

Dealing With Discouragement

Introduction:

1. Question: Have you ever been discouraged? Asking that question is about like asking “are you human?”
2. The fact of the matter is this: All of us, at times, have had to deal with discouragement – some more than others, but it seems that discouragement is a part of life.
3. Many things can contribute to a person being discouraged, such as: health concerns, a barrage of bad news, family break-down, secret sins in a person’s life, having yielded to temptation, a stale marriage, self-pity, hormonal imbalance, fatigue, frustration, fear, criticism from others, etc., etc.
4. Discouragement per se’ is not inherently sinful, but it puts one in a dangerous situation because:
 - a. We have an enemy, I Peter 5:8.
 - b. He has many “*devices*,” 2 Cor. 2:10-11. And one device Satan has always used to his advantage of that of taking advantage of a person in moments of weakness. Cf. Matt. 4:1-3. Discouragement is one of his tools.
 - (1) Illus. According to legend, Satan held a garage sale. He marked all his tools (such as envy, malice, gossip, lust, etc.) with their appraised value. But there was one tool all by itself, whose appraised value vastly exceeded that of any of the other tools. When queried as to why he said “it is because I can use this tool more easily than the others. With it I can open doors that are bolted against the others. Once I get inside, I can use any tool that suits me best.” Granted, this story is only legend, but it illustrates the potential danger of discouragement.
5. Lesson Title: Dealing with Discouragement.

Discussion:

I. Discouragement Defined.

- A. Discouragement (a noun) is the State of being Discouraged.
- B. Discourage (a verb).
 1. “**Dis**” is a prefix, meaning “the opposite of,” “the lack of,” “apart,” or “away.”
 - a. Illustrations: “Dishonor,” “dismember,” “disinherit,” “disbar,” etc.
 2. To “**discourage**” a person is to cause that person to **lose** courage!
 - a. That’s what the ten unfaithful spies did. Numbers 13:31-33; Deut. 1:28.
 - b. Because they became “*discouraged*,” they began to murmur and rebel against God, Deut. 1:26-27.
- C. Synonyms for “discouragement:
 1. Depression, despair, pessimism, hopelessness, despondency, dejection, downheartedness

II. To properly serve the Lord we need courage.

- A. Scriptures.
 1. Joshua 1:6,9,18; Ps. 27:14; 31:24; I Cor. 16:13-14; Eph. 6:10-11; I Tim. 6:12.
- B. However, the Bible record informs us of many who lost courage, or who became discouraged.

III. Biblical Examples of People who Became Discouraged.

- A. Old Testament.
 1. Moses, Numbers 11:11-15.
 2. The Israelites at Kadesh, Numbers 14:1-2.
 3. Elijah, I Kings 19:1-4,9-10.
 4. David, I Samuel 30:1-4; Psa. 42:1-5.
 5. Jeremiah, Jer. 20:7-9,14-18.
 6. The Jews who began rebuilding the temple after the captivity, Ezra 4:4-5,24.
- B. New Testament:
 1. Peter, Matt. 26:75.
 2. Certain disciples, John 6:60,66.
 3. The apostles, Matt. 26:56.

IV. What to do When Discouraged.

- A. If We are Discouraged because of sin in our lives, Repent!
 1. Acts 8:22; 2 Cor. 7:10.
- B. Thank God for your blessings!
 1. I Thess. 5:17-18.
 - a. Christians are the recipients of all spiritual blessings, Eph. 1:3.
 2. From God comes every good and perfect gift, James 1:17

3. We sing the song, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one."
 - a. If we spend more time counting our woes than our blessings, we will be miserable and we will make those around us miserable!
- C. Fight Self-Pity with all your being.
 1. Someone said that "self-pity is born of self-esteem, but Jesus said self must be crucified," Matt. 16:24; Gal. 2:20.
 2. Gen. Wm. F. Dean was a prisoner of the Korean Communists. When 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."
- D. Seek Help!
 1. There are times when we need help from others.
 - a. We don't live to ourselves, Rom. 14:7.
 - b. We must bear one another's burdens, Gal. 6:2.
 2. The help might come from a brother in Christ who can help bear our burdens, or give us needed words of encouragement. Look for a modern Barnabas, Acts 4:36-37; Acts 9:26-27; 11:22-23.
 3. The help might come from a man of medicine if the discouragement be caused by a chemical imbalance, Matt. 9:12.
- E. Practice some Blessed Forgetfulness.
 1. Phil. 3:13-14.
 2. In life, there are those who let us down, there are those who take undue advantage of us, there are those who are hyper critical; if you live a normal life span, you **will** be disappointed by others time and again.
- F. Do good to others!
 1. Gal. 6:10; James 1:26; Matt. 7:12.
 2. We tend to forget ourselves when we do good to others, and after we have done good for others, we tend to feel better about ourselves.
- G. Pray fervently!
 1. James 5:16; Luke 18:1-2; I Thess. 5:17.
 2. Note Phil. 4:6-7.
- H. Remember: You are not alone!
 1. Matt. 28:20.
 2. Illus. the little girl having a wound sewed up without the use of an anesthetic.
- I. Look to Jesus.
 1. Hebrews 12:1-3.
 2. Note verse 3: "*Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*" "*Consider*" Jesus:
 - a. Born to an unwed mother, Matt. 1:18-21.
 - b. Born in a stable, Luke 2:7.
 - c. Born to poor parents, Luke 2:24.
 - d. His life threatened in infancy, Matt. 2:13.
 - e. Raised in Nazareth, Luke 2:39, a town with a bad reputation, John 1:46.
 - f. Had no place to lay His head, Luke 9:58.
 - g. Hated and opposed, Mark 14:1-2.
 - h. Was charged with insanity by His "friends," Mark 3:21.
 - i. Accused of casting out demons by Beelzebub, Mark 3:22.
 - j. Betrayed by a close friend, Matt. 26:15.
 - k. Denied by Peter, Matt. 26:74.
 - l. Forsaken by His disciples, Mk. 14:50.
 - m. Tried by the High court, and accused of treason, Luke 23:2.
 - n. Executed as if He were the worst of criminals, John 19:18

Conclusion:

1. Satan wants you to be discouraged; Jesus gives every reason for courage and hope, Rev. 14:13.
--Bobby Witherington, March 6, 2016

