

## **The Problem Of Discouragement**

### **Introduction**

1. Discouragement is a universal problem.
  - a. The best of people become discouraged - get the blues, get down in the dumps, have periods of depression.
  - b. This is a common problem among Christians.
    - 1) Preachers, elders, deacons, teachers
    - 2) Sick, handicapped
    - 3) New and old Christians experiencing hard times or great disappointments
    - 4) Parents, children, husbands and wives
  - c. We all get down. The fatal problem is not getting down, but staying down.
    - 1) Discouragement causes failures in every area of life
    - 2) Many Christians will fail to reach their potential and perhaps heaven itself because of discouragement.
2. God does not want us to become discouraged and despondent. (Matt. 14:27; Jn. 16:22, 24; Matt. 9:22; Phil. 3:1; 4:4).

### **Examples Of Discouragement**

1. Elijah (1 Kgs. 19:1-4).
  - a. Physical exhaustion was a reason for his discouragement.
  - b. Thinking he was the only one left serving God was a big factor in his despondency. (1 Kgs. 19:18).
2. David (Psa. 42:5, 6, 11; 43:5).

Ps 42:5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And {why} have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him {For} the help of His presence.

Ps 42:6 O my God, my soul is in despair within me; Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

Ps 42:11 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

Ps 43:5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

### 3. John the Baptist

- a. John was a great man. (Matt. 11:11).

Matt 11:11 "Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen {anyone} greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

- b. As great as he was, he too became discouraged. (Matt. 11:2-6).

Matt 11:2 Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent {word} by his disciples

Matt 11:3 and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?"

Matt 11:4 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see:

Matt 11:5 {the} BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and {the} lame walk, {the} lepers are cleansed and {the} deaf hear, {the} dead are raised up, and {the} POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.

Matt 11:6 "And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me."

### **Causes Of Discouragement**

#### 1. Illness

- a. Good people can become ill. (2 Cor. 12:7; Phil. 2:25-30; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20; Job 2:7).
- b. We should pray and try to regain our health.
- c. We must not let illness destroy faith.
- d. We must resolve the illness will make us better, not bitter.

#### 2. Loss of material possessions

- a. It is disappointing to lose material possessions, but it is not end of world. (Job 1:21).
- b. We brought nothing into world and we can take nothing out of it. (1 Tim. 6:7).
- c. Everything we have really belongs to God (Psa.24:1), and God will provide for our needs. (Matt. 6:33; Phil. 4:19).

#### 3. Loss of loved ones through death or separation

- a. Death of parents, a child, spouse, friends, etc. can cause discouragement.
- b. The loss of a mate or child or someone else close can bring on deep depression.

#### 4. A sense of insecurity

- a. God will take care of us. (Psa. 37:25; Matt. 6:33; Phil. 4:19).
- b. We must trust Him and seek His kingdom first.

#### 5. Friends turning on us.

- a. David, Christ and Paul (Psa. 41:9; Jn. 13:18; 2 Tim. 4:10).

Ps 41:9 Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.

John 13:18 "I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but {it is} that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.'

2 Tim 4:10 for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens {has gone} to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

- b. Christ is a Friend that will never turn. See Prov. 18:24.
  - c. Count the friends that have not forsaken us or turned against us.
6. Inability to accept and cope with criticism.
- a. None really like criticism, but we should not let it destroy us.
  - b. We should try to grow from criticism.
  - c. All of us will be criticized regardless of our decisions or course of life.
7. Blighted hopes and dreams
- a. Business or marriage failed
  - b. College education eluded us.
  - c. Did not get the job or career we wanted.
8. Handicaps overcome some with discouragement.
- a. Handicaps need not handicap.
  - b. Many handicapped people have made great and lasting contributions to the world.
9. Not accepting our limitations
- a. None of us can do everything.
  - b. All of us are ignorant of most things.
  - c. At best we can do a few things well.

### **Overcoming Discouragement**

1. Count blessings
- a. We often dwell on one or a few misfortunes
  - b. It is healthy to regularly count our blessings.
  - c. We will be utterly amazed at the immensity of God's blessings if we will name them one by one.
2. Things are always as bright as the promises of God

- a. Lost in sin - Read (Isa. 1:18).

Isa. 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.

- b. Lonely - Read (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5).

Matt 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Heb 13:5 {Make sure that} your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

- c. "No one will listen to my preaching." (Isa. 55:11).

Isa. 55:11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding {in the matter} for which I sent it.

- d. We live in a sinful environment to raise children (Prov. 22:6)

- 1) We should raise our children to be Christians.
- 2) Children are not, however, robots.
- 3) They can choose to do good or evil whether they be 12, 20 or 50.

- e. We are tired and loaded with burdens. (Psa. 55:22; 1 Pet. 5:7).

### 3. Proper rest (Mk. 6:30, 31).

Mark 6:30 The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught.  
Mark 6:31 And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while." (For there were many {people} coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)

- a. Physical and emotional exhaustion will cause despondency.
- b. The tired Elijah became discouraged and wanted to die. (1 Kgs. 19:1-4).
- c. Fatigue most often causes discouragement.

### 4. Keep on trying - never give up.

### 5. Exercise Patience

- a. Most good things take time.
- b. Abraham Lincoln went out of business and lost 8 elections before becoming president.

### 6. Talk to yourself (most do), but not in negative language.

- a. Be positive - Tell yourself you are important. Trust in the promises and power of God.

b. The woman with the issue of blood talked to herself in a positive way. (Matt. 9:20-22).

Matt 9:20 And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak;

Matt 9:21 for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I will get well."

Matt 9:22 But Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well." At once the woman was made well.

c. Some speak only negative things.

1) "I'm no good."

2) "No one cares."

3) "It won't work"

7. Consider how useless we are when discouraged

a. We become useless and harmful to others.

b. When discouraged, we do not try to encourage others. (1 Thess. 5:14; Heb. 10:24).

1 Thess 5:14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

Heb 10:24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

8. Remember the cause of discouragement is only temporary.

a. Things are rarely as bad as they seem.

b. Tomorrow often brings brighter and better things.

9. Be optimistic, upbeat, hopeful

10. Fight Self-pity

a. Self-pity whips more people than anything else.

b. It is a way to bury ourselves.

11. Remember the Lord is always with you. (Matt. 28:20).

12. Call on friends for encouragement

13. Believe the fact that you are valuable and desperately needed.

14. Get up and do something for someone else.

15. God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13).

16. Remember that problems and discouragements can build strength.

- a. A smooth sea does not make a good sailor.
- b. Some of the best people have suffered many problems and hardships.

17. Prayer (Rom. 12:12; 1 Thess. 5:16).

- a. Phil. 4:4-7

Phil 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Phil 4:5 Let your gentle {spirit} be known to all men. The Lord is near.

Phil 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- b. David (Psa 42:5, 8).

### Conclusion

1. It is disastrous to give up.

- a. We must never, never give up spiritually.

b. Sobering thoughts

1) Trying times are no time to quit trying

2) Quitters never win and winners never quit.

3) There are 3 rules for success: go on, go on, go on. (Crane)

2. The Lord will not let us down, will not let us go, nor will He let us off.

- a. Therefore, let us never give up.

b. See Heb. 12:12; Acts 28:15

Heb 12:12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble,

Acts 28:15 And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

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