

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Al Denson Show and for tuning in every week to our program. My prayer for you is to be encouraged in your daily walk with Christ through the words of this booklet. Our hope is that in turn you will tell others of what God is doing through our ministry to youth and parents on TV. I am convinced you will not find another program on any network anywhere that deals with issues today's youth and their parents are facing, and provides answers from a Godly perspective.

In addition, we would love for you to help us by going to our web site at www.aldenson.com. Here you can write to us, order additional material like this booklet, check out all my music, have a daily bible study, and stay up to date on the ministry. You can also send us a prayer request and questions for the TV show. But more importantly, please continue to be in prayer with us as we work together to help those that are in need.

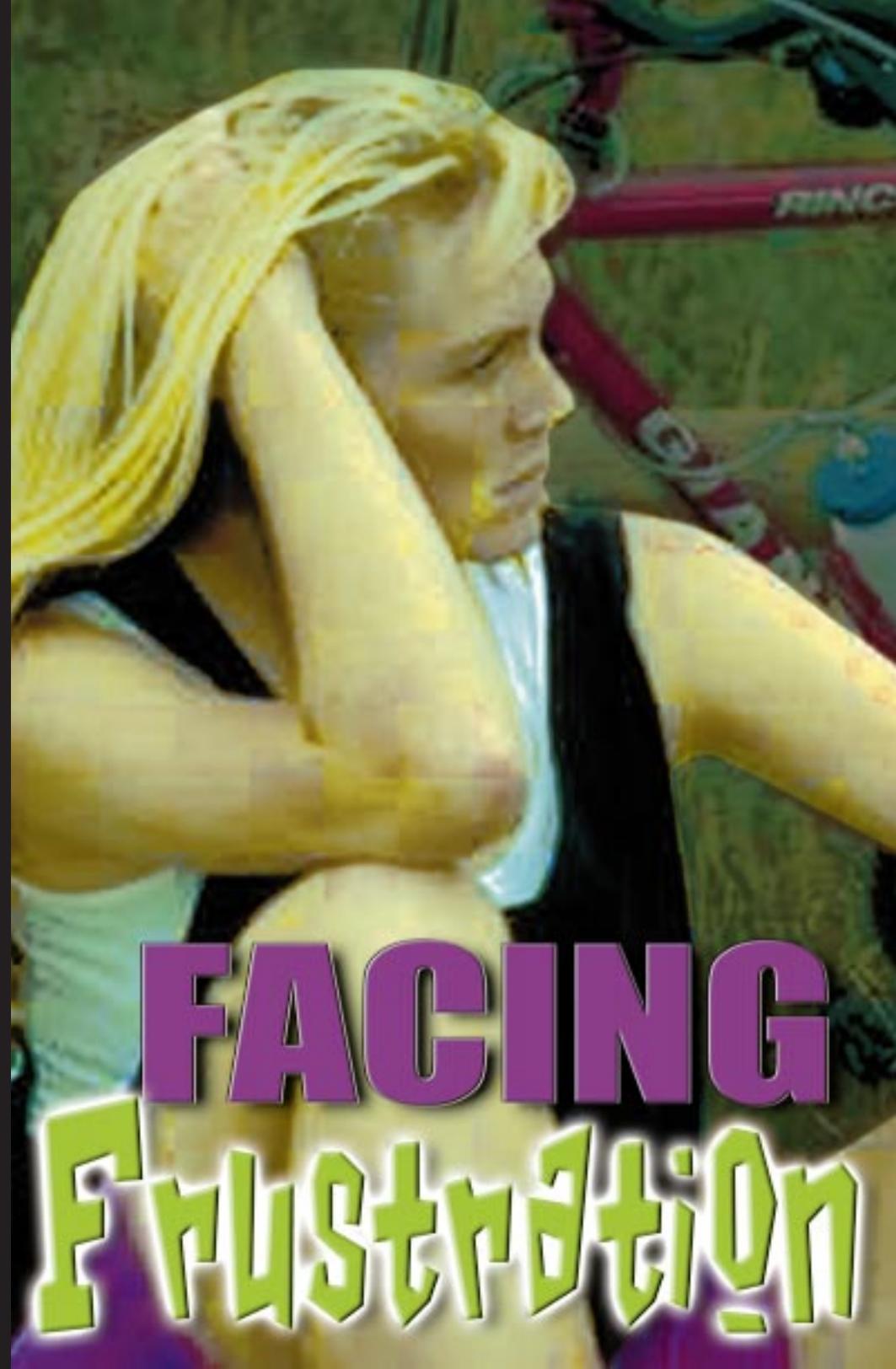
Thanks for watching and God Bless!

Sincerely,



An Outreach of Celebration Ministries

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FACING Frustration



Most artists create for only a brief moment in time. That phenomenon was once known as “15 minutes of fame”. Yet even in a fickle world, there still emerge a talented few that transcends time and trends. With nearly 15 years as a major label recording artist and seven hit

albums to his credit, Al Denson is that kind of artist.

But the attention and acclaim his artistry has brought him over the years are anything but the routine rewards of worldly success. Rather, they are the fruits of a life of purpose and passion, and a mission that has always reached far beyond merely making music.

The millions of young people Al has performed for, befriended, counseled, consoled and clowned around with in his career already know that. And thousands more are finding out every day.

This past year has seen Al expand his efforts to a global audience through the reach of his daily syndicated television production, “The Al Denson Show.” “You’ve got to reach out to people where they are with the most powerful means and this form of media allows you to build trust and a rapport,” says Al. “This has all been so amazing. I can’t imagine what lies in store when the Lord finally calls me home, but I don’t have to wait for heaven to receive rewards. I get them every time a kid comes up to me and says, ‘I heard what you said, and I accepted Christ.’ You can’t ask for anything more or better than that.”

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FACING Frustration

If there is one word which seems to describe the majority of people today, it would have to be the word “frustrated.” Dave Edwards gives us a great definition of frustration. He says, “When our expectations and reality clash, the result is frustration.” We have set ourselves up for major frustration in this country because Americans all seem to have expectations about life which are unrealistic, unfair, or biased. These expectations become our focus and leave us no room or time for flexibility or failure (ours or anyone else’s). We seem to have our minds set in concrete as to how life should go. Somewhere

along the way we have gotten the idea that life is to be fair and perfect and that we should never have any pain or problems.

When reality doesn’t match our expectations, we become intolerant and intolerable. At worst, the results of our frustration can be deadly—everything from “Road Rage” to heart attacks. At best, frustration can lead to bitterness, resentment, and pessimism. Relationships, finances, school, work—these are all prime places where we can easily experience frustration. As unpleasant as these times or seasons of frustration can be, Dave says that God wants to use them to get our attention and do a work in our lives.

There is a guy in the Old Testament named

Joseph who understood about frustration because his season of frustration lasted about 20 years. You may remember the story in Genesis 37 and 39 of Joseph being sold into slavery by his older brothers. He was taken into the foreign

land of Egypt and eventually ended up as a servant in the home of a man named Potiphar. Potiphar was a very important man because he was the captain of Pharaoh’s bodyguards.

Joseph worked hard and did a good job for Potiphar. The Bible says that Joseph found favor with Potiphar and as a result, he made Joseph the overseer of his house. That

meant Joseph was in charge of everything. So, Joseph went from being a slave to a servant to a manager. The Bible also points out that Joseph was a very handsome young man and in Genesis 39:7 it says, “after his master’s wife took notice of Joseph and said, ‘Come to bed with me!’” Even though Joseph was young, handsome, away from home in a foreign land, spending his life as a slave; and Potiphar’s wife was probably very beautiful (not to mention willing and available), Joseph said no.

Genesis 39:8-9 says, “But he refused. ‘With me in charge,’ he told her, ‘my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, everything he owns he has entrusted to my care.

“When our expectations and reality clash, the result is frustration.”

No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" "He refused"—those are great words. Joseph realized refusing was a choice he could make; it was an act of his will. If Joseph had tried to make excuses or rationalize, he could have probably made a pretty good case as to why he should have given in to this woman. But the basis of his decision was that he could not participate in wickedness and sin against Potiphar and against God. Joseph had determined years earlier what the definition of sin was. He never wavered, even in the midst of frustration, because he made up his mind ahead of time what the answer would be before the question was ever asked.

The Bible says that this woman wouldn't take "no" for an answer. In verse 10 it says that she tempted Joseph day after day. Not only did Joseph keep turning her down, but

he took extra precautions and made sure he wasn't ever alone with her. Verses 11-12 say, "One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house."

Well, the scorned woman was not happy, so she went immediately to her husband and accused Joseph of trying to rape her. The Bible says at the end of Chapter 39 that Potiphar "burned with anger" and had Joseph thrown in prison where the king's prisoners were also confined. This sounds hopeless, doesn't it? But twice in these last verses of Chapter 39 the Bible records the same words that have been recorded over and over again in the story of Joseph's life: "God was with Joseph." In spite of the way things looked to Joseph, in spite of his circumstances, God was in control and at work.

Chapter 40 begins with Joseph back in prison for a crime he didn't commit. Talk about frustration! Dave Edwards gives us three great things we can do based on Joseph's experience that will help us get through our own seasons of frustration:

1. Recognize Frustration as God's Tool to Prepare You for the Future.

Seasons of frustration are not God's way of punishing us or getting back at us. Frustration is a tool that God wants to use in our lives to prepare us for greater things and to make us

more useable. Joseph had a destiny, but in order to become the man of God he needed to be to fulfill that destiny, there were some rough edges that first had to be sanded off his life. If we will cooperate with what God is trying to do in our lives, a season of frustration can help shape us into what God wants us to be.

2. Refuse to Compromise.

Chapter 40 says that the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt had offended Pharaoh, so he had them thrown into the same prison where Joseph was confined. After they had been there for some time, the cupbearer and the baker each had a dream the same night. They were both very troubled by their dreams because they had no one to interpret the dreams for them. Joseph told them that interpretation

belongs to God and asked them to share their dreams with him.

After hearing the cupbearer's dream, Joseph told him that it meant he would be released from prison in three days and restored to his position in Pharaoh's court. Then Joseph made the decision to take matters into his own hands and manipulate the cupbearer to help him get out of prison. Instead of waiting on God to work in His own time and in His own way, Joseph decided to take control. Joseph took advantage of the good news he had given the man and played on his emotions by telling the cupbearer his sad story. Joseph then asked the cupbearer to make an appeal to Pharaoh for him, so he could be released.

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Anytime we are frustrated, it is easy to rationalize and do something crazy and careless. One of the greatest temptations we face when we are in a season of frustration is to try to speed up what God is doing in our lives. When we give into that temptation like Joseph did, two things happen:

A. We prolong the process.

The Bible tells us that the cupbearer did indeed get out of prison and was restored to his position in Pharaoh's court just as Joseph had said he would. But the last verse of Chapter 40 says, "The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him." Verses 14 and 15 of Chapter 40 where Joseph tries to manipulate his way out of prison cost Joseph an extra two years in prison. Joseph only prolonged what God was trying to do in his life by compromising.

B. We miss the blessing of God.

God wants a season of frustration to be a time when He has our full and undivided attention—a time when the distractions of life fade away and God can give us a new sense of who He is and what is really important in life. These seasons in our lives are to be times when our wills are broken and our expectations are given up to Him. Times when we are willing to let go of what we thought would bring us happiness in order to have the greater blessing of God working in our lives.

3. Request Courage.

The cupbearer and the baker were gone, and Joseph was left alone in prison. It must have been a real terrible moment for Joseph when he realized that no one was coming to get him. When we see Joseph in Chapter 41, it becomes apparent that his attitude must have begun to change that day, two years earlier. He had been praying to get out of prison up until that point, but he must have begun to pray for the courage to hold on until God brought him out in His way.

In the middle of a season of frustration, just about the time God is going to do a real work in our lives, many people say "no" to what God is trying to do. Some pull away from God all together; others drop-out from the things of God. At times of frustration we need to pray for the courage to hang in there with God until He finishes what He is trying to do in us and delivers us in His way and in His time.

One of the most frustrating experiences in life for a Christian is when we believe we have found God's will for our lives, but then see things seemingly fall apart before our eyes. Our expectations are high, but reality clashes with those expectations, and we find ourselves stuck in a season of frustration. We need to understand that at times like these, it may have been God Himself who put a roadblock in our lives. He may have caused us to brake so quickly that we actually skidded off the road we were

traveling, and now we just don't understand what God is doing. It is easy at times like these to get hurt, disappointed, and angry with God. These are the times when we must make a choice to hold on to the sovereignty of God like never before.

We need to understand that God pushes the "pause" button in our lives for many different reasons. We may have some character issues that need work or a lesson that needs to be learned before we can go any further down the road. There could be something ahead we are totally unprepared for which would permanently wreck our lives, so God wants to get us in shape for that challenge before we move on. There may be weaknesses in our lives that need attention. We must also accept the fact that God does things according to His timetable, not ours. So what,

to us, may look like a trial or a delay is really God protecting us and perfecting His purpose and plan for our lives.

If we finish reading the story of Joseph, we see that God was at work orchestrating the events and circumstances in Joseph's life. Two years later, the cupbearer remembered Joseph when the Pharaoh had a troubling dream that no one could interpret. Pharaoh sent for Joseph and in Genesis 41:16, we see a godly, wise, and humble Joseph being used of God to help not only Pharaoh but also the entire nation of Egypt. Joseph went on to become the second most powerful man in all the land. God knew exactly how long it would take to do what needed to be done in Joseph. When Joseph was ready, God stirred the cupbearer's memory and Joseph's season of frustration came to a close.

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Seeing things through God's eyes will make all the difference in the world.

Whenever we get frustrated, the temptation will always be to give up. There is a great story in Luke 5 that illustrates this point. Peter and his friends were professional fishermen, but they had been out on an all-night fishing trip and had caught nothing. Their income and their families depended on their success, so their expectations had been high. Now they were tired, frustrated, and discouraged.

Jesus comes along at just the right time and says to Peter, "Launch out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." In verse five Peter responds, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything." To Peter's credit he went on to say, "But, because You say so, I will let down the nets." The Bible says in Luke 5:6 that when they did what Jesus instructed them to do, they caught so many fish that their nets began to break. Just as He did in Peter's life, God wants to use the seasons of frustration in our lives for our good. These times are not easy, so here are three things we can do that will help us through seasons of frustration:

1. Acknowledge God's Presence. Being aware of His presence with us at every moment and in every situation, will dramatically change our attitudes and outlooks. Peter realized that Jesus was in the boat with him and that the Lord cared about his problem. We all want to know that we are not alone and that someone understands what we are going through. Jesus can meet those two needs.

2. Cooperate With God's Plan. It would have been easy for Peter to have followed his

intellect that day instead of Jesus. After all, he was a professional fisherman. He did have the best boat, the best nets, and certainly all the knowledge and experience he needed to be a success. It made no sense intellectually to try again. It also would have been easy for Peter to have followed his feelings. He was tired and probably hungry from working all night. But, he listened to Jesus instead of his own intellect or feelings and cooperated with His plan.

3. Trust God's Promises. Peter let down his net the second time in anticipation that something was going to happen. He didn't know what or how much, but he was expecting God to do something. There was no pressure on Peter the second time, no fear of failure, because he was not trusting in his own abilities or his past performances. He was just simply trusting in the word he had gotten from the Lord.

Jesus said to Peter, "Launch out into deep water," because the deep water symbolized total commitment to doing things God's way. Sink or swim, do or die in deep water with God. Allowing ourselves to get to the place in life where we know that if something is going to be done, God will have to do it. We must come to the place where we are willing to do business in deep water with God, because that is where life-changing miracles take place.

In verse ten, Jesus said to Peter, "Don't be afraid..." Jesus was warning him not to fear frustration. If we follow Peter's example, frustration can be a positive thing in our lives, too. We must understand that whatever our area of

frustration, Jesus is right there in the boat with us. He is saying to us just as He said to Peter, "don't be afraid, I have a plan to work all things together for your good, and all I need is your cooperation and a willingness to get out into deep water with Me and do it My way."

In life there are only three ways we can move when we are frustrated: Against it in anger, away from it in fear, or through it in faith. If we allow unresolved anger a place in our lives, the following consequences can be very destructive:

Problems in relationships. People with unresolved anger in their lives have great difficulty letting people get close to them. Anger will impair our ability to give and receive love. It is extremely difficult to please a person who has unresolved anger, so relationships are always strained at best.

Emotional Immaturity. Unresolved anger will "freeze" our emotional maturity level and cause us to respond in childish and immature ways.

Addictive Behaviors. People with unresolved anger are those most likely to become addicted to drugs, alcohol, sex, food, or work—anything that will give them some temporary relief from the pain they carry inside.

Physical Problems. Unresolved anger can cause backaches, headaches, neck pain, ulcers, stomach and digestive problems, as well as heart disease.

We must never forget that how we choose to respond to the frustrating situations we face in life is a choice. When we choose to respond to frustration with anger, we will be in danger of

losing our perspective about our situation. The choice to let go of our anger will give God the opportunity to give us a new perspective, which is a great help when we are in a season of frustration. Seeing things through God's eyes will make all the difference in the world. God sees things differently than we do because we see only a small piece of the puzzle of our lives while He sees the big picture. It's the difference between watching a parade from the sidewalk or from a helicopter. The only thing we can see from the curb is what is right in front of us at the moment, but from the sky, the entire parade is visible. We need to remember that God wants to use times of frustration to help us see our lives through His eyes.



The key to getting through a season of frustration in our lives is trusting God. This may be one of the most important lessons that a Christian can ever learn. It is important because, in the midst of facing frustration, our strength must come from God and God alone. It is crucial at times like these that we focus on what we do know about God and not on what we don't know or understand. When we are in a season of frustration, we must reaffirm who we know God to be. Unless we do, we won't be able to turn to Him for the strength, hope, and courage we need. Three of the most important truths we must reaffirm about God are as follows:

1. God loves us and He understands.

The Bible affirms the love of God again and again. We know this love is unconditional and unending because Jesus demonstrated God's love to us. I John 4:9 and 16 say, "This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him." Psalm 145 speaks of God's abundant goodness and of His being loving toward all He has made. Jeremiah 32:41 tells us that because God loves us, He rejoices in doing good for us. The Bible says that God is

love; and He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, so we can depend on God's love and goodness being unconditional and unchanging. The Bible tells us in Psalm 34:18 that, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Jesus is not removed from our pain. He understands what it is like to suffer loss. The Bible reminds us in the book of Hebrews that Jesus has faced every heartache and pain that we face. He is a Savior who understands.

2. God is too wise to make a mistake.

Psalm 147:5 says, "His wisdom has no limit." Unlike a human parent, God is too wise to make a mistake where His children are concerned. He always knows what's best for us and what is the best way to bring about that result in our lives. Our Heavenly Father has the "big picture" for our lives and therefore is the only One who can know what is best for us. God is so wise that He automatically knows what we need when we need it. He can separate our needs from our wants and knows whether what we want would be good for us to have or whether it would harm us. God's wisdom and ways are so far beyond our limited understanding that the only way we

will find peace in times of frustration is to let go and trust Him.

3. God is in control of everything in our world.

Being in control means God is sovereign and is in charge of the final outcome. The wise, good God who loves and understands us is a sovereign God. God is in complete control of everything at all times. There is not one single event in all the universe which can occur outside of God's sovereign control. Not even willful, malicious acts, or the mistakes of other people can change God's purpose for us. No detail of our lives is too insignificant for our Heavenly Father's attention. No circumstance is so big that He cannot control it. Nothing happens in our

life without a reason, and, if we will allow Him, God will use everything that happens, including frustration, for good in our lives.

Being out of control makes us insecure and fearful. When we are in a frustrating situation over which we have little control, fear will often rob us of our ability to "Be still (rest, cease from striving) and know that He is God." (Psalm 46:10) Anxiety will always propel us into the future by asking, "what's going to happen next?" Fear says, "Do something now!" Reminding ourselves that God is in control will help us rest in our season of frustration.

God, in His love, always wills what is best for us. In His wisdom He always knows what is best, and in His sovereignty He has the power to bring it about. We can trust this kind of Father to meet our needs. The peace that comes in our lives when we choose to trust Him during times of frustration will give us the courage to hold on where we are until God brings us out His way.

God will use everything that happens, including frustration, for good in our lives.