

9 Habits of the Chronically Unhappy

Blowing Things Out of Proportion

CONNECT

What's one of the biggest challenges you've faced? Who or what helped you get through it?

DISCUSS

Have someone read the following verses. As you listen, are there any words or phrases that especially strike you? What questions come to your mind about what it says? Is there anything that is confusing? Encouraging?

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18, NRSV)

¹⁷ For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. ²⁰ No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²² They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³ They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD—and their descendants as well. ²⁴ Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD. (Isaiah 65:17–25 NRSV)

1. How would you explain Romans 8:18 to someone? This might be easy to believe when our lives are easy but much harder when we (or our loved ones) are suffering. Why do you think that's true?
2. What do you think we can do to help ourselves and each other embrace Romans 8:18, even when we're suffering?
3. Christian identified 3 dynamics that occur when we blow things out of proportion:
One thing becomes everything. Small things become big things. Temporary things become permanent things. Which of these best describe your response to difficulties? Share a story that illustrates this dynamic in your life.
4. Do you know anyone who has suffered greatly, and yet they're able to keep things in perspective? Share their story. (It can be you!)
5. What has helped you to keep things in perspective rather than blow them out of proportion?
6. Which aspects of the passage from Isaiah bring you the most hope? Why?

PRAY AND PERSONALIZE IT

1. How do you think your life would be different if you really believed nothing “in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord?” (Romans 8)
2. What step(s) do you want to take this week to replace the habit of blowing things out of proportion with the discipline of keeping things in perspective?
3. How can we pray for you?