
Born to Win

A Ronald L. Dart Ministry

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NEWSLETTER

February 2018

The God Who Disappoints

By Ronald L. Dart

God *so* often disappoints us. No, let's not kid ourselves, we place our hopes in God and those hopes are all too often disappointed. The fault, however, is not with God. The fault is with our expectations, and with what I call "the God of our imagination." The only reason we could ever be disappointed with God is if he somehow doesn't meet our expectations.

Recently, someone reminded me of something I said in a sermon long ago and had all but forgotten. A great lady, whom we all loved and for whom we had prayed long and hard, had died in pain from what was probably colon cancer. There was no small amount of disappointment when she died after so much prayer. My sermon addressed the basis of our disappointment. Rather bluntly, I fear, I said that God's objective in calling us is not merely to save our miserable hides, but to spend us in his service.

Specifically I said, "God is not in the business of the preservation and perpetuation of human flesh." I think it is in this error that we so often become disappointed. We think our aches and pains are as important to God as they are to us. They may be, but it will not be for the same reason at all.

There was a man who is a mentor to so many of us. His name was Saul of Tarsus. We have come to know him as the great Apostle Paul. At one point in his ministry he was moved to write of his experiences with God. He said that he knew a man in Christ who had been caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, words not permitted man to utter. In context, it is clear that Paul himself was that man, but he doesn't want to couch it in those terms. He is somewhat afraid of the consequences of that visit to paradise, because there was a very real danger there.

"And lest I should be exalted above measure," he said, "there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. Three times I pleaded

with the Lord to take it away from me. "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'" (2 Corinthians 12:2 ff).

Paul went on to say what his infirmities meant to him: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

I must confess I am not there yet. I can't take pleasure in my infirmities. Sometimes they hurt terribly. But I do understand what Paul means when he said, "When I am weak, then I am strong." Paul knew that he could not do what he did, that he could not know what he knew, go where he had gone, understand what he understood, and be whole in the flesh at the same time.

I can say this from Scripture, and I can confirm in my own life and experience; the greater the gifts from God, the closer one is to God, the more one understands of God, the more God intends to use a person in his service, the greater the *need* for infirmity of the flesh.

God so often disappoints us because he is so often subtle. We want to see the withered hand go straight right in front of our eyes. We want to watch as the man born blind can now see. We want to watch the man

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Mark Your Calendar

2018 Feast of Tabernacles

Join us for the 2018 Land Between the Lakes (LBL) Feast site where brethren from CEM, CGI, and UCG, plus several independent groups will come together to build a Feast—a family-friendly Feast.

The model for this Feast was the brainchild of Ron Dart. Many of us have been part of planning CEM Feasts in the past, and interwove those ideas into the LBL Feast. We formed a “Festival Association” (FA) as had been done at CEM Feasts. The FA, as at CEM Feasts, is a group of volunteers working together to make the Feast family-friendly, educational, and edifying.

There will be inspiring worship services, Bible studies, informative seminars, Sabbath School, youth

activities, game nights, a pie and ice cream social, a family picnic, a dance for all ages, and much more.

The LBL Feast site itself sits adjacent to the Kentucky Lake, providing clean, crisp air, fall colors, many water activities, hikes, nature watching, etc.

Our emphasis, as always, is to provide sound biblical teachings, along with lots of music for all tastes. We will have many traditional hymns, sprinkled with some contemporary Christian music, choir performances, and special music. Come join us at the LBL Feast this year. Special housing rates are available. Call (270) 362-4271 for rates and reservations. For more information about this Feast site, including information about the housing options, go to: lblfeastoftabernacles.wordpress.com.



YEA Program

On a recent visit to Kenya, CEM staff member Linda Benton took requested YEA materials to the Faithful Family Center orphanage in Ogembo. This orphanage is part of the Child of God Rescue ministry (www.cogrescue.org). The orphanage and the local church want to make use of the YEA program for their children. One of the church members who works for the orphanage plans to come to Texas in April and stay through the Feast of Tabernacles—during this visit they will see how the program is also used at the Feast.

Hope

By Ronald L. Dart

What do you think is the worst feeling a person can experience? Maybe fear—mind-numbing paralyzing fear? That is bad news and, of course, we experience fear at different levels—different elements of it—but I don't think it's the worst feeling a person can experience. Loneliness? Certainly, being alone when you don't want to be and needing another human being and not having that person, or any person, with you can be very depressing, but I don't think it's the worst. Desperation perhaps—when you get down to the place where you've got nothing to lose and you're willing to take almost any chance. It is not a very happy place to be, but I don't think it's the worst feeling known to man. How about discouragement? Maybe anger? Maybe resentment? I don't really think so.

I think the worst feeling a person can experience is hopelessness. The person who is hopeless, who is utterly without hope, is the poorest person of all in many ways. I really feel that it's out of hopelessness that a lot of suicides take place. A person comes to the point in life where he has no hope, or at least perceives that he has no hope, can see no way out so there's no chance of survival, no chance of making it, no chance of things getting better, only the possibility of things getting worse. Death begins to look better than life.

I find as a minister, a preacher, a counselor, that it's relatively easy to reach people who are afraid or desperate or lonely or discouraged, because these people want something very specific and, as a speaker or a counselor, you can sit next to them and find out what it is that they want. They think maybe you can help them find it and you've got some sort of a meeting of the minds and then you can begin to work. Order your copy of this message, *Hope*, and hear the rest of the story.

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who had been crippled all his life who now can dance and laugh. We want to see Lazarus walk out of the tomb. We want to see fire fall down out of heaven. And we are a little bit disappointed when we don't see anything.

Actually, it is not that we don't see anything at all. God may make a sick man well, but we wonder if he just got better. He may find you a job, but you can't tell if he really did or if the job was just there, and time and chance led you to it. And that leads us inexorably to a fact of life: God is subtle in His dealings with man and He prefers to keep it that way.

It is so easy to be disappointed with God. Take Elijah as an example. He had seen the fire fall from heaven on Mount Carmel, and one would think he would have been the king of the hill after this. But in a matter of hours, he was fleeing for his life from Jezebel, who had long since proved she was capable of murder. Elijah fled south to get away and came to a place in the wilderness where he sat, exhausted and defeated in the meager shade of a juniper tree. He prayed, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (1 Kings 19:1-18).

But God was not finished with Elijah. An angel came and woke him, fed him, and sent him on to Mount Horeb where he came to a cave and waited there. As he waited, the Lord came to him and asked, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" The reply from Elijah contains a whiff of self-pity: "I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

"Go out," replied God, "and stand upon the mountain before me." And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire *a still small voice*.

The subtle God then clarified the issues for Elijah. He gave him a couple of jobs to do and then said, By the way, you aren't really the only one left. "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed

unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (1 Kings 19:18).

We mustn't be disappointed with the subtlety of God. It is more often than not his preferred manner of operation. And if we watch for it, we will be far more likely to see it when it comes. When we pray, we may not have the faith to move mountains. We may not be able to pray in faith that God will make the tumor just disappear (although he has done so). But we can pray for relief from pain, a good night's sleep, a better doctor, and better medication.

There was Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46). Given many of the assumptions we might carry about Jesus, the account of this night could be disappointing. For Jesus asked his Father if there was any other way to do this. Is it possible that I might not have to drink of this cup? I suppose it is possible that Jesus could have decided, even this late, not to go through with it. This might be disappointing if it were not for one thing. Jesus was prepared to go wherever God took him.

So what was God's answer? There was no clap of thunder, no lighting, no light from heaven. There was one subtle thing: "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Luke 22:41-43).

There was one other very important thing. Jesus adapted his hopes to the plan and the method. We are too often disappointed and discouraged because we fail to make that adaptation.

Now I don't want you to think we shouldn't ask God for the BIG EVENT. By all means, ask God for the big stuff. He says you *have* not, because you *ask* not. But at the same time, look for the subtlety of God, and join him in winning the fight before the enemy even knows we are there.

There was an occasion in Israel's early history when they were terribly oppressed by the Midianites. One day a man named Gideon was threshing wheat when a stranger came along and sat down in the shade near him. The man spoke, "Yahweh is with you, O mighty man of valor."

To tell the truth, I don't think Gideon immediately knew who he was talking to. He was puzzled, because he thought very little of himself—an important item in the story. I won't bore you with the whole story because it has been all but worn out by preachers over the years. But I

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recommend you read it, starting in Judges 6, because it is a very endearing story regarding this faithful man. Following instructions, Gideon sent word out to gather an army and he got a good one—32,000 men in all.

Now consider what God considers. That gang of Midianites was even bigger. They covered the ground like a plague of grasshoppers. We can arm our 32,000 men and charge into the valley and whip all those people, but a lot of good men will die in the process. In hand to hand combat, half the people on the field will probably die the first hour, the remaining half, the second hour.

So what shall we do? The first step, hardly what one would expect, God said, we have to cut this army down in size. I don't dare let this gang whip the Midianites, lest they get too big for their britches (however God might say that). Walking through steps that included sending everyone home who was afraid, God whittled Gideon's force down to 300 men. In doing so, God lowers drastically the possible loss of life, and that's a good thing.

Then comes the tactical problem. The battalion was divided into three companies: each man armed with a trumpet, a lamp, and a pitcher. What the men were to do was occupy the surrounding hills. On a signal, every man blew his trumpet, broke the pitcher to display the light, and yelled at the top of his voice, "The Sword of Yahweh and of Gideon."

Taken completely by surprise, the Midianites fell over one another getting out of the valley. It was a

subtle, but brilliant, strategy. Normally, one man would have the trumpet to summon, say a thousand. The lamp served as a banner in the daytime. For all the Midianites knew, they were surrounded by 300,000 men. Maybe more.

It is much better for us to get on God's wavelength, to think as he thinks, to see as he sees. A frontal assault is, in some cases, what's called for. But in other cases, he wants us to be as subtle as he is. This is what Jesus was telling his disciples when he said, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

"We are saved by hope," said Paul. "But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:24-26).

Make your requests known to God. Ask as big as you want. But expect God to be subtle in his reply, because he is that way far more often than not. And if you are watching for God to be subtle, you will see it. Don't forget to be thankful for it. To hear this entire radio broadcast, *Disappointed with God*, return the enclosed order form, call our office, 1-888-BIBLE-44, or email us at adm@borntowin.net to request your FREE copy.

Radio Update

Find Ronald L. Dart and *Born to Win* at OnePlace.com

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Is the *Born to Win* program playing on a station near you? To find out, go to www.borntowin.net and check our radio log or call us to request a current copy of our radio log.

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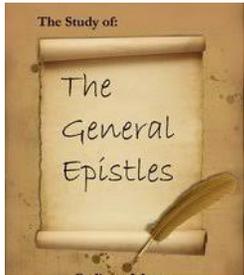
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That the man of God may be proficient and equipped for every good work.

Born to Win

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NEW! The General Epistles CD Series



Paul speaks of “faith, hope, and love” in 1 Corinthians 13:13 and the Apostles James, Peter, and John as well as Jude address these topics in their own letters. James brings us the reality of faith, Peter speaks of the “living hope” we have in Christ, John reminds us that God is the summation of love, and Jude encourages us to stay strong in our faith. In this series Mr. Dart does for the General Epistles what he has done for the Epistles of Paul—background material and a verse-by-verse exposition of these letters. This CD series contains multiple studies and bonus material on 8 CDs that will illustrate the messages and motives of the writers. This will be a wonderful addition to your library. The regular price will be \$29.95 and it is available to you for **\$14.95** right now.

Disappointed with God (CD) FREE

God so often disappoints us. No, let’s not kid ourselves, we place our hopes in God and those hopes are all too often disappointed. The fault, however, is not with God. The fault is with our expectations, and with what I call, “the God of our imagination.” The only reason we could ever be disappointed with God is if He somehow doesn’t meet our expectations. In this radio broadcast Mr. Dart explains what we must do to be on God’s wavelength and not be disappointed.

Hope (CD) FREE

What do you think is the worst feeling a person can experience? Maybe fear? Loneliness? Desperation? How about discouragement? Maybe anger or resentment? Ronald L. Dart didn’t really think so. He said “I think the worst feeling a person can experience is hopelessness.” The person who is hopeless, who is utterly without hope is the poorest person of all in a lot of ways. Could hopelessness have been the reason the gospel spread so quickly through out the Roman Empire? This message provides tremendous insight into the power of hope.

Thank You

We are a donor-supported ministry and we thank God for all of you who help us stay on the radio and help us provide Mr. Dart’s messages to those who would otherwise not be able to listen and learn from his gift of teaching. We pray that you will be blessed for your support.

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CEM Mission Statement

Christian Educational Ministries (CEM) was founded in November 1995 by Ron and Allie Dart as an independent, non-denominational ministry to serve the public and individual Christians of every kind through the ministry of Ronald L. Dart. Mr. Dart, an ordained minister and evangelist, has served God through hundreds of sermons, broadcasts, Bible Studies, and books—bringing clarity and simplicity to topics.

CEM promotes Ron Dart's radio ministry, *Born to Win*, which is heard from coast-to-coast. His clear, conversational, and inviting style can be heard the world over. The *Born to Win* website, www.borntowin.net, features more than 1000 of Mr. Dart's timeless sermons and studies at any one time.

Our mission is:

- First, to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. (Matthew 28).
- Second, to teach the disciples of Jesus Christ so that they may be “proficient and equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:17).
- Third, to teach and train this generation and the next with studies and programs focused on youth, through the Dart's special passion, Youth Educational Adventures (YEA). (Deuteronomy 11:19, Proverbs 22:6).
- Fourth, to bring God's people closer together, through cooperative efforts wherever they may be. (2 Corinthians 5:18).

To this end, we teach the Bible and its Truth, with a goal of helping people make their own lives work while they are a positive influence and blessing to those around them. Follow Mr. Dart and CEM at www.borntowin.net, Facebook, YouTube, and other media.

March Scripture Writing Plan

We encourage you to read each day's scripture and then write it down in a notebook, a journal, on index cards, in a text message or whatever method you know works best for you. If you can't write it down, consider speaking the scripture and recording it on your cell phone or voice recorder. Our goal is to have read and written down a minimum of 365 scriptures by the end of 2018. Let's do this and see the value it brings to our lives.



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|----------|----------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|----------------------|
| March 01 | Romans 8:24-25 | March 11 | 1 Timothy 1:1 | March 21 | 2 Thessalonians 2:16 |
| March 02 | 1 Corinthians 13:13 | March 12 | 1 Thessalonians 1:3 | March 22 | Jeremiah 17:7 |
| March 03 | Colossians 1:23-27 | March 13 | Isaiah 41:10 | March 23 | Job 5:16 |
| March 04 | Isaiah 40:31 | March 14 | Job 17:15 | March 24 | Romans 5:2-5 |
| March 05 | Proverbs 13:12 | March 15 | Proverbs 23:18 | March 25 | Titus 3:7 |
| March 06 | Psalms 147:11 | March 16 | Psalms 39:7 | March 26 | Job 6:8 |
| March 07 | Romans 12:12 | March 17 | Romans 15:13 | March 27 | 1 Timothy 6:17 |
| March 08 | Titus 1:2 | March 18 | Titus 2:13 | March 28 | Hebrews 6:19 |
| March 09 | 1 Peter 1:13 | March 19 | 1 Peter 1:3-6 | March 29 | Matthew 24:6-9 |
| March 10 | 1 Thessalonians 4:13 | March 20 | 1 Timothy 4:10 | March 30 | Matthew 24:10-13 |
| | | | | March 31 | 1 Thessalonians 5:8 |

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