

Dealing with Discouragement

Have you ever known someone who became a Christian ... became strong ... then fell away?

Lk.8:13

- One reason: discouragement – one of satan's greatest tools to defeat children of God
- No one is exempt

I. Discouragement Comes in Varieties

Business / Work

- Money matters
- Overtime
- Fatigue

Family

- Marriage not working out as hoped
- Rebellion of ungrateful children. Lk.15:11...
- Parental neglect (discipline / training). Ep.6:4
- Divided families. Mt.10:34-36

Friends

- Ps.41⁹ ...my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.
- “Et tu, Brute?”

Spiritual

- **Moral failures**
 - Disappointed with self (satan won). Mt.26
 - Church failures. 1 Co.5:1
 - (1) **A 'Christian' worse than pagans**
 - (2) **A church that ignores it**

I. Discouragement Comes in Varieties

II. What We Should Not Do

Think we are immune

- 1 Co.10:13, No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Think we are immune

- 1 Co.10:13, No temptation has overtaken you except such as is (1) common to man; but (2) God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, (3) but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, (4) that you may be able to bear it.

Pretend it doesn't exist; live in denial

- Resist pain / pleasure of sin. 1 Pt.5:9

Self-denial

Self-control

- We must recover an optimistic faith
- Pretense is fake and fatal (Ph.1)
 - Ph.4:4 . . . 13

Deny possibility that we could inflict spiritual harm on others

- Some deny effects of their . . .

1 example

2 beliefs

3 words

4 deeds

5 dress

Try to run away

- Moses, Num.11:...10-15
- Elijah, 1 K.18, 19
- Job, 1-3
- David, Ps.55:...6

Become cynical

- Def.: question sincerity and goodness of people's motives and actions, or the value of living; opposite of optimism
- Cynic blames others for his own faults
 1. Joseph, Gn.37-39
 2. Jesus, Mt.26
 3. Churches, Ac.5-6
 4. Paul, 2 Tim.4:16
- Cynicism never solved a problem. Jn.20

I. Discouragement Comes in Varieties

II. What We Should Not Do

III. What We Must Do

Maintain faith [do not abandon faith]

1. First reaction of some. Demas, 2 Tim.4:10
2. Paul, 2 Tim.4:6-8

Realize the testing of our faith is for our spiritual good

- Ps.119:67 ... 71
- 1 Pt.1:6-7
 - Peter compares present suffering with future rejoicing
 - **Various / manifold:** many colored; various kinds
 - **Genuineness of your faith:** result of a test, genuine

Fire separates gold and dross

Realize the testing of our faith is for our spiritual good

Can a Christian rejoice in heaviness?

1. We receive grace and peace multiplied, 1:2
2. We have mercy that begets us to living hope, 1:3
3. We share an inheritance reserved in heaven, 1:4

Hope for the future gives
consolation for the present

Gold is perishable, but faith
waits for eternal inheritance

Realize the testing of our faith is for our spiritual good

- 1 Pt.4:12-13 do not think it strange; expect it
 - Athlete
 - Patient
 - People don't attack garbage dumps . . .

Faith does not guarantee riches or popular favor

- Ps.73:3
- Opposition does not mean we are going in the wrong direction. Nu.21:4

God knew snakes were there

God had one Son without sin;
He never had a son without trials

Remember that we are not alone

- Heb.13⁵ Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” ⁶ So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”