

DISCOURAGEMENT

BY: PHILLIP HAYES

One of the greatest weapons of the enemy is discouragement. However, I do not believe discouragement is a demon. Most times the source of discouragement comes from co-workers, friends, and relatives.

Sometimes we allow negative thoughts to bring discouragement when there is actually no real reason to be discouraged.

Understanding discouragement and how to resist it is a vital key to fulfilling a person's God given potential.

Personally, I have been overcome with discouragement many times in my life. I am certain each reader has also been influenced negatively by the horrible feeling of discouragement.

Discouragement is defined as a break down (literally) by violence, or (figuratively) by confusion and fear: it means to affright, melt, despair, be (make) afraid, amaze, beat down, discourage (cause to) dismay, go down, scare, terrify.

If you allow it; fear or dread of a situation that you must face will bring discouragement. It can begin with disappointment, then despair, oppression and depression follows. Yes, I said, "If you allow it". I believe you can defeat discouragement and ultimately depression!

I have actually witnessed saints of God feeling beat down and discouraged after hearing a message from the pulpit! I heard a Bible teacher advise his students, "Preach hell, fire and brimstone but don't leave the people in hell before you send them home. Tell them how to escape it!"

That was very good counsel. He understood the power of words.

There are valuable lessons we can find in the Word of God. These lessons will help us defeat every obstacle that might present itself to us. Let's look at a few I believe will help us.

After being delivered from the Egyptians, God's people fought and won many battles because God was with them. However, their trek through the wilderness proved to be perilous at times and sometimes the way was scarce of water and they tired of the daily food God gave them from Heaven.

After having won a great battle against the Canaanites we find them complaining and yielding to discouragement.

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. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. [Numbers 21: 4-5]

Notice, the people were discouraged "because of the way" not because of a demoniac attack against them. They had forgotten the great victory they had against the Canaanites and their attention was on their physical discomfort.

And they spoke against God, and against Moses! They complained there is no bread, neither any water! They hated the "light bread". That is, God's manna from Heaven! They despised the provision of God! Another lesson we should learn from this is "be content with what God has provided for you"! When you become discontent, you become discouraged! There is absolutely no reason for those in the wilderness, nor you or me to be discouraged

because of a lack of material wealth. Remember, it was their misguided view of the situation that led to their discouragement.

The greatest victory God's people would have is when they crossed over Jordan into the land God had promised them.

Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. [Deuteronomy 1:21]

Wow! Wouldn't you love to receive a word from the Lord like that! As they prepared for this great event, they decided to send spies into the land first to see what they would face. When the spies returned, there was good news and there was bad news!

The land was just as God said. It was a good land flowing with milk, honey and fruit. The bad news was there was opposition!

Let's take a look at how the people reacted to this news. Please remember, God had given them a great word and told them to fear not and neither be discouraged.

And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 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. Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this

place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God. [Deuteronomy 1:27-32]

Where did all this discouragement come from? It wasn't the devil, it was their brethren! *"Our brethren have discouraged us!"*

Moses told the people that God would fight for them and reminded them how God had delivered and kept them throughout their journey *as a man bear his son*. In other words God was like a father to them in all the way they went! But, *"Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God"*.

God had given them a great promise and a warning in verse twenty-one. But, they didn't really believe God. They allowed friends and relatives to persuade them away from His promises. A great lesson learned in this set of scriptures is discouragement is contagious!

You can receive a word from God. God can speak to you in a dream. But if you are not careful, someone will find a way to discourage you from fulfilling the very purpose God has for you.

Many a time, we have set our face toward the mission field and those very close to us would begin discouraging us. "Don't you know they are robbing and killing people over there?" Don't you know they are kidnapping Americans?" Don't you know a plane just crashed last week?" Don't you know it's miserable there and the water will make you sick?" "You need to get some immunization shots, disease is rampant over there!" Don't you know it's dangerous?"

These were all well intended comments by good people. However, if we had listened to them we may have never left our comfort zone.

I realize bad things do happen to good people. However, the Word of God is where we gain our strength to press on no matter the circumstance. *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to*

them who are the called according to his purpose” [Romans 8:28]. I am convinced all things will eventually work to my good! God can turn your trial into a blessing!

Most everyone has heard that, “David Encouraged himself in the Lord”. The Bible says that David was a man after God’s own heart. He was a great warrior and everyone knows the story of David and the giant. He was ordained of God! But bad things did happen to him and there is little doubt he had reason to be discouraged many times in his life. One of the most remarkable events in his life was at a place called Ziklag.

Ziklag had been given to David and he and his men lived there along with their wives and children. While David and his men were away from the city the Amalekites invaded Ziklag and burned it with fire. They also took all the wives and children captive. You can read about this in 1Samuel, chapter thirty. I will begin with 1Samuel chapter thirty, verse three: *“So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 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”.*

David and his men were greatly distressed and for good reason. They had lost everything! David’s men had followed him faithfully and were devoted to his leadership but this situation was overbearing. They blamed David for what had happened! But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God!

Think about that! Everything was lost! His home, his wives, his sons and daughters; all gone! But David reached out to his God and encouraged himself. I believe he knew and had faith that God could restore everything he had lost. He wasn't going to allow the devastation he saw with his eyes destroy his faith in God. He had beaten the odds before! No doubt, he began to remember his triumphs over the bear, the lion and Goliath the giant. He knew it was the hand of God that delivered his adversaries to him and God could do it again.

And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all [1Samuel 30:8].

When trouble begins to overwhelm you, do what David did! Don't give in to discouragement! Encourage yourself in the Lord and go to Him in prayer! He hasn't changed. He is still with you!

David and his men recovered everything. David didn't give in to discouragement. He walked by faith, and not by sight!

I believe God wants His people speaking faith and not discouragement. He wants us to be an encourager, not a discourager!

Look how Moses encouraged Joshua, *"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"* [Deuteronomy 31:7-8]. The word dismayed means, discouraged, demoralized, depressed. God said, don't be discouraged, I will be with thee, neither will I forsake thee.

Remember, we also have a word from the Lord. Jesus said, *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (See Hebrews 13:5).

Joshua encouraged the people by giving them the same word that God gave him. *"And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight"* [Joshua 10:25].

God has and will always fight the battle for His people! *"And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's"* [2Chronicles 20:15]. It doesn't matter how big your problems are, God is bigger!

Look at these amazing verses in 2Chronicles, chapter thirty-two, verses seven and eight: *"Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah."*

The people found rest when they heard these words! Praise God! I wish we could all remember that with us is the Lord our God to help us! God will fight your battles, for the battle is His, not yours. But this only happens, when you allow Him to fight for you.

There is always two ways to look at every situation. You can focus on the negative things you face, or you can focus on the solution. God is always the solution!

Remember, there were twelve spies that spied out the land before the children of Israel invaded the Promised Land. But they didn't see it the same way. One man was encouraged with what he saw and reported they were well

able to take the land. However, eleven men saw it differently. They saw themselves as grasshoppers in comparison to the men they saw there. They were discouraged and they discouraged all the people with their report. How are you seeing things in your life? Are you overcome with life's troubles, or are you well able to overcome every adversary? Can you encourage yourself in the Lord your God? If not, you will fall prey to every difficulty life brings.

I know this may be difficult for you to accept, but discouragement is a sin! Yes it is! Discouragement is disbelieving God! It's being faithless. You are denying the very power of deliverance that lies within you. Wake up! Hebrews chapter eleven, verse six says, *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"*. You can't please God and be overcome with discouragement and the same time!

Look at these next four verses: Jesus said, *"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment" [Matthew 6:25].*

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed" [Matthew 6:31].

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" [Matthew 6:34].

"But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost" [Mark 13:11].

To “take thought” is to worry. Jesus is saying, don’t worry! It’s a commandment! God took care of you yesterday and He is very able to take care of you today and tomorrow! Worry is a sure sign of discouragement! When you worry, you are walking in unbelief! You are walking by sight and not by faith.

Jesus is letting us know that the Heavenly Father cares for and will supply your daily food and clothing. Not only that, He will also be with you when you face very trying times and the Holy Ghost will speak for you. Jesus said, don’t worry about what you should say! This is a tremendous lesson for all of us. Sometimes we forget that Christ is not only with us, He is in us!

Quit justifying your discouragement by the things you go through. When I was in the world, we called it a pity party. “Oh, poor little old me”!

You have no right to be discouraged or depressed. God has declared the end from the beginning! Read the back of the Book. We win!

God has no problems; no crisis; no worry; no emergencies! He is not pacing back and forth in the Throne Room worried what Satan might do to you! Our God has All Power in Heaven and in the earth.

You are born again, a new creation in God and old things have passed away and all things are now brand new. You are a brand new creature covered in the Blood of Jesus, clothed in the Righteousness of Christ and baptized in the Holy Ghost and fire. You are ordained and elected; chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.

You are the light of the world, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. You have Royal Blood flowing in your veins. You are an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. You are kings and priests unto God. You’ve escaped hell and on your way to Heaven! What in the world are you worried

about? We really do not have any reason to fear or be discouraged.

Sister Glenda sings a song sometimes I really like. "I'm a winner either way, if I go or if I stay, I'm a winner either way". Truly, we are winners either way!

Trust Him! Walk with Him! Live in Him! *"For we walk by faith, not by sight" [2Corinthians 5:7].*

Carnal man walks by sight. His attention is on the outward appearance of things. Carnal man never sees beyond the physical.

Faith has eyes! Faith doesn't see the problem – Faith sees beyond the problem – Faith sees the blessing on the other side of your storm.

Open your brand new born again, new creation eyes. The eyes of faith God has given you looks not at things seen, but at the things not seen. *"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" [2Corinthians 4:18].*

Trials and tribulations will come. Just remember who you are when they come. Knowing who you are and Who you have living on the inside of you will help keep you from discouragement. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world".

Just as He promised the great heroes of the Bible we have referred to, He has also given us His Word and He expects us to use it to overcome every adversary.

May the Lord fill us with all His fullness, for we have the power within us. *"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" [Ephesians 3:19-20].*

Knowing all this, it should be impossible for a Born Again child of the Living God to be discouraged.