

Family Worship Guide: The Unbelief of the Disappointed

This week, we are preparing our hearts for the upcoming sermon on Luke 24:13–35. In this profound passage, we will look closely at two disciples on the road to Emmaus whose hopes were crushed because they did not understand the whole counsel of God's Word.

The Scripture Reading

Read Luke 24:13–35 together as a family. As you read, pay attention to the emotional state of the two disciples, their explanation of what happened in Jerusalem, and notice exactly how Jesus responds to their sadness and confusion.

The Central Truth

The two men walking on the road to Emmaus were not enemies of Jesus. They were faithful disciples, but they were deeply sad and confused. Their unbelief was not the stubborn unbelief of a hard, rebellious heart; it was the unbelief of disappointed hopes. They had expected Jesus to be a victorious, conquering king who would overthrow Rome right then and there. Because they only believed the parts of the Old Testament that spoke of the Messiah's glory, they completely missed the prophecies about His necessary suffering.

Jesus gently rebuked them for being slow to believe *all* that the prophets had spoken. He then took them on a journey through the Bible, beginning with Moses, showing them that the cross was not an accident or a failure—it was the divine plan. Today, we often face the same danger of "selective belief." When hard times come, we are tempted to think God has failed us, when in reality, we have misunderstood what His Word actually promises. The cure for the unbelief of disappointment is a return to the whole Bible and intimate fellowship with the risen Christ.

Family Discussion Questions

Take a few moments to talk through these questions together. Parents, help younger children understand the historical events of the story, and encourage older children to think about how we interpret difficult times and unfulfilled expectations in our own lives.

1. Why were the two disciples so sad as they walked away from Jerusalem?

They had hoped Jesus was the promised redeemer of Israel, but they had just watched Him be condemned and crucified. Their expectations were shattered because they had no category in their minds for a dying and rising Messiah. They thought the cross was the end of their hope.

2. What did Jesus use to comfort and correct them?

He did not give them a positive pep talk or try to cheer them up with mere emotion. He took them straight to the Scriptures. He explained how the entire Old Testament pointed to the necessity of His suffering before entering into His glory.

3. What does it mean to have "selective belief" when we read the Bible?

It means we only latch on to the parts of the Bible we like—such as verses about blessing, peace, and deliverance—while ignoring the parts that tell us we will face trials, temptations, and suffering. When we only believe a select portion of the Bible, our expectations will eventually be crushed by reality.

4. How did the disciples finally recognize Jesus?

Their eyes were kept hidden until they sat down for intimate fellowship with Him during the breaking of bread. It is a powerful reminder that while we must know the Scriptures, we also need close, daily fellowship with Christ to truly recognize His presence and hand in our lives.

These questions are designed to help us see that our deep disappointments often stem from a faulty or incomplete understanding of God's Word. When we trust the whole Bible and walk closely with Jesus, our sadness can be turned into a burning joy.

Guided Family Prayer

Close your time by praying together as a family. Ask the Lord to prepare your hearts and minds to hear the preaching of His Word this coming Lord's Day.

Pray for Biblical Understanding

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to understand *all* of the Scriptures, not just the parts that are easy or comfortable to hear. Pray for the grace to love the whole counsel of God.

Pray for Trust During Trials

Confess the times you have doubted God or grown frustrated because your circumstances were difficult. Ask for the faith to trust His perfect plan, remembering that He uses afflictions to mold us and build our character.

Pray for Burning Hearts

Ask the Lord to make your hearts burn with love and conviction for Christ as the Word is opened and preached on Sunday. Pray that your time in corporate worship would be a time of true fellowship with the risen Savior.

May this time of family preparation strengthen your faith, guard you against discouragement, and ready you to worship God in spirit and in truth.