

THE PROBLEM OF DISCOURAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

1. In this lesson we want to look at DISCOURAGEMENT and how to overcome it.
2. DISCOURAGEMENT is one of the greatest burdens that we as Christians sometimes bear.
3. Elders, Preachers, Deacons, Teachers, Parents, and Everybody, at one time or another, becomes DISCOURAGED.
4. Life will have its valleys and peaks, its downs and its ups, its highs and its lows.
5. The problem is getting down into a valley and not getting out.
6. God does not want His children to become discouraged:
 - a. Deut. 31: 6, 8; 20:8; Joshua 1: 7, 9
 - b. Gal. 6:9
 - c. Heb. 12:3; Heb. 13: 5 – 6

I. THE SOURCES OF DISCOURAGEMENT

- a. Discouragement sometimes comes from INACTIVITY.
 - i. A church that does not work can be destroyed by discouragement.
 - ii. It is discouraging to be part of a church that has no enthusiasm.
 - iii. Lack of enthusiasm and zeal comes from INACTIVITY – Tit. 2:14.
 - iv. What can members do to overcome discouragement?
 1. Pray for everyone – I Tim. 2: 1 – 5.
 2. Visit the Lost, the Weak, the Unfaithful, the Aged, and Sick.
 3. You can phone people, send tracts, and literature.
 4. You can have Bible classes in your home.
 5. Attend every service.
 6. You can study your Bible lesson.
 7. Live a pure life – Tit. 2: 11 – 12.
 8. You can be friendly, happy and optimistic in attitude toward life, God, and the church.
- b. Discouragement sometimes comes from REJECTION.
 - i. People refuse our invitations to attend the services.
 - ii. We need to realize these people are not rejecting us, but Christ and God – Luke 10:16.
 - iii. Christ found rejection in:
 1. The World – John 15:18
 2. His own – John 1: 11 -12
 3. For His hard sayings – John 6: 66 – 68
- c. Discouragement sometimes comes from SICKNESS.
 - i. We need to let sickness teach us some needed lessons and not be discouraged by it – James 1: 1 – 4.

- ii. We need to let it teach us patience and humility – 2 Cor. 12:7.
- d. Discouragement sometimes comes as we view the SINFUL LIVES OF OTHERS.
 - i. When we see sin and lack of zeal for the Lord in the lives of many professed Christians we become discouraged.
 - ii. Elijah in the Old Testament – I Kings 19:14.
 - 1. He was looking at the wrong people – I Kings 19:18 (7,000 had not bowed their knees to Baal).
- e. A list of other things that bring discouragement:
 - i. Death of loved ones; material losses; a sense of insecurity; friends turning on you; blighted hopes and dreams; trouble in the church; family problems; handicaps; etc.

II. DISCOURAGEMENT WEAKENS OUR SENSE OF AIM.

- a. A person's AIM is absolutely vital to his well-being.
- b. We sometimes say "He lives an aimless life".
- c. Without AIM there is no special place to go.
- d. Our achievements are connected to our AIM.
- e. Men who have accomplished things in every age have been men of purpose and AIM.
 - i. Abraham – Heb. 11: 8 – 10.
 - ii. Moses – Heb. 11: 24 – 26.
 - iii. Jesus – Luke 19:10.
 - iv. Paul – Phil. 1: 21; 2 Tim. 4: 6 – 8.
- f. Christians AIM to go to Heaven; they must not let discouragement weaken that AIM.

III. DISCOURAGEMENT PROMOTES INACTIVITY

- a. A discouraged Christian many times become INDIFFERENT.
- b. Because discouragement dulls our sense of dedication.
- c. When one is discouraged:
 - i. He loses interest.
 - ii. He fails to attend.
 - iii. He is not involved.

IV. THE CURE FOR DISCOURAGEMENT

- a. A STRONG FAITH – Rom. 4: 20 – 21; Heb. 11:6; 11:1; Rom. 10:17.
 - i. There is nothing which will counteract discouragement like trusting in God and remembering His promises – 2 Pet. 3:9; Heb. 13: 5 – 6; I Pet. 5:7; Rom. 8: 28; Matt. 6:33.
- b. SELF-CONTROL – "to have power over oneself"
 - i. I Cor. 9:27
 - ii. Self-control is using one's ability to control one's own behavior in harmony with the will of God – Psa. 119:11.
 - iii. Discouragement seeks to control us.
 - iv. We must not submit to it.

c. INTENSE ACTIVITY

- i. The quickest way to win over discouragement is to get out of yourself and go do something for somebody.
- ii. It is very difficult to feel sorry for yourself when your mind is occupied with helping others.
- iii. There is always opportunity to help others – John 4:35; Mk. 16:15 – 16; Gal. 6:10.

d. SPIRITUAL THINKING

- i. Rom. 8:6
- ii. *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life”* –Prov. 4: 23.
- iii. If we are to overcome it, we must occupy our minds with things that edify – Phil. 4:8.

e. BY PRAYER

- i. I Pet. 5:7
- ii. Phil. 4: 5 – 7
- iii. I John 5: 14 – 15

CONCLUSION

- DISCOURAGEMENT causes us to complain and to murmur – I Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:14.
- It causes us to be IDLE while men die without the gospel.
- It produces a desire to give up and return to the world.
- One cannot entertain enthusiasm and discouragement at the same time.
- DISCOURAGEMENT is like a disease that is terribly infectious; it infects those who come near to it with gloom and deep despair.

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