives, and then we'll be able to deal with the big ones when they happen across our lives as well. We have to have the tools in order to engage

with these or we become angry people or anxious people or we end up with problems in our lives. We have to have tools to work with or we get paralyzed and we can't do what God has called us to do, and that is anoint, like Samuel could have done.

I'm going to give you ten tools. Ten tools that are scripture verses that make Christians different than others. I want to share these with you. I call it "Handling Disappointment 101." Ten tools, scriptures that I found that help me (and I think can help you) deal with some of the challenges that we face to overcome disappointments. I would suggest that instead of living in disappointment God wants us to experience something like joy or peace or something else that we have to offer as we anoint other people. So let's go through some of these.

The first one is to believe that God has a plan. God has a plan. Look at the verse in Isaiah 55:8-9. You might jot down these verses. When you're experiencing disappointment you want to immediately go here because our immediate go-to is "I can't believe this! I am so angry or disappointed by this!"

God says – *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

So immediately when there's a disappointment that comes into my life I need to say, "Okay God, you must have a plan here somewhere. I don't know what it is. It's your time, Lord. Not my time. It's your time. But if you want me to spend twelve hours working on an electrical problem, it doesn't seem to have any fruit in my life when what I could be doing could be so much more productive in other areas. If that's okay, Lord. This is your plan. My thoughts are not your thoughts. I'm going to give up this area of my life. I'm going to not allow this to disappoint me and get me down. I'm going to move forward and I'm going to experience you and do what I need to do in order to move on."

We need to recognize God has a plan. That's one of the things that makes us different than non-Christians, you know. Do you know how non-Christians handle disappointment? It's happy thoughts. Just think happy thoughts and it will make you feel better. Well maybe happy thoughts will help. But what I'm saying is Christians have deeper roots. There's something that fuels us from the inside that empowers us to be different than anyone else, and we can truly not just mask our disappointment with happy thoughts or a smile on our face. We have something we can actually believe in and trust in. So number one is to believe in God's plan.

The second one is to allow ourselves to grieve. I don't want to suggest that grieving is wrong. I don't think it was wrong for Samuel to be grieving. It's just that he grieved too long. He was stuck there. When we're grieving and we're sad about something, you have to realize God isn't just the God of the joyful. God is the God of grieving too.

So a verse like Psalm 34:18 is so helpful for me when it says – *The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.* When you're disappointed, you need to know that God is right there next to you to comfort you. He's the God of the brokenhearted. He's near.

He's not distant. He's near them. So this second tool, allowing yourself to grieve, is so important.

I would suggest that we are not trying to ignore grief. The purpose of grief is to be able to separate the good from the part that's not good. That's what grieving is. Let's say you're grieving a lost loved one. You want to grieve the fact that they're not with you, but you want to hold on to the memories. There's always something you give up and there's something you take with you in the grieving process. That's what grieving does. God designed our hearts to be able to grieve because there's a releasing of something and a taking something with us.

So grieving is important, and in this case that is another tool that we can use when we find ourselves disappointed. You're disappointed with something. Even though you can't find your keys, you can grieve over that for a little bit. But move on. We've got to move on here.

Another tool is to gain perspective. Perspective. Just looking at it from God's perspective instead of our little puny perspective is helpful. *Therefore we do not lose heart* or become discouraged or disappointed. *Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen* (not on that disappointment that's right around us), *but on what is unseen. Since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

So do you see if we can start gaining perspective that this problem in our life is a problem? I don't want to minimize how bad the problem is in your life or my life, but there's the reality. If we were all to sit around a big table and took all our problems, put them in a bucket, and we all stuck our bucket on the table, and we go around and look at each other's buckets, we'd say, "I think I'll keep mine, thank you." We all have our problems that we need to deal with. Certainly we could compare our problems to someone else. We can always find someone who looks like they're doing better off than we are, but if you get to know them a little bit you'll find out they deal with real problems too. I'll take my own problems, thank you. We need to have that kind of perspective that allows us to see that God might do something in the midst of this and that this is bigger than this particular situation here. Dealing with disappointment.

Let's go to the next tool. Accept the fact that God's grace is sufficient for this situation. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says – *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.* God has this power, or this energy, if we can use that term to define grace, because in this context I think that's what grace is. Grace is this divine energy that God gives. Divine grace to be able to manage today's problems, disappointments, strategies, and challenges. So if you come here today and you're disappointed about something, hey, you've come to the right place. You can come in contact with God's grace here today in a way that will allow you to leave here feeling lighter, feeling more joyful because you have experienced God's grace and then allowed that grace to work in you in the course of you now going back to deal with your problem or face the challenge of that disappointment. That's tool number four.

Let's go to tool number five which is to recognize that this is not the end. Because that's what happens. We go, "Oh no, this is terrible. This is the end of my life here." I don't mean necessarily the end of my life in terms of I'm going to die, but this is like I can't take this anymore or this is the end, like the last straw. No. Look at what God is saying in Philippians 1:6. *I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.* God is doing a work in us and He's moving us forward.

So as a Christian I come to this whole issue of disappointment differently than my friend who might not be a Christian. I recognize that God's working in me. I don't even know what He's doing sometimes, but I can trust in the fact that God is in control and that He's near me in the midst of my challenges and that He's working in me. That allows me to handle disappointment, whether it's small, medium, or large, in a way that's different than somebody else. That's tool number five.

Tool number six. Acknowledge that you can face the future. I love this verse in Isaiah 40:31 which talks about flying. He doesn't use the word 'flying,' but you get the idea. Flying, walking, and running. *Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings soar like eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

There's something about being a Christian that's so powerful because that personal relationship I have with God is not just something that happened in my childhood. It's something that I'm living with now and that God is helping me. There's times when I can't even walk along that He carries me along the path. *They will run and not be weary, they will walk and not faint.* There's this sense of I can face the future. Not because my expectations will be fulfilled. Not because I know even the answers. But I know the person who does know the answers and He's carrying me through that. So I'm carrying this strength that allows me to be like this majestic bird who's able to fly with huge wingspans high in the air, above everything else, and not live like a turkey. I just think a lot of us live like turkeys when we could fly like eagles. So God wants us to be able to face the future in that particular way. That's tool number six.

Let's go to the next one. Tool number seven is know that you are responsible for your part, but we let God do the rest. So I do have my job to do, my responsibilities to solve problems, or to meet challenges, or to do my part. I don't just "let go and let God" kind of thing. I know there is some benefit to that statement, and we do need to move on and allow God to work in our lives, but we have our part to do. We have to go back and correct mistakes that we've made. We have to go and ask for forgiveness in this situation. We have to go back and apologize for something. We have to go back and fix something or do something. We have our part that we have to do in order, oftentimes, to deal with life. So we do our part.

But the problem is while we're doing our part we get anxious about the part we can't do, and that's God's part. So we need to be able to do what 1 Peter 5:7 says – *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

This isn't like because you shouldn't do this. He comes alongside and He loves us so much. He cares for us in the midst of our pain, our suffering, our disappointment, our expectations that didn't work out. He's right there. He cares for us. In our hearts He just loves us and He comes

alongside of us and He nourishes our hearts. So we don't have to live with that anxiety or that pressure. We can turn it over to Him. A very important part of our tool kit is to recognize that we are responsible for our part, but God will take care of the rest.

Number eight, another tool. And these are all tools that I either experienced or came across these verses. I'm trying to figure out what do I need to do or what are some of these I'm doing, but others that I need to do and remind myself to do when I face disappointments in life. This is such an important one: Be thankful.

Psalms 118:24 says – *This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.* It doesn't say I'm going to be able to be glad when my expectations are fulfilled when I graduate, or when I get that job, or get married, or find that person. It doesn't say that. Today is the day for rejoicing. There's got to be some way to be able to look at today in the midst of disappointments and say, "Yes, I can enjoy today." I think the key is to be thankful.

There's this thing that God says in His word about being thankful that kind of resolves things or I think it moves our thinking from negative thinking over here to positive thinking. That's why in Philippians you remember in the anxiety passage in Philippians 4 it says – *Do not be anxious about anything, but pray about everything, in every situation with prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.*

Why is that *with thanksgiving* thrown in there? Because thanksgiving helps you deal with the anxiety. See, the problem with expectations or disappointment is there is something you've lost. A dream. Or real things like money or time. Or a wish. Or a hope. We've lost something that we feel disappointed about. So if we focus on where we're going and what we can be thankful for, that's really helpful.

I think this is one of my wife's solutions. This is how she overcomes her disappointment. She does very good at this and doesn't live with a lot of disappointment that I can tell. I think she does it by being thankful. It was illustrated this week.

If you know my wife you know she's a genius in the kitchen. She's a culinary artist and she creates amazing things out of healthy ingredients. That's really hard. Healthy ingredients turned into amazing things. Anyway, I was in the kitchen cooking this week and I made some mistakes and I ended up wasting some food. She said, "That's really valuable food that we have to throw away." But then she says this: "But I'm really grateful that you work here in the kitchen." I'm going, "Whoa. Did I just hear that right?" Instead of being angry with me because I just wasted and made a mistake and have to throw away some food, she's saying I'm really grateful that you're working in the kitchen. Do you see what she did? She turned her disappointment into something she's thankful for. So she's able to think positively about me instead of thinking like I'm an idiot. I really like that. I'm grateful! Disappointment turned into something very positive.

I would suggest God uses that in our lives. We want to be thankful people. If we can be thankful for what we have instead of complaining about what we don't have, then good things can happen in our lives. We try to do that with kids who whine and complain about everything. "You should

just be grateful for what you have.” It’s the same thing, not just for kids. That’s an adult solution that we all need in our lives as well. Well that’s tool number eight.

Let’s go to tool number nine. Be forgiving. You know why we’re forgiving? Because we’re all broken people. The people you live with are broken people. Because they’re broken people, they hurt others. Broken people always hurt others. That’s just the nature of being broken. We’re all broken. Because we’re broken, other people get hurt in the midst of our actions.

One of the neat things about being a Christian is that God empowers us. He forgave us so we can forgive other people. We see our sins. So when we see mistakes that other people have, we can release them. So he says in Ephesians 4:32 – *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

The ability to release some of the disappointment that happens in relationships...because that’s a whole category, isn’t it. A category of disappointment is relationships. I’m disappointed in that person or I’m disappointed they treated me that way, and so on. So one of the ways that God has allowed us or enabled us to handle some of these challenges that we face is that we turn them over to the Lord and we forgive the person because they’re broken.

We do it like Jesus says. Jesus was on the cross, crucified, being beat up, and He says, “Father, forgive them because they don’t know what they’re doing.” I would suggest that that’s often the case. We have to turn to those people who’ve hurt us and say, “Lord, they don’t know what they’re doing. Lord, I want to release that from my heart. I don’t want it to weigh me down. I don’t want that hurt in my life to drag me around in my life in a place where I’m going to be an ugly person. I don’t want to live with disappointment in my life. Like Samuel, God is saying, “How long are you going to mourn over this? Get over it! Let’s go. I’ve got people for you to anoint.” That’s number nine.

Let’s go to the last one. Number ten – recognizing the strength that you have. In Philippians 4:13 – *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.* There’s this sense of yes, I can face the challenges of life that are difficult. They’re hard, the things that you and I have to face in our lives. They’re really tough. We have to have a way that we can approach those things that allow us to see God in action, that God is working, that I can let go of this pain, I can move forward because that’s what God has designed for us. Each one of us, that’s what He wants for us. As a Christian, we are free to do this because God has given us this relationship with Him that empowers us to do this in our lives. So it’s not wrong to mourn. It’s not wrong to be disappointed. But there’s a point when we live there too long and we need to move on, we need to get going. That’s what God is saying to Samuel.

I think that’s what God says to me. I need to be able to deal with disappointment. Because if I’m letting something ruin my afternoon or ruin my day or my week or whatever, then what does that do to me? It just pulls me off the shelf there because now everything is bad; I start thinking and everything starts to look bad and now I can’t be that person who’s out there caring for people. I just think God has designed something for us here. He’s given us new life inside of our hearts so when disappointments come humanly into our lives, we then can experience gratefulness maybe.



But that leads to joy and that joy becomes the anointing that we can share with others. People need it. We live in a broken world. People need the anointing that God has given to us.

That's chapter 16:1. So let's continue. In verse 2 it says – *But Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.”*

*The Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ (In other words, you don't have to tell him everything you're going to do. Don't tell him you're going to anoint a new king. Just tell him you're going to sacrifice to the Lord.) Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.”*

Verse 4 – *Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, “Do you come in peace?”* Remember there's conflict now between Samuel and Saul because Samuel says you're going to lose the kingdom. They're wondering, “Uh oh, Samuel is here. What's going to happen?” So they're a little bit concerned. *“Do you come in peace?”*

*Samuel replied, “Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. We're going to have a revival meeting. We're going to have a prayer meeting. Come on. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.*

Verse 6 – *When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord.”* I can tell that this is the guy. He looks like the last king – tall and handsome, strong, a head taller than everyone else (as Saul was described). This must be the new king. He'll represent Israel really well.

Samuel was making a mistake in his understanding of God and how He works that all of us need to know. So we have this next verse that rings true in our lives. It's one of the verses that you'll hear quoted often in the Bible. It's a verse that leads us to understand God more. It's verse 7 and it says this: *But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”*

If we take it back to the disappointment, people get consumed by all the outward things that are going on and things are happening, but the Lord is working on a heart of a person. God wants to do amazing things in our hearts, so I need to be looking at my heart, not at the situation to measure my success of a day. Did I have a good day today? How do I measure that? Was this the day I made some money? Was this the day I made a new friend? Was it a day people liked me? How do you measure your success? If it's outward then we're missing something that God wants to do inwardly. He's trying to teach Samuel this very important thing. Not only by pointing out the new king, but Samuel, you're the guy who has a problem inside of his heart. Get up and start doing something here and anoint the new king. So he's going forward.

I would suggest that we all need to look in the mirror. They didn't really have mirrors in the Bible. If you wanted to look at yourself, how would you imagine you might look at yourself and

see what you would look like in the Bible times? In the water. Okay, let's look at this verse. *As a face is reflected in water, so does the heart reflect the person.*

You want to know who you are? Then start looking at your heart. If we want to know who the next king's going to be, we've got to look at the heart. We can't just look at the outward appearance. There's something much deeper. God wants to do something much deeper in all of our lives, so He's perfecting us, He's moving us forward, He's growing us in our lives. He wants to do something valuable inside of us. He wants to improve our hearts.

Maybe that's what God is doing this week in my life with my electrical problem. I don't know. But I know this. I know that the real test of this time here is if we can take Jesus home with us. My problem isn't Saul, but this afternoon instead of going to exercise like I normally do after church (when I leave here I'm so pumped up with spending time with you guys I usually go exercise), I'm going to go work on my electrical problem.

The reality of my electrical problem is this. We took all the boxes apart, found the problem, we got part of it working, I put it all back together, and I have one wire left over. That's my problem right now. That's always the worst thing. If you take apart your car and you put something back together and you have this piece left over, where does this go? Oh no. The problem with this wire is it red and all the other wires are black and white, and I have one red wire and I don't know where it goes. That's my problem.

But here's the thing. I've solved the problem in my head. So I'm ready to go. I know where that red wire goes, so I can hardly wait to get over there and hook it up. But if it doesn't work then I'll be faced with the message for today of disappointment. Or worse, I flip the switch and it blows up the house or something. I'll really have a disappointment and you'll hear all about it next week as the Lord continues to work in my heart.

I just trust that the Lord will use this particular message in your life because disappointment is one of those things we all have to face every day and if you don't have a plan, your life is going to be miserable. But if you're a Christian then you have resources within you that God has provided and resources from His word that can help you process disappointment different than other people do.

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Father, we know that this moment today is divine appointment by you. You've brought each of us here together for a reason. I thank you, Lord, for your work in each of our lives and it would be great to hear stories of our lives like we heard last week from Kimberly. I'm sure there are many other testimonies here of your work in people's lives. But Lord, I ask that you would give us your grace to understand who you are more, that we would be able to live each day of our lives with the willingness and the ability to anoint other people, not hindered by our own disappointment. Give us that freedom to bless others. Lord, help us to recognize the value of the heart, our own hearts and the hearts of other people, as the primary place where you want to live and grow, where you want us to minister to others. Draw our hearts closer together as a fellowship. Draw our hearts closer to you, we ask. In Jesus' name, amen.