

DOING THE NEXT RIGHT THING: DEALING WITH DISAPPOINTMENT

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Have you ever had a road trip go bad? You plan and try to take every contingency into account, but then there are car troubles, or the accommodations are terrible, or the weather doesn't cooperate, or someone gets sick? In our family, we have made many cross-country trips and have dealt with all of these (though it is almost always the car trouble). Because we have had to deal with this so many times, we figured out how to look for the opportunities that crop up when we get stuck in a small town or in driving rain or on a dirt road far off the highway. A wise friend told me years ago, "There are plans that go well, or there are memories."



Right now it may seem like life is one giant road trip gone wrong. No matter what plans your family carefully and prayerfully made, any small thing can throw them off. But God's plans are bigger than ours, and he is at work. In these situations, he gives us new opportunities to do his will. In the story of Joseph, God shows that he can use small decisions even in terrible circumstances to work his will. Are we keeping our eyes out for the small decisions in front of us, or will we miss them because we are so focussed on the changes to our plans?

Here are some ways to help your family "do the next right thing" (as the Disney song goes):

1. **Listen together:** Listen to the *Kids Corner* episode [Route 32](#) together. Talk about the major disappointments that Liz and his father had to deal with. How did each react? What opportunities were they able to see? What ones might they have missed? Can you relate?
2. **Share Stories:** Talk about times that you have had "memories" instead of perfect plans. How can you see in hindsight how God was working? Can you see how God meant it for good? How could your current life situations lead to more memories of God's faithfulness? Do some brainstorming about new opportunities you see.
3. **Put down the devices.** Sometimes it is easier to just keep scrolling through our phones and let the small chances for connection go by. How might God work through a game night? A friend or family video call? A letter or card written to a friend?

Effecting change in our children may have to start with a change in our own attitude to dealing with trouble. This may be hard for those of us who consider ourselves "planners." We have to trust that God is the ultimate Planner, and that his plans never fail ([Proverbs 16:9](#), [Proverbs 3:5-6](#), [Isaiah 14:24](#), [Romans 8:28](#)). When we are sure of God's faithfulness, it is easier to share that confidence with our children.

Want to dig deeper? Check out Family Fire's article "[Choosing to Model Joy](#)"

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