

Loving on Purpose Podcast

with Bonnie Lyman

Episode 117: Is God Disappointed in Me? - An interview with Kurt Francom

This is Bonnie Lyman, and you're listening to the podcast, Loving on Purpose. Episode number 117 is God Disappointed in Me, an interview with Kurt Francom.

Welcome to the podcast, Loving on Purpose. I'm your host, Bonnie Lyman. If you're having trouble navigating through your relationships with your adult children. If you are struggling to connect with them or having specific challenges, you're in the right place.

Hello, my listeners, welcome back to another week of my podcast, Loving on Purpose. I get so excited to talk to you. I feel like you're right here. In my kitchen table talking to me. So many of you maybe are Moving into spring and getting a little sunshine in your life and I want to Thank you for taking the time to listen And take time for those of you that have left reviews And of course, I always appreciate it when I hear of somebody Thank you That you shared this podcast with.

So today I'm excited to have a guest, Kurt Francom, and I, I feel like he's one of my best friends and I've probably spoken to him in person, maybe twice. But he is the founder of a non profit, which I'll maybe tell you a little bit, organization called Leading Saints. I am a member of, but I really got to know Kurt through his podcast, leading saints, and he'll tell you what that is, but if you Google leading saints Kurt, what was the name of the family you interviewed where you interviewed both?

the couple the adult son and wife who had left the church and his parents. Do you remember what their last name was? Yep. The last name is Packard. Okay. So it's a fantastic one to listen to. Oh, it is so good and how they worked out. And it gave me A whole new understanding of of our need as parents.

We don't have to agree. We don't have to endorse, but just understanding. What our kids do, whether it's leaving the church, whether it's, um, graduating from college after you spend a lot of money and they decide just to do nothing, travel the world or be a ski bum for two years, but just. Being able to love them by understanding them and that it's their choice and not necessarily a bad thing what they're doing, but you'll want to be sure and go back and listen to that.

So, I'm going to turn the time over. To Kurt and I just highly respect everything he puts out in the world and it gets you thinking. He's a strong member of the church and yet he gets you thinking about some of the, you could say policies of the church in, in a way

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that helps you understand some of the changes that have gone on and also a lot, a lot of help if you're a leader in the church.

So Kurt, I'm going to turn the time over to you. Awesome. Well, thanks, Bonnie, and I consider you a friend, so never hesitate to connect us in a friendship way, for sure. I've always enjoyed our conversations and meeting you, and so yeah, those who aren't familiar, Leading Saints, we're a non profit organization.

We're with a mission to help Latter day Saints be better prepared to lead, so we talk all things leadership. Both maybe in formal leadership in the church and in callings, but also just in leadership as a Latter day Saint, you know, how to make a difference in your community and your, in your church how to step up to these, these different roles that we have to, and lead in an effective way.

So it's been a lot of fun and it's also guided me on the path to you know, I do a lot of firesides. I'll do some Live events through leading saints and then now I'm venturing off into the book writing world. So that's a basic synopsis of, of what I do. So. Okay. That's great. And that, that is why I wanted to have Kurt on this podcast because I've just got done reading his book called is God disappointed in me.

And some of us struggle with that and maybe it even crosses over to is God disappointed in my And it's just not a healthy emotional path to go down. So, I'm going to let Kurt talk about, first of all, how his book, because a lot of it has to do, which is, I feel we need to start with ourselves and get ourselves in a strong place before we Think about that our children need to do that because really all we need to worry about Am I in a place that I feel?

that I Don't disappoint god. So Kurt You know why Why do you believe we? You Can't disappoint God awesome question, and I love the premise of your podcast and your your Coaching efforts because I know that this audience, you know, you know when you think of parents of adult children there's can be a lot of aching that's happening behind the scenes a lot of worry a lot of sleepless nights as individuals that see The decisions that their children make it was hard enough.

Maybe during those teenage years when you had a little bit more influence and say, but now here they are legal adults, maybe with their own families. And oftentimes you as the parent, Phil disappointed. And in our experience. It's very easy to project our mortal experience onto our eternal father's experience and think, well, if I'm disappointed in a parent, he must be really disappointed with my children and even myself.

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And, and then we maybe, on our shoulders that I, I didn't do enough, you know, here they are making these decisions or they've left their faith or they're, they're raising their kids in a way that's just very frustrating. And, you know, I should have done more, I could have, or I should have done less, or maybe I was too overbearing.

And so I just want to, the first part of the book, I try and frame this concept of maybe we're a little bit too quick to project our own experience as mortals onto God, who is not mortal, right? And as yes, there's a lot that we have in common with God, since we are his children, but there's also a lot that he's overcome that he doesn't struggle with.

Right? And, and disappointment is one of those because what, where disappointment comes from is expectation. And when we hold expectation, You know, I even referenced this concept of expectation pain in the book, right, like we sometimes hurt our own self when we have this expectation on others and then all that we get back is, is pain because we're giving expectations to people who maybe never accepted these expectations, nor did they ever want our expectations, even though we're their parent, and then it just leads to more pain and we, and we, we assume that the, the solution to healing this pain is for them to just absorb the expectation and fulfill the expectation and then we can all be happy, you know, and So I really believe like this is the beauty of the God that we worship is we, we worship a God of grace.

That's the, the, the subtitle of the book of removing shame from the gospel of grace. And I wrote this book primarily for those individuals out there who feel, from their religion experience or just from their mortal experience, they feel an abounding sense of overwhelm where they think, you know, I go to church here is, you know, supposed to be this hopeful gospel.

But every time I leave church, I just feel more overwhelmed or anytime I engage with my, my adult children, I just feel overwhelmed because everybody's going through so much. And when does this let up, right? Do we just suffer through mortality, hoping for this. It's far off day in the eternity that all will be healed and made well and then it'll be worth it.

And I just, that is not the gospel or the God that, that we were ever meant to worship. God is somebody who, who is with us in this and gives us grace, gives us strength, gives us hope and redemption. That is the number one feeling I want all people to feel as they leave church every week is that I'm redeemed.

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Like, I can take on another week because. I'm, I'm walking in a relationship with Jesus Christ. And so I just, you know, and obviously there, a lot of this is spoken in hyperbole, but at the end, the day I truly believe we will, the one thing that will shock us most when we are reunited with our heavenly father is just how.

How encouraging he is and how he was never, ever disappointed in where, how we fall short, or how we raised our kids, or how we showed up to church or how we fulfilled our calling because all things are fulfilled through his son Jesus Christ. We see it time and time again in the scriptures. His grace, Jesus Christ, grace is sufficient.

It is sufficient. And so we need can hold on hope knowing that God's never been disappointed in us and in that state of mind when we frame the gospel that way. It is remarkably encouraging, and I can't help but return to that well over and over again because mortality keeps beating me down. Okay, so how do you get to that point, though, where you can And that's the, that's the path I hope now going through this book that I want people to, to go on.

Not that I have like, here's the 10 step plan, Bonnie, and if you just do these 10 steps, you'll, you'll get there. But just, I think the first step is we have to frame the gospel in an appropriate way. Oftentimes we. invest too much effort on, well, what's true? Is this true or is it not true? Do we have an eternal father?

Are we his children? Does he have commandments? Is that true or not true? But even though that all those things are true, if we frame them incorrectly, and this goes to a lot of the, you know, the thought work that, that you and other life coaches do, like all you're doing is helping people step back and say, okay, what, what's the circumstance here?

Like, is that a really a circumstance or is that a thought, right? Like, is the circumstance, can you prove in a court of law, that God is perpetually angry at you? Or, maybe you've just framed it in an incorrect way, right? And so, I think the first step is just stepping back and saying, maybe I framed God incorrectly.

Or the the, the one, the one quote in the book of, from I want us to say his name is Michael Young, the guy who wrote the book The Shack. He says, it took me all of 50 years to wipe the face of my earthly father off of the face of God. So often we assume that our eternal father is God. It's very much like our mortal father, and that's a very dangerous place to be if your mortal father was abusive, dismissive, didn't show up for you, if he was angry a lot of time, if you can primarily remember those arguments rather

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than the positive times, like we naturally are going to project that onto an eternal God, but that A That is, it would be an incorrect framing.

And once we first start from a place of okay, I'm going to surrender all those preconceived notions of who God is and how, how I think he thinks of me in a negative way. But what if we believed in a God that has never been disappointed in you? Is that in fact just your biggest cheerleader? And is always on the sidelines of your life cheering you on.

He's never giving you a lecture after the game or as you walk back to the car, like my, my father or my earthly father often did to me. He's just simply so satisfied in you because all things are fulfilled through his son, Jesus Christ. Like he, he doesn't hope that Jesus Christ's sacrifice worked. Like, he knows it does.

He's not, he's not crossing his finger, waiting till the end of eternity to see if this actually worked. It is done. And now he wants to engage with us in a relationship to help us become more and more like him. And when we feel that love, when God comes to me and says, you, you could, you could never change.

You could do every silly thing you still do today and I'd still love you. When I feel that grace, that complete love, I can't help but turn to him and say, how do I do that? How do I become like you? What are some things I could do better? Because I want to become like you. Not in the sense of I'm trying to earn his love or measure up, but because I want to become like you.

I want to be that type of being that can love like you. And so that's hopefully the starting place. I think that's great and a thought that came to my mind having to do with some of my listeners and their suffering because their kids are suffering. Hmm. You know, I, I too believe that Jesus Christ suffered for us so that we didn't have to suffer.

And so maybe by us not realizing that we don't need to suffer this, this is part of our kids' journey that we, we can. Show an increase of love, just like our heavenly father does. I had one client that talked about, they, they had one child who had made lots of mistakes, but he came to a point in his life where he owned up to them.

I don't even know if he repented of all of them, but there There was no judgment. She could love him There was another child Who wasn't quite to that point? And She had a hard time You know, she was trying to just like him but I think that comes back to the

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You know, like you said, if we just simplify the gospel, God loves us, no matter what, just like you, you did that child that is made some mistakes.

Yeah, maybe clean up some of them, but not all of them, but there's just something you just love them. And, and know that you know, I like to say it's God's business. Yeah. Yeah. It just feels better to love them. It feels better and I can get closer to God knowing I'm not disappointing him because I think all of us don't intentionally try to sin. You know, or making mistakes.

I don't like the word sin a lot of times is you know, for whatever reason we fell into that we're bottom line is we're not happy and, and God wants us to be happy. Absolutely. He, he talks, Kurt's book talks about this and gives you some great insights. Yeah, and this is the miracle of parenting, really, is that I've never met a parent, like, even the parent that has the child that really has made all the mistakes, and they've, you know, I've, you know, disappointed that parent so much and whether they're in jail or addicted like at no point does that parent ever feel at least I've never met this parent who gets to a point that says they've hurt me so much I just don't care anymore.

Like I don't even feel I don't, I don't even see them as my child anymore. This is the beauty of parent that aching. That is persistent. That is just proof of the love that God put in your heart for your children. And this is a very divine experience of being a parent. Is that you never ever lose that love no matter how many times they hurt you.

You still want them to turn to God and come back. Right? The prodigal son analogy. If they came back you would still just love them. and kiss them on their neck as the prodigal father's son, right? That's the beauty of repentance. And the, the oftentimes isn't, it's not that we have a problem loving them. I mean, sometimes we, we tend to love them too much in ways that we, you know, hey, here's some more expectation because I'm, I'm, you give, you're giving them expectation through love.

The problem is that we then interpret that that's what God is doing to us. And, and the scripture says it like joy will be in heaven over the one sinner who repented. The 99 just, just spirits who need no repentance, right? Like there is a celebration in life of your son or daughter who's gone so wayward and guess what?

They will repent because eternity, God plays the long game. They will, they will return, they will turn to God when they have a full understanding. And that will be worth a celebration. And that celebration is worth it because of God's grace that he gives so openly to all of us. Right, and so that, you know, reminds me, of course, when I was

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reading this book, I, I'm looking for things to apply it to, you know, my response my dealings with my adult children and the thing, God, God has no timeline.

I like the idea, the doors open early and close late. I think a lot of times a parent. And they, they're not patient enough. They're not willing to wait for their children, you know, to come around. And, um, you know, I would say for the children to end up being happier in their life. Right. You know, it's, it's, I, it's not just about me and doing this for me, but it's.

living a happier life by making better choices. Right. I'd like you to address this idea. He talks about righteousness is really the equivalent of the right relationship. Yeah. So I, I found this Hebrew translation or somebody, not that I'm like studying Hebrew or anything, but like I was introduced to this Hebrew translation of the scripture term righteousness as right relationship.

Now you can. Look throughout the scriptures. I mean, it doesn't take you a few pages in the scripture to read until you come across the word righteousness. And in our modern perspective, we've often framed the term righteousness as almost perfection. Like somebody who's living really, really good. Like, yeah, maybe they're not perfect, but they're as close to perfect as you can be.

And it's so, when we have that framing, it's really hard to identify with the term righteousness. And when we read it. Or it can be a very shaming experience as we're reading the scriptures and see, look at all these blessings that are promised to the righteous and think, Oh, well, I'm just not there yet.

You know, I've got so much more work to do before I'm there, but it is through Jesus Christ. He's the one that makes you righteous. And, but I appreciate, especially in the Latter day Saint theology, this concept of instead of it being righteous. It being right relationship and this is kind of a fun activity to do is you can go through the topical guide search the word righteousness and then pick a handful of scriptures that use the term righteous or righteousness and everywhere you read that replace it with the terms, the term right relationship.

And this is. It really changes the how you can connect with the scriptures when you're seeing that, Oh, God is not inviting me into a life of perfection. He's inviting me into a right relationship, a place I can step into and engage with God, right? And I often can compare it to like a marital relationship, like a marriage relationship.

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Is beautiful because you're stepping into a relationship with somebody else. It's a very sanctifying experience as you step into mortality with somebody else and raise a family and, and that can be a very sanctifying experience. Well, God invites us into a relationship and with our, you know, faith tradition, we have so many ordinances that they're all about relationship.

That's why we step into baptism. Or, that's why we step into you know, the, the, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, or, or, endowment. Like, for a God to endow me, for, with, with power from on high? For God to endow me with an identity? Like, that is a remarkably strengthening experience and a place where I can go and engage with God in a way that, that is encouraging and hopeful.

And so anytime I make a mistake or I stumble again, or I'm just not the parent I should be, I can always remember myself. I'm not, it's not that I'm now unrighteous. I'm still in a relationship with God. I'm still in a covenant with God. And so God offers us relationships. to continue on in life. When we're overwhelmed, he's like, don't worry, I'm in relationship with you.

We will figure this out together. And it's a beautiful mortal experience. Okay, how, you know, we talk about a lot of times when times get tough, when we have trials, whether it's with our kids or whatever You know, having strength from the Lord. Well, the only way I was able to do that was with strength from the Lord.

So, would you, you know, how, how can you tie that into not thinking God is disappointed? Yeah, yeah. In me. Yeah, that's a great question. And this is, this is really where the rubber hits the road with the gospel and why we, why, why are we even religious people to begin with? My hope would be is that it offers us strength and I think too often we frame it in this way of like no it's supposed to offer us happiness and we worry that if our children leave the faith they will then be unhappy when in reality I've met a lot of atheist people who are very happy and they go about their business they do the things and are they maybe missing something or I feel like they're missing something missing something?

Sure. But they're very happy. The, the, the offering the gospel has for us that Jesus comes to us with is healing. It is strengthening. It is encouragement. And so being in covenant with him, we will find more and more of that. Well, what does that look like in real life? And this is really something I would encourage your audience to sit with.

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Like, how would you articulate this? If you had a child come to you and say, How does the gospel strengthen you? What would you say? A lot of us say, well, I keep the commandments and seeing things seem to go well. Right. And we go back to the the scripture in the doctrine comes right. That all blessings are contingent upon obedience.

And so if I do the right thing, I will get a wonderful blessing. But that turns us, it turns God into a, a vending machine. Like I put a quarter in and I get something out. Well, you can do that game until. Wait a minute, I put a quarter in, like I've been, I've been doing the temple attendance thing. I've been keeping the commandments and life is falling apart, right?

So it's not about the vending machine. It's about the relationship that offers us strength. And for me, when I'm, times are tough, the fact that I can enter into my closet or a quiet place and sit and ponder over the relationship I have with God, the promises He gives me, the encouragement He gives me, the fact that He knows my name.

The fact that he has given me a divine identity, as I sit in that, and oftentimes it could be in a meditative place, or it could be in a place of, you know, I'm just gonna serve people, not because I expect something back, but it's in that service, where I reveal my divine identity, where I can be of help to somebody else, I feel strengthened, I can now get up the next morning and give it one more go, and no matter how many times you have to do that, God's willing to do it one more time.

That's the beauty of this, of our sacrament tradition. The more I've attended other faith traditions and their Sunday worship, I mean, they have components about them that are just beautiful, but one thing that stood out is just how, how big the emphasis we have on the sacrament of that sacred right, where every week that deacon walks up to you with that sacrament tray and regardless of how you treated your children or how disappointed you were in your children that week.

He still comes up to you, a representative of Jesus Christ and says, here is my sacrifice. Here are my emblems. Take it. Do it. The deacon never rolls his eyes when you have to reach out and take that bread another time. Like really, it's only been seven days and here we are again, you have to take the sacrament again.

Of course, of course you do, because we are in relationship with him. We've returned to that relationship every week and asking for renewal. for healing, for strength. And so it just, even in these, these ordinances of, of, of, you know, the sacrament or even returning to the temple, that's what we're encouraged to do over and over again.

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As I returned to the temple, I'm not doing it, hoping like, see God, I'm doing it. I'm here at the temple that like, now will you bless me? No, no, no, no. I enter that temple broken. I enter that temple, maybe spiritually wounded, almost bleeding out. Wanting strength and I, you will feel strength in those things and not as you go through the motions of doom, but as you just sit in peace, surrendering at all, giving your children, their decisions, everything, all your expectations to Jesus, putting them on the altar and saying, I want to try again.

Will you mentor me? And in my experience, God has shown up and offered me grace, which I, which is the most motivating experience is when I feel his full love. There's the least thing I want to do. The last thing I want to do is to give up. And the thought came to my mind, I think that was a great, a great way to end this is your, there's nothing.

That feels better and is more motivating than Christ God's love and grace for you. So if we can just emulate that toward our children and never give up on them, but to always have that hope. And that love for them. And I, I think we can do better at that by strengthening our relationship by feeling that from our heavenly father.

Knowing it's possible, even though he's God and can do everything. We, you know, we were created in his image and I feel like the atonement of Jesus Christ gives us the capacity to get there. So, I, I just can't recommend Kurt's book enough, Is God Disappointed in Me? I think it will be a real strength and a comfort to all of you that are listening.

So Kurt, tell us where we can find this book where to go to listen to your podcast or to, to get involved to access. He's got a whole library through his nonprofit. It's organization of different helps of I know that it's helped me with having a gay son. There's just all sorts of things.

So how, how can we get more of you? Sure. So obviously the book is, is available on Amazon. That might be the easiest place for people. We're recording this first part of April and currently it is in Costco stores in Idaho, Utah, in Arizona. So if you want to, and that's probably the best price, you know, Costco always has the best price.

And And you can just buy one book. They won't, they won't require, require you to buy it in bulk. So, but you're welcome to, of course. And Amazon, and then it should hopefully start popping up in desert books as well. And all things Leading Saints. You can subscribe to the podcast, however you're listening to this.

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episode is search leading saints. Go look for the red logo or go to leading-saints.org. And that's a good jumping off point as well to all the different types of content we have. And we have one thing I'll emphasize here is we have a, we did a whole virtual conference about called questioning saints.

That was what the Packard interview was a part of where we explore how do we as individuals encourage mentor. individuals who are lose their faith. And so that that's a can be found on leading-saints.org as well. That I think many of your listeners would find benefit in listening to those. And it's, you know, there's an option to listen to it for free.

So head that way. All right. I will put that in the show notes also. So again, Kurt, I just want to thank you for taking the time to do this interview with me. It's always fun to chat with you. And yeah, I hope we get to see each other sooner than later. I hope so too. And so I just, I'm going to sign off to all you lovely listeners and I'll get back with you next week.

If you liked this, this episode and you felt it was a benefit to you, I ask you to share it with somebody. That perhaps it could also benefit. But if you're still feeling kind of stuck in that, you don't know how to apply what was talked about or where to start on, on changing your thoughts, on changing your perspective, on bettering your relationship.

Get on a call with me, and we can have a discussion. I can tell you how to apply it and where we start. And then you get to decide what you want to do about this relationship that maybe you're struggling with with your adult children. There's no reason to go on the rest of our lives struggling with our relationships with our adult children.

Let's assume the best. Let's assume that we all love each other, and we're just trying to figure out how to maintain our own boundaries and respect another one's. But I can help you with everything. So just go to BonnieLyman.com and book a call. I can't wait to hear from you.