

Episode 16: Unfulfilled Longings

Resources:

Books

[Heaven - Randy Alcorn](#)

[Gospel Primer - Milton Vincent](#)

Video

[Dealing with Unfulfilled Longings - Janet Aucoin](#)

Transcript:

Janet: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Alexandra: I just want to make it as totally simple and no brainer as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy. Typically, I'll be joined by either Jocelyn or Alexandra, but for our first full episode listen as all three of us discuss the topic of joy.

Janet: Welcome back. Alexandra and I are here today talking about another subject that comes up frequently in dealing with women. We're going to talk today about how do we deal with unfulfilled longings. I mean, I've got some of those. Do you have any of those Alexandra?

Alexandra: Definitely. So I have heard you speak on this topic quite a few times, cause it's one of your most popular talks and it seems to always be applicable in my life, no matter what the season.

Janet: I think that's one of the reasons that so many of us can relate to this. This isn't about a particular season, you know. But when I've talked with women, I mean a variety of ages, I've talked with junior high up to women in their eighties. And when we think about it, either when we're younger, we have expectations that haven't happened yet, but we just assume it. Or when we're older, we realize we had these expectations for our lives. What are some of those? When I talk about expectations, what comes to your mind?

Alexandra: That my kids are happy and thriving.

Janet: And I'm going to say that we'll have kids. We'll have the ones we want, when we want, the age we want, and the sex that we want and then they'll thrive. We just assume that. That's when we picture our future. Excellent. Excellent.

Alexandra: I think another common one would be that I would be able to get married right out of college or get married at all.

Janet: Yes, yes. If that's what you want.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: You know, so some people would say, I would like to get married at 25 and started having children at 27. I would like to have some time on my own, but it's amazing you plan and you just expect that that's what's going to happen. Yep. I agree. I know one for me would be growing up, I never pictured myself not healthy. I mean, you just think, you don't even think about that. You just assume when you picture your future, I'm going to be healthy or worst case scenario, I'm going to go to the doctor and then I'll be healthy. That that's just how, so I'm going to have a spouse. I'm going to have a certain amount of money. With a job, I'm going to do something that really matters. But I think the bottom line of all of those, these are the things that I think are going to make me satisfied and fulfilled and content. So that's what I go after. And I do think, you know, men and women, we're all made of the same stuff. We all have expectations, but it seems to show itself a little differently. I really believe that women are designed by God to be helpers. And so we're a little more relational.

Alexandra: Sure.

Janet: And as a result, it seems in the women I've talked with, including myself. We tend to expect to find that fulfillment somehow in my relationships. Which I think is why even little girls need to have a best friend. You know, we have to be able to break our necklaces in half and share it. And we're only whole when we're together and we have to go to the bathroom together and we become very cliquey and very jealous. I was shocked when I had a son and realized three boys can be friends. You can relate that three girls could not.

Alexandra: Yes. Yes.

Janet: So it's just very different. So when I don't have those things that I think are going to make me satisfied, I just go after them. I clamor after them. But what I think is almost worse, what happens when the thing that you thought you needed, you get it. And you're still not satisfied. What do you do with that? Well, I had the privilege of being an advisor at a Christian co-op house at Purdue, which is really like sorority. 32, 34 girls lived there. I doubt there were many times that there was a girl there by herself in this house. People everywhere. And yet at one of their meetings, a while back, one of the other girls expressed a concern that she'd been lonely and

felt unloved in the house. Just as an aside, my husband was the advisor for the men's Christian cooperative. And here again is where men and women are different. Brent said, I have never had a man raise his hand and say, I feel lonely and unloved. I was like, again, it's about relationships for the girls.

Alexandra: Different struggles there. I'm sure.

Janet: Everybody has struggled, but it was like totally different. But what was interesting is somebody else in the meeting looked around the room and asked would everybody in the house, whoever felt lonely and unloved raise her hand.

Alexandra: Like how many hands do you think were raised?

Janet: Yeah, every girl.

Alexandra: Wow.

Janet: Every girl. Why do I say that? Well, these were girls all of the same age, all claiming to be believers coming sometimes from incredibly lonely situations and saying, now I have 32 sisters. They're sisters in Christ. We're in the same season of life. We all have the same goals. I'm going to have the camaraderie that I've never had in my whole life. And then they get. And they're surprised. I'm still lonely. I'm still discouraged. And it gives me an ache. I don't know what to do with, cause I really thought this one. You know, I know what it's like to not be the in-person. Growing up, we moved every two to three years because of my dad's job. And so one of my passions in ministry is wherever I can intentionally draw people in. That's just a heartbeat of mine. I know at one point we were over the college ministry and you would see girls clumping together on Sunday mornings before we, we had our Sunday school class and then you'd see the newer girls off to the side and my blood would just boil. So I did become, I will admit it, the friendship Nazi, and I would walk around and say, did you see that girl over there standing alone? Oh, you did. Is there a reason you're still standing here then? And then they'd go.

Alexandra: Good for you.

Janet: Oh, well, I became known for that. I'd walk up and they'd start looking around. Who's here I should be talking to. Right. They were really growing, but in the middle of all of that, one of the new girls ask me if we could get together and she wanted to talk to me about how she felt left out and like she didn't belong. And I understand that, it was a great opportunity to talk to her about what I still believe is true. She needed to live out her purpose. She can represent the values of God wherever she is. She can look for other people to love that we don't go into those settings looking for, who's going to meet my needs. We go into those settings saying I'm loved by the God of the universe, and now I get to go love someone else. So I said that and I believed it was true, but it also hurt my heart that she was not in.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: Well, not long after that. One of the girls who was in. Asked me if we could get together, she wanted to talk and I was very happy to get with her cause I had some things I wanted to say as well. So, but I let her go first thought I should, since she wanted to get with me. And I was so surprised, she said to me, you know, I just don't feel like I fit in.

Alexandra: Wow.

Janet: And I was like, really? Okay. So went through a lot of the same things. Well, that's not why we go. And what's the Lord doing? He's developing compassion in you, all of these things, you can live out God's values. I believe all of that, but I said out of curiosity, so who are you wanting to be in with? Like who's in that you're feeling left out from? She mentioned the girl I met with last time.

Alexandra: Oh, my word.

Janet: I was shocked. I was like, are you kidding me? So I can't show that because they don't know I met with each other, but I told them the same things and I still believe it. The goal is not to be in the goal is to love. And that the Lord is using that and drawing you closer and giving you compassion. I said all those things, but I left there like mind blown. So I come in the house and I opened the door and I say to Brent, you are not going to believe what I just found out. Nobody is in. That was mind blowing to me. And I realized as girls that's that whole, I want to find a place and I've got to find the person. And so all of us are feeling that where we just not fitting in. And I think part of the problem there is believing the lie that that shouldn't happen. That wherever I go, I should feel like I perfectly fit in. That any longings that I have, because I know Jesus, they should be gone. Jesus did come. So, he came to fulfill all my longings, which means I'm going to be surprised and discouraged when they come back.

Alexandra: Yeah. I think wrong expectations does lead to unfulfilled longings. And this is definitely an untrue expectations that many Christians believe. I mean, it's easy to expect that I wouldn't, or shouldn't feel this way.

Janet: Yeah. It's like, there's something wrong with me. So then I'm on a path I have to figure out what do I have to do differently to get those longings met? it can lead me to being depressed, being anxious, clamoring after other people, trying to find the friend, being discontent with where I am noticing, being very sensitive to my friends don't understand me, my husband, my boss. They don't appreciate me. I hear this a lot, I'm trying to do what God says, but it's not "working." And I don't mean this snarky. I really want you to think about, if you say that, what did you think it would do? You thought following the word of God would do something and it's not. What did you think it would do? And I think for a lot of us, I thought I would feel fulfilled. I thought I would feel none of these longings anymore. So I'm doing it and it's not working. Well,

what do we know? Jesus came into a sinful wicked world and he does give us the only hope we have. But what is it? Is it that if I know him, all of my longings will be fulfilled now because if God's word says. We should expect it. But that's not even what it says. The hope was that we would be able to have a relationship with the God of the universe now, and then one day we're going to be with him.

Alexandra: Amen.

Janet: And when we are we'll never experienced loneliness. We will never have an unfulfilled longing again. I mean, if we think about it, we were created to live in close relationship with our maker, just like Adam and Eve before the fall. It says they physically walked with God in the cool of the garden. I just wonder if before sin I'd had the opportunity to ask them. Yeah, but do you ever feel lonely? I just really think they would say, I don't even know what that word means.

Alexandra: Yeah. Yeah.

Janet: They would have no context for that. They were living the way they were designed to live in the presence of God. Well, if I know that, why would I be surprised that I have unfulfilled longings? I'm not home. Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth writes about that in her book Lies Women Believe. She has a whole chapter entitled "I should not have to live with unfulfilled longings" as one of the lies. And she says a couple of things about that. We have to recognize, we will always have unfulfilled longings, this side of heaven. So we shouldn't be surprised by that, but I have believed all those lies. Still can, but didn't even know I was believing them for many years. I got married at 28. I realized that's young for some, old for some. It's old enough to have a lot of friends get married and not know if you would. And I remember before I got married, watching spouses that would bicker over stupid stuff and thinking they got married young, they have no idea what it's like to not have someone that committed to you. If I had someone that committed to me, I would not be complaining over stupid petty things. I don't know why you're laughing, but I am married to a wonderful godly man. I am petty and I am not fulfilled. And that surprised me. It really did when I was single and lonely and wanting that soulmate. I really thought if God allows me to have a husband those longings will be met. So I just need to trust him until that point. Then I got married and I went through one of the loneliest times in my life. and what made it worse was knowing I'm in the closest relationship I'm ever going to have, and it's not enough.

Alexandra: The ache feels so much deeper.

Janet: Yeah. It's more hopeless.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: Because I didn't have, what am I going to go to?

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: At least when I was single, I knew what I was going toward.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: Now what. I also lost three babies before I had my first. So I know that having a baby is not a right. It's a grace gift and I'm going to be very thankful for the two I have. And knowing that it's above and beyond what I deserve. I'm going to be completely content and satisfied with all that I have now. I wish I'm still not. I certainly learned I'm selfish. I also learned my theology was wrong. Brent was never supposed to meet my longings. My kids are not supposed to meet my longings. I wasn't even free to focus on loving him when I was clamoring after him to fulfill all my needs. No relationship, including my children and my husband, will ever fully satisfy me. And until I recognize that and learn what it meant to start walking and repentance of that. I was using them. Using them to meet my needs instead of loving them.

Alexandra: Like, almost like an instrument to serve an idol.

Janet: Yes. Yes. My family is now the instrument to fulfill me. That's exactly right. And I learned, I couldn't love my husband as long as I needed him. As long as I clamored after him. Because while he's a great husband, he's a really bad god. And it was very cruel to ask that of him.

Alexandra: Can we just pause and just recognize that, you know, you might not have seen that in yourself if you hadn't gone through some of those hard times. And not that God ever like wants us to suffer. He, I love in the Gospel Primer how it says that God forces trials to bow to his gospel purposes. And it's just how good of our God to use even situations where you might have been like going through the consequences of wrong thinking by, you know, I'm assuming that's how the loneliness came about at the beginning of your marriage, but like how good of God to use that to be what changed your theology and made you closer to him?

Janet: Yes. He uses all, none of it's wasted.

Alexandra: Yes, yes.

Janet: Yes. Yeah. So God's word clear. Even those of us that have a relationship with him and have the spirit of God in us are not going to be totally fulfilled. Romans 8:23 says this "and not only this, but also we ourselves having the first fruits of the Spirit." So he's obviously talking to believers because they have the first fruits of the Spirit. "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." As believers were groaning waiting for the day that will be adopted. And anybody who has walked through an adoption Alexandra, I'm sure you understand that. You can know that those boys are, you know, But until it's finalized, you haven't experienced it yet. They're still yours, but there's that ache for it to be finalized. And to know it's a done deal I've been adopted, but there's an ache for it to be

finalized for me to be there. So my longings are just a reminder. I was not designed to find my fulfillment in a fallen world, separated from our maker. And I love this quote by C. S. Lewis. "If I discover within a desire, which nothing in this world can satisfy, the probable explanation is I was made for another world."

Alexandra: I love that quote.

Janet: Isn't that amazing. He goes on to say this "probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy our desire, but only to arouse to suggest the real thing." Isn't that something like the earthly pleasures were not meant to fulfill me. They were meant to show me that's a taste of what I'm longing for. So the goal isn't to try to make these pleasures on earth, completely satisfy me, but they're to draw me to the hope that something better is coming. An analogy that I've used that has been helpful to some is if you think about, being a newlywed, and I know you have an amazing husband, but he's not perfect. So let's just imagine he is. So perfect husband loves you perfectly. You're newlyweds, and he goes off to the military. There is no question that a hundred percent. He's devoted to you. And it's true. That is right. He's writing you letters every day. He is FaceTiming. He's doing all he can to stay... and he's praying for you. He cares about you. The love is pure and perfect, and you have all these letters. So would you say to me, so therefore I'm content. I don't care if he comes back or not.

Alexandra: Absolutely not.

Janet: That's ridiculous.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: It's ridiculous. Yeah, but you have the letters, you know, it's a done deal. You know, you have him.

Alexandra: You're married. You have the security of being...

Janet: Yeah, you have the perfect security. No, you want to be with him. Well, I have letters from the God who loves me and it's a done deal and it's a hundred percent and it's a guarantee and I'm going to be with him, but I'm not yet. So is it surprising that there are longings that make me ache? They shouldn't discourage me. They shouldn't cause me to doubt my faith. They're actually a proof that the Bible's true. It doesn't mean I'm less spiritual. It doesn't mean I don't trust God. All creation is groaning under the effect of sin. And that is why Jesus came. So the fact that I have longings doesn't mean I'm sinning. Though, my response can absolutely be sinful when I clamor after it. And here's the other thing, the fact that I have longings doesn't mean that they are sinning. I can't say, if this was a church that really was biblical like it should be, I should be completely feel belonged here. I should. I shouldn't be in this Purdue co-op and feel unloved. What are you girls doing wrong? You're not loving the way you should. Not necessarily. It

doesn't mean I'm doing something wrong. It doesn't mean they're doing something wrong. It doesn't mean I have to try harder. It means I'm in a broken world and I'm not home yet. So, instead of trying to find a way to get it met, I'm going to rejoice that this is not all there is. I'm going to rejoice that Jesus had the victory over the sin in the world. I'm going to rejoice that Easter happened. He rose from the dead. He was victorious. And I know I'm going to be with him one day.

Alexandra: Amen.

Janet: Romans 8:22 says we know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth, right up to the present time. That's fascinating to me. Paul compares this life, all of creation to pregnancy. I have yet to meet the woman, even if she has an amazingly easy pregnancy who says to me, I just want to be pregnant. I'm not really interested in the baby at the end. No. And I of all people know that not all pregnancies result in a baby. I get that. But why do we want to be pregnant? What's the joy of the pregnancy? The hope of the baby, even when it's not a sure hope. That's why we want to be pregnant. Well, our reality. We are pregnant with hope and our hope is a hundred percent guaranteed because I have the down payment of the Spirit while I wait. So my hope is guaranteed, but I am pregnant with hope. I have not experienced the fruition of it yet. So actually, part of how we deal with unfulfilled longings is thinking biblically about them and change what we expect. We can change our expectations and put them in a better place than trying to find it here. We put them in the Lord.

Alexandra: So Janet, when I was engaged to Stefan, which we're coming up on our nine year anniversary soon. But expectation management was the primary focus of what our pastor said that I needed to grow in during the premarital counseling. And, oh my word, boy was he right! It can be such a challenge to change our expectations, but for the believer, the only real freedom is to dissect our thinking by inserting truth from God's word and to meditate it on it day and night, as the Psalmist says.

Janet: Yes, and one of the verses that is so powerful, Psalm 62:5, for God alone, oh my soul, wait in silence for my hope is from him. And King James says it this way for my expectation is from him. That's where my hope and expectations are in God alone. And then when my mind and some of the listeners are, if they're like me, are thinking, that sounds so good, but you know what? It is so hard to trust God when life is so hard, the cross is a wonderful reminder, he can be trusted. There's no other reason, but that he loves me. And if he did that, he will do everything else. He said he would do. He loved me enough to become one of us, to bring us hope. And I'm going to put all my expectations there for as long as I live, if I don't have any of them met until I'm with him. Psalm 16:11 puts it this way. You will make known to me the path of life. In your presence is fullness of joy. In your right hand, there are pleasures forever. I will be in his presence where there will be fullness of joy, but I'm not yet. So now my unfulfilled longings become an opportunity to increase my longing for God. My love for God. And I know, we can

get weary, maybe, of hearing the answer is Jesus. The answer is the gospel. But the reality is the answer is the gospel. And I think when I look in my own life, it doesn't mean as much to me. It's almost, I know he did that, but what's he done for me lately? because I have a pretty inflated view of myself. I don't really understand what God did and how momentous it was for Jesus to become not just a human, a baby. So this is just, an analogy that has helped me. I used to live in Florida, walked along the beach and if you've ever been to a beach, you know, that there's, light sand, and dark sand closer to the water. The dark sand is wet because at high tide it's going to be covered in water. The lighter sand is dry because it's going to remain dry high tide, low tide doesn't matter. So I always walk in the dark and the wet sand. It's easier to walk in and it's cooler. So let's imagine I'm in Florida, I'm walking along the wet sand on the beach, and I see a group of ants, frantically and furiously building one of their little homes in the dark sand. What do I know is about to happen to them?

Alexandra: About to get washed away.

Janet: Yeah. Tsunami is coming. Their life is about to end. Okay. So what would I do about that? Well, probably absolutely nothing cause who cares? They're just ants. I'm going to keep walking or I'm going to kick it and laugh. And the fact that I've just ruined all of their work. Yes, I am that mean because I don't care about ants and I keep walking. So let's imagine. What kind of love would it take for me to care enough, to want to communicate with them? That's already unbelievable, but let's imagine I do. What am I going to do to help these ants to move? Well, I can yell at them. You need a move, go to the dry sand. If you just went up like 10 feet, you're going to be good. Well, that's not going to help. I could write them a note and throw it on top of their little ant pile, which they'll rip up and make part of their ant house I'm sure. It will mean nothing. What's going to have to happen for me to be able to communicate with puny little ants? I'd have to become one.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: Why would I even bother? I don't even think they live very long. Are there boy and girl ants? Do they look different? I don't even know. I don't even care. They're just going to die anyway. What kind of love would it take for me to say I so care about their short lives, that I'm going to become an ant because it's the only way they're gonna hear me. Let's say I do that. And I go and I tell them, listen, here's who I am. I'm telling you, I will help you. I'll do the work. Let's move up here. I'm trying to save all of your lives. What would I expect? At least thank you.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: And what if they took my little ant body, ripped it to shreds and tortured and killed me and you go, that's ridiculous. Well, you know what? Think for a minute compared to the difference between me and God, me and the ant are cousins.

Alexandra: So true.

Janet: I am basically like an ant. But I think the way I view myself as: ants really little, I'm really big, and God is a little above me. And the reality is the ant and I are just about the same.

Alexandra: Creation.

Janet: And God is so far above it.

Alexandra: The creator.

Janet: And he chose to come way, way, way, way, way down. More down than me becoming an ant. Why would he do that? That's love what was in it for him. Just being able to love us. How amazing is that? It should boggle my mind and if it doesn't, I don't get it. So I need to slow down and I would encourage anybody listening, slow down. Think about how amazing that is. The God willing to do that is a very safe place to put all those longings, all those desires. And he's worth trusting 80, 100 years, however long you live, even though right now, you're separated and you're feeling those longings that go with that. So as I grow in my longing for God, I can experience a foretaste of that total fulfillment, but I'm not going to experience it's completion until I'm there. One of the passages that can help me to think through, okay, what is true of me that I can meditate on, even though I'm not feeling it, even though the longings are there, what is true of me because of Christ that I can remember. Alexandra, could you just read for us Ephesians one, three to 14, and as we're doing that, let's just be listening to just the different ways that God describes who we are now all because of Christ.

Alexandra: Ephesians one, verse three, "blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love, he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the beloved. In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us, the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined, according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in him were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory."

Janet: I hope that's not just a bunch of words for people. Let's think about what are some of the blessings that we have because of Christ, because God was willing to condescend to become a

baby in Christ and give us this. What do we have? Well, it starts with saying we've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. I certainly can't tell you that. I know what all of those are, but the rest of the passage tells us at least what some of those are. What do you see there? Things like, blessed with his glorious grace, redeemed by his blood, forgiven, lavished with his grace, just for starters. So, while I'm in a sin curse body on this sin cursed earth, I'm not always gonna feel like I belong. I'm not always going to feel totally fulfilled. This thorn in the flesh reminds me I'm an outsider here, but I need to remember what I just read about what is true. For now, I'm a broken person in a broken world and I want to use those longings to set my affections back on Christ's kingdom. Colossians 3:1 says it this way, "therefore, if you've been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is." And 2 Timothy 4:8 talks about, "in the future there's laid up for me, the crown of righteousness," and it ends with it's "for all who have loved his appearing." Oh, these longings are what helped me yearn for his appearing. And at that moment, when Christ comes for his bride, you and I are going to experience how we fit perfectly with our only true creator, our Redeemer, our companion, our true husband, the lover of our soul. And we're going to know we're home. It just makes me want to go...

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: So, how do we deal with that now? So in some respect, I would say, I hate to tell you this, but all those longings, they're not going anywhere. But the fact that, you know, that I find is not actually depressing. It's actually encouraging because I realize it's normal.

Alexandra: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. There's nothing... it's not like there's something wrong with me.

Janet: Right. And then it allows me to be able to be grateful for what I do have. All the many relationships I do have. When I'm not trying to use them to meet all my needs, I'm not expecting them to do all of that for me. I'm actually, yeah, a little more satisfied. No, it's not complete, but it's a taste of foretaste of what's to come. This illustration has been helpful to me in thinking about this. Just imagine, and I promise you, this is not political. You've been invited to the white house for a meal. I have to tell you, I really don't even care who the president is. They eat well.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: That's what I know. So I'm not one of those that would say I'm so politically minded that I would only go if it's one kind of president. I don't even care. You invite me. I'm going because they have their own chef. All he does is cook for them and they get the best. So for some reason, somebody messed up, I'm invited. I'm going. That's a once in a lifetime event. How am I going to prepare for this amazing event? Well, I'm going to get dressed up and I'm telling you for me, I'm not eating all day. Because I am not going to go to the white house full. Are you kidding me? I'm not walking in for dinner and go, that's alright I already had something. Oh, I'm ready. I am ready

to eat. So I get there. People walking around, all dressed up in their tuxes and holding an appetizer tray, very fancy and come up and offer me an appetizer. Oh, and it's a little fancy little artisan bread and a little cucumber on it, tomato drizzle on it. Do I want one of those? Absolutely. The chef made it the white house. Yes. I want one of those. So I have one. You can tell I love food. Yes. So I eat that. That's really good. Okay. Talk to people, mingle with people. I will never again see in my life. This is fun. He comes around again, offers me another one. I think I'll have one more. I mean, they're not that big. Yeah. And it was very good. So I have it. Okay. Talking to people, talking to people, it comes around again. I'm like, no, because I want to be ready for the meal. Couple of hours later, we go home. How am I feeling about now? Pretty disappointed. Pretty hungry. Quite frankly. So I'm stopping at McDonald's on the way home and I'm very disappointed. Why? Because I was at the white house for dinner and I left starving with only two little pieces of bread and a couple of pieces of fruit. Well, tomato was fruit, cucumbers, vegetables. Look at that. I got them all. I got bread, vegetable fruit, and it wasn't enough for me. Totally disappointed. Okay. Now imagine, you're part of a church that's about a hundred people. Close, everybody gets along really well and they decide after church about three o'clock in the afternoon, they're going to have a fellowship time for the women to just be able to spend time together, enjoy each other's company, pray together, enjoy some time. And you're excited about spending time with them. So you show up at three o'clock and you see on a table that is an old table, and it's got the white sheet of plastic over the top of it. And it's got a cracked tray on it, and there's a little appetizer and it's a little brown piece of bread cucumber on it, tomato, a little drizzle on it. And you're like, huh, I like those. Now for me. I like those. So imagine that you like that. And I eat a couple of those two or three of those. Talk to my friends, talk with people, pray, go home. How am I feeling now? Pretty good. Why? What's the difference? I ate the very same thing. What was the difference? It was what I was expecting. When I walked in the door. When you expect a feast, an appetizer, a taste is always disappointing. But when you only expect a taste, you enjoy. All I expected was some appetizers while I enjoyed my friends and it was really good, but when I expected something more, I didn't even appreciate the appetizer. I did not leave there telling people, Hey, that was a really good appetizer.

Alexandra: And you can get so like focused on it. Like, oh, I'm basing everything off of this feast that I'm going to get. Like, it just becomes all consuming.

Janet: Yes. And I would suggest that when I'm trying to get my needs met here, here's what I'm saying. I expect the feast, right now. Well, the wedding supper of the lamb, there is a feast and it's coming, but it's not today. Today are tastes. So if I walk around expecting a feast, when I'm in the girls' co-op. Okay, all the relational needs I've ever had. Feast. I don't even appreciate the taste that two or three girls today asked how my day was.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: I noticed that 30 didn't.

Alexandra: It's impossible to love others. In that mode.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: You're so focused on what am I not getting? I'm not feeling the way I want to feel.

Janet: Yes. So I'm clamoring and I'm expecting all the time. And I'm not able to see that there are tastes everywhere and I don't get to appreciate it. I share this example. People love it. I know that my husband is not perfect. He does not always respond this way, but I share it for a reason and I will explain that. But, years ago I came home, pulled into the garage, hopping, fuming, mad, like could not even control myself angry.

Alexandra: Oh no.

Janet: I don't remember why isn't that funny. It was so important that I don't have any idea what it was about, but I was livid. And I walked in the, our garage door comes into the kitchen. So I walked in the garage door into the kitchen and my poor husband is standing there. Mind you has nothing to do with this, but I'm mad. And I start telling him all about it and I am like spewing venom and sin, not yelling at him, but yelling in his direction about something unrelated and just totally mad. And I don't know about you, but there have been times that I am so deceived that I believe it's self righteous anger, and I expect that he would agree with me, but I have to tell you it was worse than that because I could hear it. And as I'm hearing it, I knew it was wicked and I couldn't shut up. It just kept coming out and I'm thinking stop. And I'm just going on and on. So now I know it's wicked. I know it's sinful and mind you all, he's done to stand there right now because there hasn't been an opportunity to do anything else. And now I am mad at him because I feel vulnerable. I'm mad at him for seeing me be so sinful. And I'm now going to defend my son. So I start saying things like, you're probably thinking that you wouldn't even be, I shouldn't be talking... well, you have no idea. Well, you're not perfect either. Oh, my word, he hasn't done anything.

Alexandra: What a roller coaster.

Janet: Oh, my word. Now I'm mad at him. And he still hasn't said anything and why? Very vulnerable right then.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: Because I am sinning what's he going to do with that? So now I'm prepared. I'm justifying. Oh yeah well, you're not perfect either, you know? So I'm going on and on. Well, here's the beautiful thing. I am not a musician, so I don't know how to do what's called circular breathing. If you're a musician, you can breathe and sing at the same time.

Alexandra: Oh, sure. Yeah.

Janet: I don't know how to do that. So I actually have to stop talking when I breathe. And this was a blessing because I had to stop at some point. What's amazing is how long I was able to go, but I had to stop at some point because I was completely out of breath and I had to take a breath. And in that moment, Brent had his moment. What's he going to do? Well, what he could've done rightfully is say, Janet, can you just. Absolutely because it was true. There's so many things he could have done. Here's what he did. He looked at me and he opened his arms wide and said, come here.

Alexandra: Oh.

Janet: And I started sobbing because we both knew I was just sinning all over the place. And what did he do? Right then he was a taste of what God does every time I'm sinning. God's not going, honey. Stop it.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: He's going. I know. And Brent got to show me that now here's how I could have responded. If I expect the feast, I would say, well, he's a pastor he's supposed to do what's right. He's supposed to lead me well. He ought to do that. And you better do it every time. Or I could say it may never happen again. I don't deserve that, but he just showed me what God does for me every time. And I can just be grateful for it and enjoy it. But you understand, there are people who aren't even grateful when people are kind to them because it's like, yeah, they ought to be. That's the feast mentality. How about enjoy the taste? How about look at what Brent did and say whether he ever does that again, right then that was a taste and I don't need to go well, yeah, he should. I can say thank you.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: Thank you for showing me that. when I know I don't deserve something, I will appreciate it.

Alexandra: That's so good.

Janet: The greater my entitlement, the less my appreciation, I deserve my husband to treat me that way. Well, I'm at church, I deserve for people to treat me like family. We say, we're a family of God. They better.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: And when my expectations, my entitlement goes up, my own joy goes down. I'm destroying myself.

Alexandra: So true.

Janet: But when my expectations are in heaven and I realize I have no rights here, I'll see the tastes everywhere. How else do we do this? How about when we go to church? Well, they should be reaching out to me. I'm not going to go back to that church. Instead of when I went, somebody said hi. Or, it's my birthday and it's 10 o'clock in the morning. And nobody has said happy birthday to me yet. I would remember there's I always text them first thing in the morning and nobody's texting me. Or a friend of mine once said I checked to see if the card is American greetings and Hallmark, or is it a cheap one? I'm like, wow, we all have our thing, right. That wasn't mine. Mine are different. So when I'm expecting it's my birthday, people should be remembering it. Even when people do, it's like, yep. Well, when I don't expect it, when my expectations are not there. And someone at noon says, happy birthday, I enjoy it. I appreciate it. I'm just grateful for it. Instead of counting how many and realizing it should have been more.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: You know. As my entitlement grows, my thankfulness and my ability to enjoy the taste fades. And what I recognize over time is not only can I appreciate the tastes around me. Here's the amazing thing when you're a child of God, I get to be the taste. When I walk into church now, number one, I realize nobody in there completely believes they fit in. It changes how I walk into a room. I don't walk into a room, waiting for everybody to talk to me. I walk into the room knowing they're just like me, so I can go in and look, now I can say if people are kind to me, wow. That was so kind. That was a great taste, but even more satisfying. And yes, I just said, you'll never be completely satisfied, but more satisfying than that is walking in going, who can I be a taste for? Who can I do something for that they would see a taste of the love of God, just like my husband was for me in that moment. Who do I get to go be that for? And I promise you that's far more satisfying because that's what you were designed to do.

Alexandra: Yes.

Janet: And then I'll thank God that all the needs in my heart that are, feel unmet right now are really met. Even if I'm not experiencing it. And then I'm going to use my time here to help others learn how they get to belong to a God who has met all their needs. And it allows me to get my focus off me. You think about it. If I am trying to get my needs met, I can not think about you. I just really don't have time right now.

Alexandra: So true.

Janet: I have to be thinking about how are they thinking about me? Are they noticing me? And do I look stupid right now? What did they think? And do I look amazing? Cause that's one of mine or what am I going to do now? I can actually just think about you. I can see the frantic people around me and now I'm not going to sit in judgment of them. I can't believe they act like

that. Now I realize they're just trying to get their longings met. And if they don't know the Lord, they don't even know there's another way. And those of us who do know the Lord, we forget. So maybe they have the latest gadgets, and I can sit in judgment of them and go, they always have to talk about the fact that they have the newest computer and I'm not like that. How about I just try to get my needs met in different ways. I understand what's going on. Maybe they flirt with every guy that walks by just trying to get their longings met. They have to succeed at work and tell you how successful they are. That's just their way. They're experiencing loneliness and unfulfilled longings. But for many of them, without the hope of the gospel. That then motivates me. I want to share with my neighbor. I want to love those around me. And then my lack of perfect contentment just pushes me to my knees. To draw closer to the one who came to give me my hope that all of those expectations are going to be fulfilled for all of you eternity.

Alexandra: And that's truly, I mean, when I'm in that focus of like, I just think that it's almost like I'm a vacuum. You know what I mean? When you're not focused on the taste and really the gospel is the only thing that turns that vacuum off. And so I just love what you just said.

Janet: So I'm not sucking up the life of everybody around me. I love that. That's true. So how do I practically do this? Well, first of all, yes, spend time meditating on the gospel. The thing that we're like, yeah, whatever, what else do you have? No, that's actually incredibly important and realizing that all of my needs have been met. That's crucial. You cannot spend too much time reveling in who God is and what he's done for you. One of the tools I use for that is reading the Gospel Primer, reminding myself of that. And when I was reading that, I've read it several times. One of the times that I read it. There's one of them that's called liberation from self love. And I'm going to read you an excerpt that I was like, I've read this so many times and thought, oh yeah, I believe that. And then went, do I believe that? "The gospel assures me that the love of God is infinitely superior to any love that I could ever give to my self. Greater love has no one than this says Jesus. While speaking of his love and the deeper I go into the gospel, the more I experience the truth of his claim and thereby know how far his love for me surpasses even my own. His astonishing love for me, renders self absorption moot and frees me up to move on to causes and interests far greater than myself." I love that. Basically, why would I settle for loving myself when God loves me better? So I did a little exercise with myself. Okay. Do I believe God loves me better than I love me? Well, my behavior would say no. So let's imagine God said, Janet, you can love yourself any way you want without guilt. Cause who wants guilt. Any way you want, what would you do for you? Well, I would give myself. With no pain. I happen to have some chronic pain. I would not give myself that because if you love someone, you wouldn't give them pain. And do you know much more I could do for the Lord if I didn't have to deal with this and the time and that no, I would have no pain because I would give myself perfect health. I would also be healthy without having to work at it because really exercise, eating right. Time killers that could be spent on way more important things. So I would be healthy without having to work at it. That's one of the things I would do. I'd give myself, I'm not, greedy. So I would give myself enough money to never have to worry about money. I don't have to be the richest

person in the world because that would be greedy. And I'm not, I'm very spiritual. I would give myself enough money that I never have to think about it. Because who, if they love someone, would not give them that much money so that they always have to be wondering if they would have enough. I wouldn't want to do that. That's not very kind. So I wouldn't do that to me. Most days probably be my birthday. I mean, not every day, but most because I really think that makes me feel loved is when people think about me. So if I want to love me, most days, you'd all be thinking about me. And again, I'm not a materialistic kind of person, so you don't have to get me expensive things, but I would want them to be well thought out and wrapped. Because I really love wrapped things. I love to unwrap anything. My family knows this. They have wrapped Cheetos and I love it because I love Cheetos so puffy. So, and they know that too. So that's what would happen most days. And you guys be thinking about me. Brent would have a hard time going to work cause he wouldn't wanna leave me. I get that. He texted me all day long, which is totally thinking about fantasy living because my husband doesn't even text. So that would be amazing. My kids would be going mom, really you have done so much for us. And you're so amazing. Just let it let us do everything because I really believe that it is everybody loved me that way. That would make me feel good. Like that would be loving to me that would meet those needs that I have. Well, let's just imagine what I would be like if all of that were true. Have you ever for met someone who had everything they ever wanted and no one ever said no. We don't like those people because quite frankly, they're brats.

Alexandra: They're not pleasant to be around.

Janet: No, we have a story of when our kids were little, when they hung out with a little boy who, got everything he wanted and he was so angry and was so unpleasant to be around. So what do we know about those kids whose parents give them whatever they want? Well, that's how I would be. Everything is about me. What kind of purpose is there at that point? Like, why are you even around? So I'd be purposeless. I would be arrogant. I would probably be bored and it would never be enough. The days I am least satisfied in my history have been mother's day and my birthday, because I had expectations. So no matter what people did, it wasn't enough. So now imagine my whole life is spent on all the things people could do for me, even if people did things for me every day. It would never be enough. I'd always be clamoring for more. I'd be purposeless and unpleasant. My love would destroy me and now let's think. Okay. It says God's love is better. How does God love me? How about giving me a purpose that transcends time? How about knowing that what I do could impact somebody else for time and eternity. There's purpose. That matters. How about knowing that before the foundation of the world, he chose me and I'm treasured and precious to him. You want to talk about belonging? I belong. How about security? He knows everything about me and he loves me anyway. Nothing I could ever do would even surprise him. I'm secure. And what I thought through is what does my soul really want? I want to matter. I want to have a purpose that matters. I want to matter. I want to be secure. I want to be accepted. I want to belong. And I think all those other things that I would do for me will get them for me. And they don't, God gets them for me. He actually does love me better than I love me so

I can stop trying to love me and rest in his Proverbs 19:8. I love this "to acquire wisdom is to love yourself." You want to love yourself, acquire wisdom. "People who cherish understanding will prosper." God loves me better. So if I want to love myself well, I'm just going to look to his wisdom. That's what I'm going to do. How am I going to grow and doing that meditating on that, thinking that through, make a list of the tastes of the things that God has done. And instead of believing those lies, if I only had people loving me all those ways. How about knowing I'm going to take God at his word, he loves me better. And he has told me that actually loving him and loving others. Being the taste is what's going to bring me the most satisfaction in life. And then I need to act on that by doing things that will get my focus off of me and onto others and then I get to taste and see that the Lord is.

Alexandra: So Janet, you talked to a lot about how these desires will be satisfied one day when we were in the presence of king Jesus and what a glorious day that will be. Having an internal focus has been really helpful for me in my own journey with unfulfilled longings. However, when I first started trying to have any eternal focus, I found that I really wasn't good at it. Then I realized I don't really know that much about heaven. And I wasn't able to focus on it because of that. So reading through the book Heaven by Randy Alcorn has been really helpful to chew on some good meat for thinking eternally.

Janet: Oh, totally agree. And we will list that in our show notes. When I went through that, actually I was able to read some of that with my mom when she was dying and we really don't think much about what we'll have and be like, but that's going to whet our appetite for it's worth the wait. It's worth the wait. So what do we do now for now? Enjoy the four tastes, enjoy the tastes, enjoy being the taste, but expect that you're still gonna have those longings that are not fully satisfied, rejoice that God has promised he has met all of those longings and one day you will totally experience it for all of eternity. That's my God. And then my unfulfilled longings become an opportunity to focus on eternity. We're going to list in the show notes. I did a session on this. We have a video that we've done at our church that will list the gospel primer Heaven by Randy Alcorn. Just some resources that can get you thinking about that and can get you focused on the gospel focused on eternity. And then I just want to challenge you. Go find a way today to be a taste somewhere. Come back next time. Join us as we're just going to continue to see that when we're choosing truth, we are choosing joy.

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Host Janet and her husband, Brent, also speak at a variety of conferences as a way to raise money for the seminary. If you want to look at what they offer or book them for a conference, [go to their website](#).