

The MASTER's Group includes special features and commentary to assist with understanding the life issues and challenges of aging successfully and the opportunities available for personal enrichment and Christian service.

Meet David Gallagher



Dr. Dave Gallagher is nationally known as an author, speaker and pastor. He is also on staff at Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, Wisconsin. A widely respected authority, Dave has written extensively in the field of pastoral ministry, outreach, small groups, loss and grief, and middle, senior, and elderly adult ministry.

Recent books include *Healing Takes Time* (Liturgical Press); and *Senior Adult Ministry in the 21st Century* (Wipf & Stock Publishers; originally by Group Publishing). Dr. Gallagher leads seminars around the nation on strengthening adult ministry in the Church. He and his wife, Mary Ann, reside in Surprise, Arizona, and have two adult children and two granddaughters.

Facing Disappointments

Dr. David Gallagher



Once while I was at a camp in the mountains in northern California, I saw a small sign that read, "Follow this trail to the little brown church on the hill." Intrigued, I began hiking up the mountain. I hiked and hiked following the turns and inclines until coming to another sign encouraging me to keep going because that little brown church was just around the next bend. This went on for a couple of hours until the sign read, "You are there, just 200 feet to the little brown church." When I reached the top of the mountain, there it was, a little brown church, about 5 inches tall! In some ways, I was disappointed—but I had to grin. My expectations were far different from reality.

In many ways, this past year has been one filled with disappointment. Numbers are high of those who have had to re-enter the work place and those who have seen their savings dwindle. Many in the 70+ group have lost a good portion if not all of their life's savings. We pray that 2009 will be a much better year. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 encourages us with these words from the Apostle Paul, "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word."

We sometimes expect God to make everything right—instantly—but it just does not happen. God knows the timing; our job is to trust in His guidance and strength. The Scriptures give biblical principles to remind us that there is no disappointment in Jesus. We must remember that

God is sovereign and claim His promises. Our goal in life is to walk in the same manner as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6).

Based on Psalm 46, Martin Luther wrote:

“And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed, His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him,
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure: One little word shall fell him.”

One of D.L. Moody’s favorite verses was Isaiah 12:2 "I will trust and not be afraid." Moody used to say, "You can travel to Heaven first-class or second-class. First-class is, 'I will trust and not be afraid.' Second-class is, 'when I am afraid, I will trust in thee.'"

As you continue on into this New Year: 1) accept God’s provision, 2) claim God’s promises, 3) declare God’s victory, and 4) rest in God’s faithfulness.

The Psalmist wrote, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging” (Psalm 46:1-3 NIV).

My response as I claim God’s promises and grow stronger

When was the last time I felt disappointment? Why? How would remembering that God is in control help heal that disappointment?

Whom might you share with and pray with about your disappointment?

Practical steps that I will take today

Today I will leave the impossible up to God, I will make needed adjustments and I will make amends for past failures and then let go and move on. I will remember that healing takes time—lots of time.

My prayer

God, I know that life does have its disappointments, but I am reminded again that there are no disappointments in you.

Two excellent resources are *Overcoming Life’s Challenges – Lessons from the Life of Joseph*, by Bill Crowder, and *Enjoying Your Best Years – Staying Young While Growing Older*, by J Oswald Sanders, both available through RBC Ministries: <http://www.dhp.org/default.aspx>
The little brown church on the hill story was taken from *Healing Takes Time*, pages 47-48, David P. Gallagher, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN