

The wings that overthrow discouragement

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Introduction: Everyone understands the powerful emotion of discouragement.

- A. Our God understands our discouragements and wants us to know that.
 - 1. His time on this earth let us know that He knows. **(Heb 4:14-16)**
 - 2. We sing the song “Does Jesus care?” and the answer is a powerful “Yes!”
- B. Discouragement often comes from a realization that expectation does not line up with “reality.”
 - 1. Someone makes an investment that later goes bust.
 - 2. Parents have high expectations of their children.
 - 3. We have high expectations of our brethren, our mates and our selves.
 - 4. What things have discouraged you?
- C. Discouragement is likened unto a battery that runs down. **(Heb 12:3)**
 - 1. *to loose, unloose* (cf. German *auslösen*), *to set free*.
 - 2. *to dissolve*; metaphorically, *to weaken, relax, exhaust*. Commonly in the passive
 - a. "to have one's strength relaxed, to be enfeebled through exhaustion, to grow weak, grow weary, be tired out"
- D. Our God gives us a startling and incredible promise. **(Isa 40:30-31)**

I. Discouragement can bring the most powerful men to a standstill

- A. Paul has a burden that at time became very heavy. **(2 Cor 11:28)**
 - 1. Paul loved the church at Corinth. He wrote a very strong letter. **(1 Cor 4:18-21)**
 - 2. Now he had to wait and see how they would respond. It was a long wait.
- B. As time passed the burden grew. **(2 Cor 2:12-13)**
 - 1. Have you ever begun to wonder about “what if.” and become discouraged?
 - 2. What if Corinth had rejected Paul?
 - 3. Paul passed on an open door to preach the gospel. He needed encouragement. **(2 Cor 7:5-7)**

“Uncertain conjectures relative to the success of his epistle; fears lest the severity of it should alienate their affections utterly from him; fears lest the party of the incestuous person should have prevailed; fears lest the teaching of the false apostle should have perverted their minds from the simplicity of the truth; all was uncertainty, all apprehension; and the Spirit of God did not think proper to remove the causes of these apprehensions in any extraordinary way.”

- 4. God gave him that encouragement! **(2 Cor 7:13-16)**

II. Discouragement can be shared like a virus

- A. God will hold one responsible for discouraging His people.
 - 1. Satan works as an enemy to discourage. **(Ezra 4:4-5)**
 - 2. Our work is to recharge the batteries! **(Heb 12:12-13)**
 - 3. What are you known for?
- B. Consider the example of the spies in Moses day.
 - 1. They had great reason to be encouraged. **(Deut 1:21)**
 - 2. They however chose discouragement. **(Deut 1:28)**
 - 3. Most people choose discouragement because they do not know how to choose the power of an encouraging faith!

4. Your discouragement should not be permanent.

III. God has powerful provisions that overcome discouragement

- A. Our faith will lift us up. (**Acts 27:21-22, 31-36**)
 1. We should be the most optimistic and encouraging people on earth!
 2. We can see things the world cannot see. We are lights!
 3. How did Jesus encourage John the Baptist? (**Jn 7:18-22**)
 4. Do you have a faith that is based upon evidence that can be renewed?
- B. Our family should lift us up.
 1. God has designed this arrangement for encouragement. (**Ecc 4:9-10**)
 2. How many of you work to make your home that way? (Ex. A funeral yesterday)
 3. What if our homes are not? (**Col 3:21**)
- C. The church should lift us up. (**Rom 1:11-12; Col 2:1-2**)
 1. Notice how Christians should encourage us --- our mutual faith.
 2. We may choose to encourage one another like the world does. Many will be left out of that "encouragement."
 3. The highlights of many vacations have come from sharing a mutual faith with those who were previously strangers.
- D. Our worship should lift us up. (**1 Cor 14:3, 31**)
 1. Have you ever been in the presence of God and not receive encouragement?
 2. What then keeps a Christian from being encouraged in an assembly or at home?
- E. There are false forms of encouragement.

IV. Keeping the mind renewed while discouraged

- A. We must fight our thoughts to find reality. (**Ps 42:5-6, 11; 43:5**)
 1. Have you ever stopped and considered how ridiculous your thoughts are?
 2. Faith requires thought and direction, emotion alone does not. (**1 Pt 1:13**)
 3. What is reality? Our faith can teach us. (**2 Cor 4:16-18**)
- B. We must fight the temptation to criticize and tear down.
 1. Discouraged people may easily find "comfort" here.
 2. Look at what this spirit did to Israel's view of God. (**Num 21:4-6**)
 3. Some are more discouraged when others are happy.
- C. We must fight the temptation to withdraw.
 1. Outside of finding a needed rest withdrawing is wrong.
 2. You may need to learn how to find comfort from God. (**Acts 11:23**)
- D. Do not accept and expect failure.
 1. When we walk by sight we will be disappointed.
 2. The promises of God will never fail. (**2 Cor 1:18-22**)
 3. A faithful Christian cannot be a pessimist.

Conclusion: God is ready to lift me up but am I?

- A. God often has pleaded with His people to open their eyes and let Him help. (**Mt 23:37**)
- B. Lift up your eyes Christian, what do you see? (**Isa 40:26; 60:4-5; Jn 4:35**)