

# HOW TO KEEP FROM DISCOURAGEMENT

## When Things Don't Go Your Way

Many in the world today are fighting depression and discouragement.

Have you ever felt stressed, down, blue, discouraged?

Today we live in a busy, stressful, sinful world. It can be discouraging sometimes.

I had an interesting phone call recently...



### Definitions

- having lost confidence or enthusiasm; disheartened
- 1. To deprive of confidence, hope, or spirit: *Making so little progress after so much effort discouraged us*
- 2. To dissuade or deter (someone) from doing something: *My adviser discouraged me from applying to big universities*
- 3. To try to prevent by expressing disapproval or raising objections: *The agency discouraged all travel to areas hardest hit by the disease*

**Everyone** deals with discouragement at some point in his or her life. The **highs** and the **lows** are part of what makes the human experience **rich**—if we didn't **experience** the lows, we wouldn't **appreciate** the highs.

**Discouragement, disappointment, failure, and setbacks**—these are all things that can *help us develop Godly character* if we maintain a proper mindset.

**The key to the Christian life is ...**

- to **learn** from these experiences, and
- **minimize the amount of time** that we allow ourselves to stay discouraged.

**Some people** seem to be able to accept difficulty as a **challenge**, and others feel **overwhelmed**. When we become discouraged, we are apt to respond unwisely to situations and people.

- We withdraw      - We complain      - We blame      - We draw negative conclusions.
- We quit—or we go on with the above feelings churning inside us.

In the Bible, we read of **many** who became discouraged. Let's look at several examples and see what their discouragement actually came from:

**Gen 6:11-12** The earth was **corrupt** before God, and the earth was filled with **violence**. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

**Gen 6:6-7** & the LORD was **sorry** that He had made man on the earth, & He was **grieved** in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man & beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am **sorry** that I have made them."

**God** (sometimes) is discouraged! We share this capability (emotion) with Him! Yet ...

**Gen 6:8** But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

**Jesus** also showed & felt discouragement!

**Mat 23:37-38** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets & stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate

Yet ...

**Mat 23:39** for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'BLESSED is HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!' "

Jesus also expresses hope in His discouragement

**Ecc 3:1-4** To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven: A time to be born, And a time to die; A time to plant, And a time to pluck what is planted; A time to kill, And a time to heal; A time to break down, And a time to build up; A time to **weep**, And a time to laugh; A time to **mourn**, And a time to dance;



**Ecc 7:2-3** **Better** to go to the house of mourning Than to go to the house of feasting, For that is the end of all men; And the living will take it to heart. Sorrow is **better** than laughter, For by a sad countenance the heart is made better.

I get discouraged sometimes ... and it is good ... and it is biblical...

Eze 9:3-4 ... And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side; and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and **put a mark on the foreheads** of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

Why? Because of the consequences of **Iniquity** (lawlessness)

Jer 10:23-24 O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.

Yet ... We are included with those who don't know how to live ...so ...

Jer 10:24 O LORD, **correct** me, but with **justice**; Not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing.

What *iniquity* discourages me today? ... with my inability to stop it?! *ALL of it!*

- **Commandment 1 – No other gods** – society ridicules those who worship God
- **2. No idols** – society has empty replacements that become people's TOP priority
- **3. Name of the Lord in vain** – more than swear words – it is blaming God for ills +
- **4. Keep the Sabbath holy** – most don't know what (or when) the Sabbath is
- **5. Honor your parents** – society has sought to destroy the family (BLM, Marxism)
- **6. Don't murder** – Yet society promotes *legalized* abortion & MAID (Medical Assist in dying)
- **7. Don't commit adultery** – It is not a crime, it is *tragic* ... yet entertaining for TV
- **8. Don't steal** – not enforced in some states if less than \$1000 !?!
- **9. Don't Lie** – we see it daily with politicians & businessmen who should be examples
- **10. Don't covet** – Advertising & unrestrained human nature feed this lust

Battling discouragement  
doesn't mean we're failing,  
*it means we're fighting.*

... er... Back to providing some Biblical examples of discouragement ...

**Jon 1:12** And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For *I know* that this great tempest is because of me."

**Jon 4:2-3** So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!"

Jonah was a depressed and discouraged prophet because things were not going his way. Jonah was **overruled by God Himself**. Jonah did not want Nineveh to be saved; he wanted to destroy them. He was exasperated because he felt all things—including God—was against him. He angrily **resisted against God's will**, but lost.

(After the *Spys report* - the Promised land flows with milk & honey ... and Giants ...)

**Num 14:1-3** So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"



When the Israelites heard that the Canaanites were giants and lived in fortified cities, they cried! Their low spirits came from comparing a **seemingly insolvable** situation to **their resources** instead of **God's resources**.

**Gen 30:1** Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "**Give me children, or else I die!**" And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

Rachel could not have children. She blamed her "poor" husband. **Rachel's** melancholy came from... **resenting a situation she had no power to change.**

**1Sa 30:1-2** Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, & had taken captive the women & those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away & went their way.

**4** Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

**6** Now David was **greatly distressed**, for **the people spoke of stoning him**, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

David was about to be stoned by his own men when they were distressed about the loss of their wives and possessions. **David's** low point came ... **through experiencing rejection and misunderstanding from those he loved.**

**Num 21:4-5** Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became **very discouraged** on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."

In this case, they were **discouraged because** ... they were focusing so much on their difficulties that they lost sight of God's promises & provisions.

### WHAT TO TELL MYSELF WHEN I'M FEELING DISCOURAGED

1. This is **tough**. But so am I.
2. I may not be able to control this situation. But I am **in charge** of how I respond.
3. I haven't figured this out...yet.
4. This challenge is here to teach me something.
5. All I need to do is take it one step at a time. Breathe. And do the next **right thing**.

**Job 10:1** "I hate my life, so I will complain without holding back; I will speak because I am so unhappy.

**Job 10:3** Does it make you happy to trouble me? Don't you care about me, the work of your hands? Are you happy with the plans of evil people?

In light of Job's enormous trials, we hardly blame him for feeling discouraged. We can certainly sympathize with his reasoning that God is not fair in allowing the bitter experiences faced

*(Elijah flees from Jezebel...)*

1Ki 19:4 Then Elijah walked for a whole day into the desert. He sat down under a bush and asked to die. "I have had enough, Lord," he prayed. "Let me die. I am no better than my ancestors."

He had "had enough." Two things contributed to Elijah's discouragement. First, he was physically and emotionally exhausted. Second, and perhaps more significant, he seems to have pressed on in God's work without a clear sense of direction from God. The Bible records that Elijah ran for his life into the wilderness, but there is no indication that this was God's bidding. How many times have we felt "burned out" from "running on empty" and declare, "I'm out of here!"?

**Neh 2:1-3** It was the month of Nisan in the twentieth year Artaxerxes was king. He wanted some wine, so I took some and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before. So the king said, "Why does your face look sad even though you are not sick? Your heart must be sad." Then I was very afraid. I said to the king, "May the king live forever! My face is sad because the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire."

Nehemiah was sad (discouraged) **because** he saw the work of God going backward. The rebuilding of Jerusalem was very dear to Nehemiah. How many people today feel angered or discouraged because certain undertakings—or even churches—they have devoted their lives to, turn to naught?

## 10 Reasons Why Failure is Important



"I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

Thomas Edison

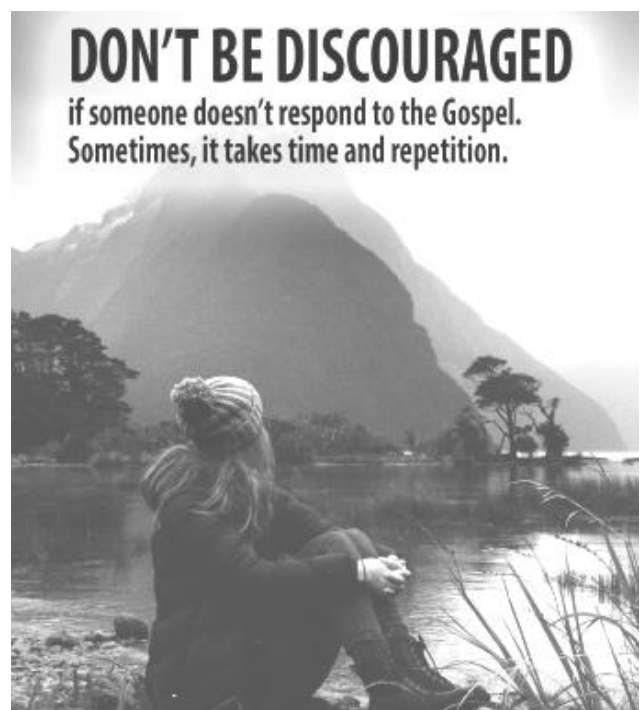
- 1 Failure means you have at least tried. 
- 2 Every failure is a step towards success. 
- 3 Failure makes you stronger and more resilient. 
- 4 Failure teaches you how to deal with disappointment. 
- 5 Failure helps you identify your weaknesses. 
- 6 Failure inspires perseverance and builds character. 
- 7 Failure develops creativity & problem-solving skills. 
- 8 Failure teaches humility and empathy. 
- 9 Failure keeps you in the growth mindset. 
- 10 Failure helps you appreciate success. 

Failure is important, but it's the moment after failure, when we get up and try again, that should be truly celebrated.



Out of these Biblical examples, we can draw some **conclusions for avoiding discouragement** in our own lives. We need to:

- Realize God has plans far above and beyond what we grasp in the present.
- Distinguish between the “changeables” and “non-changeables” in our lives. “Non-changeables” can be conditions in our lives that God is allowing for His purposes.
- Review God’s promises and recall ways He provided for us in times past. “I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands” (Psalm 143:5).
- Realize that our friends and relatives may not always agree with us—or with God (Romans 8:7). See things from God’s perspective. Keep our eyes focused on God’s power and resources.
- Rejoice that God is working with you—even if you cannot understand it at the time. It is what it is. Realize our heavenly Father knows best.
- Wait on the Lord’s time. Major decisions should never be based on discouragement, doubt, or fear. Heb 11:6 Without faith no one can please God. Anyone who comes to God must believe that he is real and that he rewards those who truly want to find him.
- Do not try to “force God’s hand” by your “high priority” request or bad attitude (Ecclesiastes 5:2). Realize He has our best interest at heart.
- Realize that what may appear as a set-back to us may be God’s way of showing us greater plans. Learn to cooperate with the inevitable.



We need to discipline ourselves to meditate—to keep our minds STAYED on God, not on circumstances. Here are three sure-fire ways to see the “Big Picture” and keep from discouragement.



DON'T LET LIFE  
DISCOURAGE YOU;  
EVERYONE WHO  
GOT WHERE HE IS  
HAD TO BEGIN  
WHERE HE WAS.

## I. REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE: [the PAST]

Psalm 126:3: “The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.”

- We can keep from discouragement by meditating about what God **HAS DONE** in the past. We can offer prayers of **thanksgiving** for what God has done with a sincere attitude of **gratitude**.
- **The Bible** is primarily a history book, showing what has been, what is, and what will be.
- God has **created** the angelic realm, the heavens, and the earth (Genesis 1:1).
- God gave us His Son to die for our sins. **Jesus** gave Himself that we might be cleansed from all unrighteousness (John 3:16).
- The man of faith knows that **every good gift** comes from God— including his health, life, & possessions All are gifts from the hand of God (Romans 6:28; 1 Corinthians 4:17; James. 1:17).

## II. RECOGNIZE WHAT GOD IS DOING: [THE PRESENT]

- We can keep from discouragement by meditating about what God **IS doing** presently. A positive attitude will help us to see the good and expect the best from God.
- Realize Jesus Christ is acting as our High Priest every day on our behalf. Go to Him often every day. Remind yourself daily God is alive today. He is working in the lives of those of us who allow Him. We always need to be aware of His power and presence (Isaiah 26:3).
- God the Father is begetting sons and daughters, children of God, and bringing them to fruition. Sometimes the conversion process can be uncomfortable. But know it is for our overall good (Romans 8:28).
- Be constantly aware God is seeing to it that we are physically and spiritually nourished each day. His angels watch out over us, but we must do our part; we must BE here.

## III. REJOICE ABOUT WHAT GOD WILL DO: [THE FUTURE]

**Joel 2:21** says, “Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things.”

We can keep from discouragement by meditating, or thinking, on what God **WILL DO**—what God has promised!

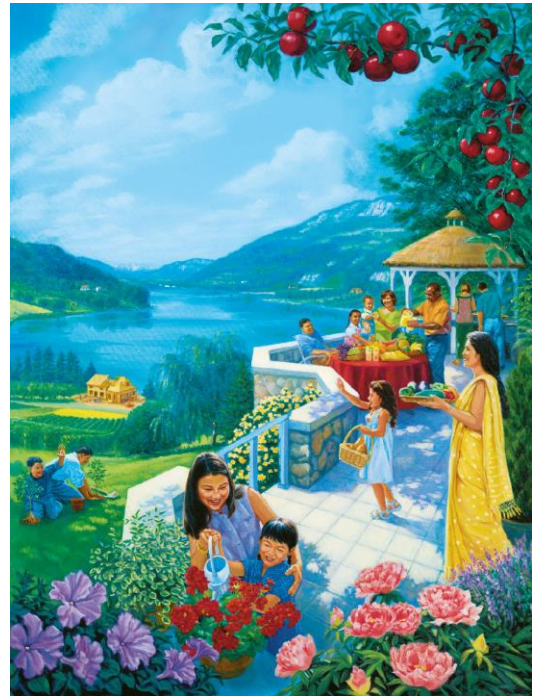
We must learn to face the future with an attitude of optimistic faith. Faith is believing what God



says is true. God has promised to help us in time of need, and to give strength and courage for all our tomorrows. Relying on God, we can do it! We are promised eternal life with God. He is preparing wonderful things for those who trust in Him. How ironic that **the atheist** denies God exists; in reality, unless he repents, he will not exist!

## So, What WILL God Do?

- “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:19). He will punish the wicked. Satan and his minions will finally be put away.
- At His Coming, Christ will resurrect the righteous dead and give them eternal life forevermore (1 Corinthians 15:51–53).
- He will establish His Kingdom and His Laws on the earth (Hebrews 10:16).
- He will reward the saints (you and me); we are joint heirs of God (Romans 8:17).
- He will appoint offices for us. He will renovate the earth—it will become like a literal Garden of Eden (Isaiah 51:3)!
- There will be no more sickness. The nature of animals will be changed. Mankind’s long desire for utopia will arise! (Isaiah 65:25; Revelation 21:4).
- There will be a restitution of all things (Acts 3:20–21). “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).
- The whole earth will be filled with the glory of God (Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14).



If you actively and persistently meditate on these points you will have more peace of mind & will be prepared to **embrace & to battle** any discouragement that comes your way!