

Discouragement

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- I. Discouragement is the main hindrance that everyone has to deal with.
 - A. Don't doubt it – EVERYONE is discouraged!
 - B. Especially in times like we live in now, where there is so much confusion, apostasy, and hypocrisy on every hand.
 - C. It is the devil's most powerful weapon and he uses it more than any other.
 - D. Yet we do very little to counter it or avoid it in ourselves and we do practically nothing to help others who are discouraged.
 - E. It is the main thing that drives people to forsake God and righteousness and step over the line into sin.
 - 1. Before entering into some awful sin people are always first discouraged.
 - F. It means to be spiritless, disheartened, or dismayed; deprived of courage or confidence; depressed in spirits; dejected.
 - G. It is close to despair, which is hopelessness.
 - H. It is always based on the lies of the devil and not on the promises of God.

- II. Reasons for discouragement.
 - A. Apparent failure.
 - 1. In the business of life in general.
 - 2. In our service for God.
 - 3. In our family - our children in particular.
 - B. Disappointment in others; their sin; their apathy; their foolishness.
 - C. When it appears that others have abandoned you.
 - D. When it appears that there is no hope of the circumstances ever changing.
 - E. When it appears that there is no way we can overcome and go forward.

Deuteronomy 1:28 Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there.

- F. When it appears that we have been treated unjustly and have no recourse or hope of being vindicated.
- G. Just plain weariness from the way, and much labor.

Numbers 21:4 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

- H. Weariness from waiting and trusting a long time with no help in sight.

- III. We are to encourage one another.

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

- A. Twice, God told Moses to encourage Joshua.

Deuteronomy 1:38 But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

Deuteronomy 3:28 But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.

- B. So Moses did encourage Joshua, just as God had commanded him to do.

Deuteronomy 31:7-8 And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

IV. How to encourage yourself.

- A. Count your blessings and all that you have going for you.
- B. Get a larger view of things than the present circumstances.
- C. Make sure you do not leave God out of your equation.

2 Chronicles 31:4 Moreover he (Hezekiah) commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD.

2 Chronicles 35:1-2 Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD,

1 Samuel 30:6 And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

V. How to encourage others.

Isaiah 41:6 They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.

- A. First of all, you must encourage yourself.
 - 1. We cannot encourage someone else with our discouragement.
 - 2. This is what we do many times - we identify with their discouragement and try to make them feel better by telling them how discouraged we are, too.
 - 3. Misery may love company but there is no comfort in it.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

- B. We encourage others by helping them in real ways.
 - 1. If possible do what you can to remove, weaken, or disable whatever it is that is discouraging them so.
 - 2. If they are discouraged by the heavy load they are bearing, try to bear some of it for them - take some of their load off.

Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

- C. Also, we need to encourage with words.
 - 1. People who are discouraged seek out someone to encourage them.

1 Samuel 22:2 And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

2. Tell them what the Lord has done for you in your distress - that is what David did.

2 Samuel 22:5-7 When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me; In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.

- D. Just simply "watch with them."

Matthew 26:38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

1. Be there for them, just spend time with them.
2. There doesn't have to be anything said - just the presence of someone else helps.
3. Pray with them and pray for them.

- E. Try to get them to God, like Jacob did.

Genesis 35:3 And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.

1. Jacob took them to the house of God - that is where you are most likely to meet God and find encouragement.
2. Like the Psalmist did:

Psalms 73:2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. ...

Psalms 73:16-17 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

- F. If we can get them to God He will encourage them more than we ever could.
 1. Moses encouraged Joshua, but later God himself did.

Joshua 1:6-9 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

- G. For one of us to say to a discouraged brother, "Be strong" might help some, but when God speaks those words to a heart, it does much more good.
- H. Do not accuse and blame and find fault. This only causes them to be angry and that is what adds to discouragement and makes it worse; discouragement always follows anger.

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

- I. Strive to be an encourager and search for those who need an encouraging word.
 1. There are some good examples of people like this in the Bible and they did much good.

2 Timothy 1:16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

Acts 4:36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,