

LYSA TERKEURST

#1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author of *Uninvited*

New York Times
Bestseller



IT'S NOT
SUPPOSED
TO BE
THIS WAY

finding unexpected strength when
disappointments leave you shattered

IT'S NOT
SUPPOSED
TO BE
THIS WAY

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IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE THIS WAY

Finding Unexpected Strength When
Disappointments Leave You Shattered

STUDY GUIDE

SIX SESSIONS

LYSA TERKEURST



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**In their hearts humans plan their
course, but the Lord establishes their
steps. (Proverbs 16:9)**

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

GROUP SIZE

The *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way* video study is designed to be experienced in a group setting, such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or any small group gathering. To ensure everyone has enough time to participate in discussions, it is recommended that large groups break up into smaller circles of four to six people each after the video is viewed.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Each participant should have her own copy of this study guide, as well as her own copy of the book *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*. This study guide contains notes for video segments, directions for activities, discussion questions, and personal studies that will deepen learning between group sessions. This study guide also tells which chapters of the book should be read before each group session. You will dig deeper into the book in the personal studies between group sessions.

TIMING

The time notations—for example, 20 minutes—indicate the *actual* time of video segments and the *suggested* times for each activity or discussion.

Noting the suggested times **in bold with the section heading** will help you to complete each session within the time frame your group has available.

If your group meets for two hours, you will probably be able to cover all of the questions even in the longer sections. You will also have time for the optional activities. If your group meets for 90 minutes, you may need to omit the optional activities and decide how long you can spend on each of the other sections.

You may also opt to devote two meetings rather than one to each session. In addition to allowing discussions to be more spacious, this option has the added advantage of allowing time to discuss the personal studies and the chapters of the book. In the second meeting for each session, devote the time allotted for watching the video to discussing participants' insights and questions from their reading and personal study.

FACILITATION

Each group should appoint a facilitator who is responsible for starting the video and for keeping track of time during discussions and activities. Facilitators may also read questions aloud and monitor discussions, prompting participants to respond and ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

A brief leader's guide for each session is enclosed with the DVD of the video.

WEEK 1 SCHEDULE

BEFORE GROUP MEETING	Read Introduction and Chapters 1–2 <i>It's Not Supposed to Be This Way</i> Book
GROUP MEETING	View Video Session 1: The Birthplace of Disappointment Group Discussion Pages 12–22
PERSONAL STUDY DAY 1	Pages 23–29
PERSONAL STUDY DAY 2	Pages 29–33
PERSONAL STUDY DAY 3	Pages 33–38
DAYS 4 & 5 BEFORE WEEK 2 GROUP MEETING	Read Chapters 3–4 <i>It's Not Supposed to Be This Way</i> Book Complete Any Unfinished Personal Study Activities

Session 1

THE BIRTHPLACE OF DISAPPOINTMENT

What would happen in our lives if we really lived in the absolute assurance of God's love in the midst of our disappointments?

Welcome! (2 minutes)

Welcome to Session 1 of *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*. If this is your first time together as a group, take a moment to introduce yourselves to one another before watching the video. Then let's get started!

Opening Discussion (10 minutes)

Answer the following questions to prepare for this week's video teaching:

- How would you define disappointment?
- What was one sentence that resonated with you from the introduction or chapters 1–2 of the book?

VIDEO

The Birthplace of Disappointment (28 minutes)

LEADER:

Play the video segment for the Introduction, and then play the segment for Session 1. Instruct your group to use the outline below to follow along or take additional notes on anything that stands out.

THIS WEEK'S STATEMENT TO HOLD ONTO:

What would happen in our lives if we really lived in
the absolute assurance of God's love in the midst of
our disappointments?

GENESIS 2:5–9

v. 7: Then the LORD God formed a man
v. 9: . . . trees that were pleasing to the eye

[Your Response Here]

GENESIS 2:15–18

v. 16: And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free . . .”
v. 18: “. . . I will make a helper suitable for him.”

[Your Response Here]

GENESIS 2:23–25

v. 25: Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

[Your Response Here]

GENESIS 3:1–9

“You must not” (Genesis 3:1) versus “You are free” (Genesis 2:16)

[Your Response Here]

When God says “Do not = Do not hurt yourself” (Levi Lusko)

[Your Response Here]

Eve assumed that she knew what a good God would do.

[Your Response Here]

Created things cannot give what only the Creator can give.

[Your Response Here]

You steer where you stare.

[Your Response Here]

God could have been angry, but instead He asked two questions:

- “Where are you?”
- “Who told you that you were naked?”

[Your Response Here]

Sin demands a sacrifice (Genesis 3:21).

In Genesis 3:22–23 (NIV), *banished* can be translated as “sent” in Hebrew (*shalach*).

[Your Response Here]

Look at your disappointments through the lens of the great love of God. It will change how you see everything.

[Your Response Here]

GROUP DISCUSSION

(45 minutes)

LEADER, READ EACH NUMBERED PROMPT TO THE GROUP.

1. What part of the teaching had the most impact on you? Take turns sharing with the group.

[Your Response Here]

2. Lysa explained that the reason we face so many disappointments in life is that we are living between two gardens. There's a garden in Genesis 2–3 at the beginning of the Bible and a garden in Revelation 21–22 at the end of the Bible. Our hearts were created in the perfection of the garden of Eden, but we don't live there.

Open your Bible to Genesis 2:8–25 and let's read aloud, changing readers every few verses.

What were the wonderful features of this garden? List as many as you can.

[Your Response Here]

3. What do these beautiful details reveal about God and His nature? List and discuss.

[Your Response Here]

4. Why was the provision of water (v. 10) important? What does it reveal about God?

[Your Response Here]

5. How would you describe the relationship between Adam and the woman (Eve) depicted in verses 18–25?

[Your Response Here]

6. Sometimes we're trying to hold people accountable to a level of perfection in our relationships that's not realistic. Not that we permit or excuse behaviors in the abuse category, but what about those expectations we have of someone else who just isn't spiritually, emotionally, or relationally at the place where those expectations are realistic? How could understanding this help you in a current relationship that feels disappointing at times?

[Your Response Here]

7. Is there a realistic option that could encourage growth in the relationship?

[Your Response Here]

HAVE SOMEONE READ ALOUD:

The Hebrew for the words “suitable helper” in Genesis 2:18 doesn’t imply a subordinate. The Holy Spirit is often described as our “helper” in the New Testament. And “suitable” here doesn’t mean “good enough or just okay” but rather “perfect counterpart.” A suitable helper is a needed counterpart, someone who fills a need that Adam can’t manage on his own.

Jesus himself says in John 16:7–8, “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you” (ESV). Notice how the Spirit of God is described as our “Helper” in John 16:7. It’s the Greek word *parakletos* and is translated as “helper,” “intercessor,” and “advocate.” The essence of this word lends to the reality that the Spirit was called or summoned to aid and help the people of God. Therefore, the perfect, suitable helper was given to us by God the Father just as He gave Eve to Adam as a perfect counterpart.

8. What clarifying revelation do you have after reading this insight on the word *helper*?

[Your Response Here]

9. Before sin entered the world, Adam and Eve had a close relationship with God and each other. Communication didn’t feel complicated. Work was a pleasure, and Adam didn’t have to toil among thorns and thistles in order to feed his family. Eve never felt the sting of comparison and struggles that seem to never end. Neither of them knew the bitter taste of sin or shame. How does this bring context to some of the situations in your life that make you say, “It’s not supposed to be this way”?

[Your Response Here]

10. Open your Bible to Genesis 3:1–9 and let’s read aloud, changing readers every few verses, noticing the slippery slope of compromise.

[Your Response Here]

11. Lysa highlighted the difference between “You must not” in Genesis 3:1 versus “You are free” in Genesis 2:16. When looking at God’s protective commands, do you tend to view God as a “You must not” God or as a “You are free” God? How does that affect the way you relate to Him?

[Your Response Here]

12. Eve assumed that even if they touched the fruit they would die. She added to God’s rule which created assumptions. Sometimes we assume we know what God should do in circumstances as well. Give an example of a way you’ve done that before.

[Your Response Here]

13. Remember, God wasn't removing Adam and Eve from the garden out of anger. He was actually protecting them. This was an act of mercy, not cruelty. If Adam and Eve had eaten from the tree of life, they would have lived forever in sin and would have been eternally separated from God. Write down how this example of His mercy, protection, and love could be playing out in your situation. Share your responses with the group.

[Your Response Here]