

Overcoming Discouragement

No. 134

Introduction.

I. Once Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah who had slain the prophets of Baal. He fled to Beer-sheba and left his servant there. He then went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat under a juniper tree. He begged Jehovah to take away his life. He was very discouraged because he thought he was the only one left who was seeking to please God and Jezebel was seeking to take his life. God revealed to Elijah that his discouragement was unfounded. There were still 7,000 in Israel had not bowed down to Baal and were serving God. (1 Kgs. 19:1-11). This rejuvenated Elijah and helped him overcome his discouragement and once again become useful to himself and God.

II. One of the most common problems in the world is discouragement.

A. We all at time are victims of discouragement. This is a problem that is difficult if not impossible to completely overcome.

B. **Life cannot be lived exclusively on the same level.** It will have its peaks and valleys, its ups and its downs, its highs and its lows. The problem is getting down, getting low, getting into a valley, and not getting out; thus depression sets in and we become miserable and useless.

III. God does not want us to be discouraged. He wants us to be happy. His message is, "Be Of Good Cheer." Let us consider some ways we can conquer discouragement.

I. **Counting Our Blessings** - We can overcome discouragement by counting our blessings.

A. We often are beset with problems. This may cause us to feel sorry for ourselves and get down into the dumps. We often dwell on our misfortunes.

B. It is healthy for us to count our blessings.

1. We will be utterly amazed at the immensity of God's blessings if we will count them one by one.

2. David was a great man who became very discouraged. How did he overcome his discouragement? How did he again become useful to himself, to others, and to God. He counted His blessings.

PSA 40:5 Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders which Thou hast done, And Thy thoughts toward us; There is none to compare with Thee; If I would declare and speak of them, They would be too numerous to count.

PSA 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.

PSA 42:8 The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime; And His song will be with me in the night, A prayer to the God of my life.

PSA 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.

II. **Getting Up And Out And Doing Something For Someone Else** - We can overcome discouragement by getting up and out and doing something for someone else.

- A. Most discouragement will be found in an overactive mind and an underactive body.
- B. The ten rules for getting rid of the blues are go out and do something for someone else and repeat it ten times.
 - 1. The Lord said that we find life by losing it, losing it in a cause beyond and bigger than self. (Matt. 10:39).
 - 2. Dig someone else out of his troubles and you will make a hole in which to bury your own.

III. **Things Are Always As Bright As The Promises Of God** - We can overcome discouragement by remembering that things are always as the promises of God.

A. **Judson went to Burma as a missionary but landed in jail.** A prisoner sneeringly asked, "What are the prospects of converting the heathen?" He replied, "The prospects are as bright as the promises of God."

- 1. Yes, things are always as bright as the promises of God
- 2. Let us trust God and His promises. (2 Pet. 1:4; 3:9; Psa. 27:14).

B. **God has some wonderful promises.**

- 1. **Lost in sin** (Isa. 1:18).
- 2. **Elders** (1 Pet. 5:4).
- 3. **Preachers and Teachers** (Isa. 55:11).
- 4. **Christian workers** (1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9).
- 5. **Parents** (Prov. 22:6).
- 6. **Burdened** (Psa. 55:22; 1 Pet. 5:7).
- 7. **Trials and troubles** (Rom. 8:28).

IV. **Rest** - We can overcome discouragement through rest.

- A. Rest is so vital to our health and state of mind. (Mk. 6:31, 32).
- B. Physical and emotional exhaustion will result in despondency, discouragement, and despair.
- C. **Satan** covets a tired man and destroys him. **God** rests a tired man and inspires him.

V. **Talking To Ourselves** - We can conquer discouragement by talking to ourselves.

A. Matthew tells us of a woman with an issue of blood. (Matt. 9:20-22).

- 1. The woman with the issue of blood could have said, "I've tried everything. Nothing avails. God does not care."
- 2. But instead of thus talking to herself she said, "If I but touch his garment, I shall be whole."

B. **The point is this.**

- 1. We must avoid talking to ourselves discouragingly, telling ourselves that we are a failure, that nobody

cares, that we are not appreciated, that we are a nobody.

2. Instead, we should tell ourselves we are not failures, that people do care, that we are appreciated and that we have a vital role to play in life.

C. The Lord's message is, "I love you..I have need of you." (Mk. 11:3). "You are of more value than many sparrows." (Matt. 10:31).

D. Paul teaches that every member has a vital place in the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:13-27).

1CO 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now there are many members, but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; 23 and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness, 24 whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, 25 that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

1. Paul plainly teaches each of us has a vital role to play in the body of Christ.

2. Some services get more attention, but all are important and the church needs all its members.

3. It is vital that we tell ourselves that we are needed, and this exercise our talents for the Lord.

VI. Fighting And Conquering Self-Pity - We can overcome discouragement by fighting and conquering self-pity.

A. Self-pity is born of self-concern and self-esteem, but Jesus said self must be crucified. (Matt. 16:24; Gal.2:20).

B. General William F. Dean was a prisoner of the Korean Communists. When he was asked what upheld him during his three years of imprisonment he replied, "I never felt sorry for myself and that was what licked it. Self-pity whips more people than anything else."

C. Those guilty of self-pity dig a pit or grave for themselves.

VII. Being Perpetually Optimistic - We can overcome discouragement by being perpetually optimistic.

A. **Two shoe salesmen went to Africa.** One discouraged wired back saying, “No market. No one wears shoes.” The other optimistically reported, “Market unlimited. No one has shoes over here.” The difference? Optimism!

B. **Let us live on the summit, not in the valley.** Let us see opportunities and not obstacles. Instead of being becoming discouraged, the optimist will take the barrels of cold water thrown upon his ideas, hopes, and dreams, wet them with the fires of his enthusiasm, make steam, and drive ahead.

VIII. **How Useless We Are When We Are Discouraged** - We can overcome discouragement by considering how useless we are when we are discouraged.

A. The Bible teaches us to be encouragers of men. (1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24).

1. These scriptures teach we are to encourage others and bring out the best in them, but when discouraged we cannot fulfill our responsibility.

2. When discouraged, we discourage others and bring out the worst in them.

B. There was an **outstanding insurance salesman** who called a close friend every few nights and went into lengthy detail relating his business successes and failures. He call this friend his “Battery Booster,” because he could always expect praise from the friend for his successes, and encouragement in times when the going is hard.

1. Instead of becoming discouraged, we should seek to be a “Battery Booster.”

2. A “Battery Booster” makes life better and motivates others to be happy and accomplish great things.

IX. **Never Alone** - We can overcome discouragement by realizing we never alone.

A. **The little girl who was to have a wound sewed up** without the use of anesthetic was asked if she could sit unflinchingly. She said, “Yes, if daddy holds my hand.” The presence of the father made the difference.

B. The realization of the presence of God will make a difference in our lives. (Psa. 46:1; Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5, 6).

X. **Prayer** - We can conquer discouragement through prayer.

A. We must learn to take our causes of discouragement to the Lord in prayer. (Phil. 4:6, 7).

B. Yes, prayer will help us overcome discouragement. We kneel in discouragement and arise full of power and optimism.

Conclusion.

I. Beloved, it is vital that we overcome discouragement. We must not give up or remain in a state of despondency. **Trying times are no time to quit trying.** Quitters never win and winners never quit.

II. The love of God will not let us down, will not let us go, nor will it let us off. Wherefore, let us lift up the hands which hang down and take courage.

III. **Jesus once said, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”** (Jn. 16:33).

- A. What could be more encouraging than this. Jesus overcame the evil of this world and became a Savior to all who will accept Him.
- B. We urge you to give your life to the One who offers the abundant life here and in eternity. Come as we stand and sing.

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