

## Overcoming Discouragement

Message 02 of the series, "Outlook: Overcoming Negative Emotions"

### I. God doesn't want us to be discouraged.

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand." Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)

### II. When we're feeling discouraged, it's important to identify "why", so we can combat it.

"Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again— my Savior and my God!" Psalm 42:5,6,11 (NLT)

#### a. We may be discouraged because we're tired.

"At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm... Then the people of Judah began to complain, 'The workers are getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be moved. We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves.'"

Nehemiah 4:6,10 (NLT)

*Note:* It's easy to get discouraged and quit halfway through.

*Life Application:* We can overcome discouragement from fatigue by scheduling Sabbath days.

"You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work... Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt, but the LORD your God brought you out with his strong hand and powerful arm. That is why the LORD your God has commanded you to rest on the Sabbath day."

Deuteronomy 5:13-15 (NLT)

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul." Psalm 23:1-3 (NIV)

#### b. We may be discouraged by negative things people say.

"Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked the Jews, saying in front of his friends and the Samaritan army officers, 'What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they're doing? Do they think they can build the wall in a single day by just offering a few sacrifices? Do they actually think they can make something of stones from a rubbish heap—and charred ones at that?' Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, 'That stone wall would collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!'" Nehemiah 4:1-3 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We can overcome discouragement from negativity by meditating on what God says.

"The fear of human opinion disables; trusting in GOD protects you from that." Proverbs 29:25 (MSG)

"I called together the nobles and the rest of the people and said to them, 'Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!'" Nehemiah 4:14 (NLT)

"David strengthened himself in the LORD his God." 1 Samuel 30:6 (NKJV)

#### c. We may be discouraged because we're working alone.

"Then I explained to the nobles and officials and all the people, 'The work is very spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall.'" Nehemiah 4:19 (NLT)

*Note:* One of Satan's best strategies is to divide and conquer. "Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We can overcome discouragement from isolation by developing relationships with Christian friends.

"When you hear the blast of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. Then our God will fight for us!" Nehemiah 4:20 (NLT)

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together,

they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NIV)

“God, who encourages those who are discouraged, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus.”

2 Corinthians 7:6 (NLT)

d. We may be discouraged because we are afraid.

“Sanballat’s servant came with an open letter in his hand, and this is what it said: ‘There is a rumor among the surrounding nations, and Geshem tells me it is true, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel and that is why you are building the wall. According to his reports, you plan to be their king... You can be very sure that this report will get back to the king,’ I replied, ‘There is no truth in any part of your story. You are making up the whole thing.’ They were just trying to intimidate us, imagining that they could discourage us and stop the work.” Nehemiah 6:5-9 (NLT)

*Note:* Many fears can discourage us.

- fear of failure (What if I blow it?)
- fear of criticism (What will people say?)
- fear of leadership/responsibility (What if I can’t handle this?)

*Life Application:* We can overcome discouragement from fear by fighting back against false arguments and lies.

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (NIV)

“When the servant of the man of God got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. ‘Oh, sir, what will we do now?’ the young man cried to Elisha. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ Elisha told him. ‘For there are more on our side than on theirs!’ Then Elisha prayed, ‘O LORD, open his eyes and let him see!’ The LORD opened the young man’s eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.” 2 Kings 6:15-17 (NLT)

“So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.” Romans 8:6 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We must encourage each other often.

“So encourage each other and build each other up....” 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)

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### **Promises of God to reflect upon when we feel discouraged:**

“I weep with sorrow; encourage me by your word.” Psalm 119:28 (NLT)

God loves me unconditionally. (Psalm 36:5-7, 103:11, Jeremiah 31:3, John 3:16, Romans 5:8-10)

God chose to adopt me into his family. (Romans 8:23, Galatians 4:6, Ephesians 1:5)

God will use even the painful things in my life for good. (Romans 5:3-5, 8:28, James 1:2-4)

God will never leave me or forsake me. (Matthew 28:20, Romans 8:35)

God forgives my sins and remembers them no more. (Psalm 32:5, 103:8-14, Isaiah 1:18, 1 John 1:9)

God is always available and wants to help me. (Psalm 23:4, 46:1, 118:7, John 14:16, 26, Hebrews 13:6)

God will protect me. (2 Samuel 22:1-7, Psalm 3:3, Psalm 91, 94:22, Proverbs 18:10)

God will strengthen me. (Psalm 29:11, Isaiah 41:10, Philippians 4:13)

God will guide me along the best pathway for my life. (Psalm 32:8-9, 37:23-24, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 30:21)

God loves to use imperfect people. (Acts 4:13, 1 Corinthians 1:25-29)

God did not give me a spirit of fear. (Psalm 56:11, Romans 8:37, 2 Timothy 1:7)

God is bigger than any problem I will face. (Psalm 118:4, Jeremiah 32:27, Luke 1:37, Romans 8:31)

God will reward me if I suffer for His sake. (Matthew 5:11-12, Ephesians 6:6-8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 3:14)

My troubles here won’t last long. (2 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Peter 1:6)

**Connect Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Over the past year, how have negative emotions impacted your life?
2. During times when you are discouraged, do you lash out or withdraw, blame others or yourself, try harder or give up, get mad at God, or ask for God's restoration?
3. Discouragement can happen when we are tired/exhausted. Why do you think God instituted a Sabbath? Read Deuteronomy 5:13-15 and Psalm 23:1-3.
4. How hard is it to live out Philippians 4:8-9 when people are saying or posting negative statements about you? What is required to intentionally 'fix our thoughts'?
5. Read Hebrews 10:23-25. How is your faith impacted by your faithfulness to or neglect of meeting with the Body of Believers (the church)?
6. Read Mark 6:45-51. In this story of the disciples being afraid, we see the impact of Christ in our lives. Look at the statement from Jesus in verse 50. Do you believe He says the same thing to you today? How would remembering that Jesus is with you in times of fear impact your ability to endure life's challenges?
7. Spend time each day this week reading aloud the promises of God listed here.

**Quotations worth discussing:**

"Fatigue makes cowards of us all." George S. Patton, Jr. and Vince Lombardi

"I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living." David in Psalm 27:13

"Every opportunity comes with opposition." Rick Warren