

As new widows, we often deal with many feelings in our grief, but the one that has taken me a while to name, and that still comes up, is disappointment. In fact it just came to the forefront again this month on what would have been my 27<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Even though it's been 9 years since my husband's death, I felt a surge of disappointment. There was the obvious disappointment that this day was not as it should be. I know if Russ were still alive, we would most likely be traveling somewhere and enjoying time together away from the daily grind of life. But the more subtle disappointment was with friends and family who consistently recognized the day prior to his death and now say nothing. I try to give them grace, because they are not widows and they don't understand that this is still a very important date and should still be acknowledged. But if I am being honest it hurts. Thankfully many of my widowed friends reached out to me because they "get it", but that didn't fully offset the disappointment I felt.

Disappointment by definition is "the feeling of dissatisfaction that follows the failure of expectations or hopes to manifest." Wow, doesn't that encompass so many things in our lives as widows? We had so many dreams about what our lives with our husbands would be like for years to come that now will never be. We try to be thankful for the time we had with our husbands, but disappointment continues to come back in time and time again. There are the big milestone events that they won't be a part of, but there are also the little things that aren't as they "should be" that catch us by surprise. We know that disappointment is not unique to widows, but sometimes it feels like we get more than our fair share of it.

So how do we deal with disappointment? As I was searching for Bible verses on disappointment, the verses that kept coming up were all verses that I knew well, but somehow didn't make me feel any better. Don't get me wrong, verses like Jeremiah 29:11 and Romans 8:28 are some of my favorites. However, on my anniversary I needed verses more like these that let me grieve my disappointment.

- The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. -*Psalms 34:18*
- Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning. -*Psalms 30:5*

And once I'd taken the time to grieve, I could then embrace His promises and start to feel His love and comfort even through my disappointment with verses like these.

- Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall. -*Psalms 55:22*
- Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. -*Philippians 4:6b-7*

So what are practical ways to deal with disappointment? This looks different for everyone and every situation, but let me share what helped for me with this specific disappointment. I knew that this year would be no different than past years, as this wasn't the first time I'd been disappointed on my wedding anniversary. So I planned time to take care of me and do something fun. I took my dog and drove to a state park to take a hike and enjoy the beauty of an early fall day. Rather than feel sorry for myself, I did something Russ and I would do often - I found a local ice cream shop and tried a scoop of a new flavor. I have also made it a point to remember the wedding anniversaries of other special widows and widowers in my life and I send them a note or a text so that hopefully they will never feel like their spouse is

forgotten. I wish I could do this for every widow I know, but I choose to do it for a few and hope this will prompt them to do it for someone else too.

As disappointments come your way, my hope is that you will know that you are not alone and many other widows have felt what you are feeling now. I pray that you know that you are loved by God and He cares about even the smallest details of your life. Ask Him to provide a few friends that understand and are willing to walk with you through the hard days. I would be honored to hear your story and then connect you with other widows who have been where you are and want to walk with you through all phases of widowhood.

Blessings,

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