

Letting

Go...

of DISCOURAGEMENT

"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

– Psalm 43:5

"I'm tired... I'm frustrated with my life... I feel like there just isn't any purpose anymore and I just want to quit." These are some of the voices of discouragement. Discouragement comes in and attacks our sense of worth; it clouds our view and replaces it with apathy. We walk around feeling defeated and without hope or purpose. This only leads to more problems and paralyzes our faith.

This week we will identify many of the causes of discouragement that come into our lives to steal our JOY. Get ready to replace this mentality with encouragement from the TRUTH of God's Word. There are many things that can quickly get us discouraged. We're going to look at the causes and how to overcome them.

1. Our Feelings

The first major mistake is to trust our feelings! Our feelings and emotions are ready to take us down destructive roads away from the TRUTH. **What does Psalm 119:29 say to watch out for?**

"Keep me from lying to myself; give me the privilege of knowing your instructions."

– Psalm 119:29 (NLT)

God has given us powerful resources in His Word! How can the following verses encourage us in discouraging moments?

Isaiah 26:3 _____

Philippians 4:4-9 _____

2 Corinthians 10:5 _____

Colossians 3:1-2 _____

Blurred vision...the more we focus on the problem the bigger the problem gets...but when we focus on God the problem diminishes. What do you learn from Hebrews 12:2? _____

2. Physical issues - Lack of Sleep and Nutrition

When you are tired, things can seem more overwhelming and devastating than they really are. When you haven't eaten anything for a while your blood sugar levels get low and cause you to feel frustrated. Jesus says in Matthew 11:28-30 that we need to come to Him when we are weary and heavy burdened and He will give us rest!

What is happening with Elijah in 1 Kings 19:1-9 and how does God encourage and strengthen him? _____

3. Our own Failures:

We can be extremely fragile and vulnerable when we see our own inability to succeed. We cannot believe the lie that we are no good because of our past mistakes and failures. You can't quit—you have to get back up again!

What does Proverbs 24:16 say about a righteous man? _____

Paul even shows his frustration with his own failures. What do you learn in Romans 7:15? _____

But what does Paul say he does in Philippians 3:13-14? _____

4. Other People:

Bad attitudes of other people can have a huge effect on us. Discouragement is contagious as well! Watch out who you're spending time with, be surrounded with good examples.

What is the warning in 1 Corinthians 15:33? _____

What does James 5:16 encourage us to do? _____

5. Unrealistic or Unfulfilled Expectations:

It's easy to create our own perfect scenarios and when they don't come to fruition our hearts are devastated and discouraged.

What does Proverbs 4:23 say we need to do in order to overcome this? _____

According to Proverbs 3:5-6, what do we need to do when life doesn't go as expected? _____

6. Lack of Contentment:

When we are not content with what we have and who we are then we fall into the trap of discontentment and discouragement. In order to let go of discouragement caused by discontent, we have to learn to be CONTENT! What do you learn from the following verses?

Philippians 4:11-13 _____

1 Timothy 6:6-7 _____

7. Conditions of the World:

When we dwell on the scum going on in the world we can get discouraged! Jesus says to take heart because He has overcome the World! This world is not our home, our eternal destination and home is Heaven!

What comfort do you find in Philippians 3:20? _____

What does Romans 12:2 say we need to do? _____

8. Bitterness:

The key to getting rid of bitterness is forgiveness! So in order to get rid of our discouragement caused by bitterness, we have to forgive! What do these verses have to say about bitterness?

Ephesians 4:31-32 _____

Hebrews 12:15 _____

9. The Poor Me Syndrome:

“Every party has a pooper...” The only one who wants to come to your pity party is YOU. You got to get your eyes off yourself!!! Philippians 2:3-4 says that we’re supposed to do NOTHING out of selfish ambition, but in humility consider others better than ourselves! Freedom from discouragement and living with JOY comes from having right priorities—Jesus **O**thers **Y**ou.

How do the following verses encourage us?

1 Corinthians 10:24 _____

1 Peter 4:10 _____

10. Loneliness:

Sometimes in life we just feel neglected and alone. But guess what... No matter what we think or feel, we’re never alone! What are we promised in Deuteronomy 31:6?

You are not alone in the area of discouragement! We are all very vulnerable to the crushing effects of discouragement. It is definitely our biggest hurdle to experiencing JOY. Proverbs 18:14b says “...but a crushed spirit who can bear?”

According to the following verses, what do we need to do in times of discouragement?

Psalms 119:25, 49-50 _____

2 Corinthians 5:7 _____

James 1:2 _____

Psalm 42:5 _____

Wrap up:

I must let go of _____ and put my _____ in God.

Additional Study

Sin and guilt are huge components in our battle with discouragement. God clearly gives us the solution to dealing with our sin—it's called repentance by confession, then we receive His forgiveness.

What does 1 John 1:9 promise us? _____

Look up Psalm 51 and write down the key points in David's prayer. _____

What do you learn about the Lord's character from Psalm 118:5-6, 14? _____

What command from Jesus is given to overcome discouragement in John 14:1? _____

How are you encouraged by Romans 8:35 & 37? _____

Passage Index (NIV 1984 unless otherwise stated)

Psalm 119:29 (NLT) "Keep me from lying to myself; give me the privilege of knowing your instructions."

Isaiah 26:3 "You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you."

Philippians 4:4-9 "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

2 Corinthians 10:5 "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."

Colossians 3:1-2 "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

Hebrews 12:2 "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

1 Kings 19:1-9 "Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ²So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, 'May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.' ³Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, LORD,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' ⁵Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' ⁶He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. ⁷The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' ⁸So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹There he went into a cave and spent the night."

Proverbs 24:16 "For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity."

Romans 7:15 "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do."

Philippians 3:13-14 "Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

1 Corinthians 15:33 "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'"

James 5:16 “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

Proverbs 4:23 “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Philippians 4:11-13 “I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”

1 Timothy 6:6-7 “But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.”

Philippians 3:20 “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ...”

Romans 12:2 “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Ephesians 4:31-32 “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

Hebrews 12:15 “See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

1 Corinthians 10:24 “Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.”

1 Peter 4:10 “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.”

Deuteronomy 31:6 “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Psalms 119:25, 49-50 “I am laid low in the dust; preserve my life according to your word...⁴⁹Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. ⁵⁰My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.”

2 Corinthians 5:7 “We live by faith, not by sight.”

James 1:2 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds...”

Psalms 42:5 “Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior...”