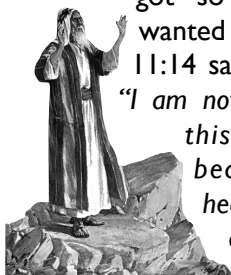




Good People Get Discouraged

Moses was giving his life to help God's people, however, the people criticized, condemned and complained so much Moses finally

got so discouraged he wanted to die. Numbers 11:14 says Moses prayed, "I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me." He continued, "kill me, I pray thee."



Moses Had A Wrong Perspective of Things

From Moses' perspective the source of discouragement was people and a lack of provisions. The real source of the discouragement however, was a personal problem. Like Elijah and Jonah, who also prayed to die, Moses allowed himself to become discouraged. He allowed his problem to become bigger than his God. This in turn changed his attitude about everything. Moses started out very confident about his ministry. Discouragement, however, brought him to the place of confusion.

Why Me???

His prayer revealed the condition of his heart had changed. The tone of his prayer was angry and irreverent! His question was, "Why me?" When we get discouraged

Fighting Discouragement In The Small Church

instead of asking "why me?" we should ask "Why Not Me?"

Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Did he mean everyone but me?

Job 14:1 says,

"Man that is born of a woman is...full of trouble." Did he mean everyone but me?

First Thessalonians 5:18,

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Did he mean everyone but me should give thanks for, "every thing"?

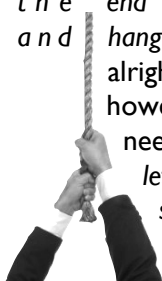
Note: It says, "In every thing," not "for" everything." Sometimes adversity is a better friend than prosperity.

When the Lord allows trouble into our life, we must remember that it is part of His plan for us, Romans 8:28 says all things, "work together for good." The verse continues it is, "according to his purpose."

We should not ask, "Why Me?" Our prayer should be, "Lord, what is your purpose? What is the lesson that You want me to learn?"

Let Go And Let God

Someone has said, "When you get to the end of your rope tie a knot and hang on!" That advice is alright for unsaved people, however, what Christians need to do is "let go and let God take care of the situation."



Part of the purpose for the pressures of life is simply God working at getting us to the end of our rope so we will trust Him to do the impossible.

Moses Had A Pity Party

Moses had a little self-centered pity party instead of having a heart for the people he was responsible to lead to the promised land. (It was a "little" pity-party because the people who got him discouraged didn't come. They didn't even know there was a party.)

What Do You Expect?

Discouragement is caused by unmet expectations! If you expect you are going to be involved in the work of the Lord and not be criticized, you are living in a dream world. If you expect everyone to appreciate your efforts you will soon be discouraged.

Do You Actually Expect To Be Appreciated?

Many times Paul referred to himself as, "a servant of Jesus Christ."



The word servant in the Greek is a bond slave. An Israelite could sell himself as a slave for seven years. The law demanded at the end of that time the one who purchased him was to release him and give him supplies to start a new life. Sometimes the slave grew to love his master and wanted to remain a servant. The servant would then be a bond slave for life.

Unlike a regular slave, the bond slave had no rights whatsoever!

We do not have a right to be appreciated. We do not have the right to anything since we are bond slaves of Jesus Christ. As bond slaves we should not be discouraged when we do not get our expectations because we have no rights to have our expectations. The only thing we have a right to expect is the will of our Master.

The Price Moses Paid

The account in Numbers 11 shows us that Moses ended up having to share his leadership with seventy other men. If we get to the place where we are so discouraged we can not carry out the responsibilities given to us by the Lord, He will find others to do His work.

When God anointed seventy elders He took some of the ability He had given to Moses and gave it to others! In Numbers 11:17 God told Moses, *"I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them."*

Obviously, Moses already possessed all he needed to get the job done for the Lord; however, he lost the privilege because he allowed discouragement to prevail in his life. As a result, he had to share his leadership with seventy others. (It is an interesting fact that this group of seventy grew into the Sanhedrin that had Jesus crucified.)

Moses, like many pastors today, got discouraged. His discouragement led to a dissatisfaction with the situation and a distrust in God's *"working all things together for good."* Moses simply wanted God to find someone else to take the heat. Discouragement has brought many

pastors to want the same thing. Discouragement led Moses to have an attitude of ingratitude for the privilege of being used of God, and a heart of indifference concerning the will of God for his life and the lives of the adults and the children that God had given him the responsibility to help. Many pastors have quit their ministry with no concern for the children in the church that were not giving him any reason to be discouraged. Your young people can be a real source of encouragement.

You Decide What To Focus On

A few years ago several families left our church. I was very discouraged. Someone said, *"cheer up things could be worse."* I cheered up and sure enough things got worse. Another family left.

That same week a thirteen year old girl from our church who attended a public school gave a testimony in church. She was excited about having the opportunity to witness to her friends and her teacher. Two teachers have checked out our website as a result. The next day, I received the following email from the teenager.

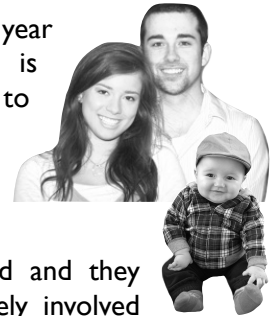
Hello Pastor Kirkland:

"I am so happy to be serving the Lord. I am dropping notes to the teacher all the time. And for some reason while we were at Church, Sunday night, The Gospel Hall called...I think it might be because I showed a friend your book about drinking, and he probably told his parents, and his parents told the church. But I am praying for his parents, and my teacher. Please continue to keep them in your prayers."

Your messages on Nehemiah are wonderful! And you really made that song mean so much to me. I am happy in the service of the King, I am happy oh so

happy... I have peace & joy & blessing in the service of the King."

That thirteen year old little girl is now married to fine young Christian man, they have a little boy named Jed and they are very actively involved in the work of the Lord at our church.



Have A Pity Party or Encourage Yourself!

Getting discouraged or getting encouraged is a choice. If you are discouraged, deal with it before it deals with you.

First Samuel 30:6 says, *"David encouraged himself."* Judges 20:22 says, *"the men of Israel encouraged themselves."* They made a decision!!!

How David Encouraged Himself

In First Samuel chapter 30 David and his men found their city on fire. The Bible says, *"the Amalekites invaded."* The city was, *"burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives."* Think about it! Put yourself there! Your house is burned to the ground and terrorists have taken your family!

Verse 4 tells us, *"David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep."* It gets worse for David! We read in verse six that. *"David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him."*

Put yourself there! Your house is burned to the ground, terrorists have taken your family and the

church people are coming to kill you.

Verse 4 continues, *“but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.”*

First, he made a conscious decision to be encouraged. It was simply a choice.

Second, he received the encouragement from the only place it was available to him. *“David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.”*

Third, verse eight says, *“David enquired at the LORD.”* The result of David's decision was a complete victory in an impossible situation.

When the discouraging circumstances come along, don't focus on the circumstance. Look to God for wisdom! The things we consider to be problems, God considers to be projects. Ask God for the wisdom to handle the project and thank God that He trusts you with the project He has allowed to come your way.

Discouragement, if not dealt with, will lead to compromise. The greatest reason many churches have quit preaching Bible standards concerning modesty, music and messing around in the world is pastors got discouraged to the point that they began to compromise.

A Yoke And A Burden

In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus said, *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

Discouragement is a reality and Jesus knew we would have problems fighting it. Jesus said, *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*

Christ also referred to His “yoke” and His “burden.” Jesus demands that we be yoked up with Him. He is the one who gives direction. If we try to go our own way while yoked up with the Lord, it will result in a real pain in the neck! Jesus offers to make the burden bearable. (See Jeremiah 28 for an interesting comparison on a “yoke of wood” or a “yoke of iron.”)

Discouragement

The dictionary meaning of discouraged is, *“to deprive of courage or confidence.”* As previously mentioned, like Moses, most pastors start out very confident in the work of the Lord.

Hebrews 10:35 says, *“Cast not away therefore your **confidence**.”*

Hebrews 3:14 says, *“hold the beginning of our **confidence** stedfast unto the end;”*

First John 2:28 says, *“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have **confidence**, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”*

Don't Let Anyone Discourage You From Finishing What God Wants You To Do

We like to read Hebrews chapter eleven. It is the great “*faith chapter*,” however, reading about those men and paying the price to be listed in “God's Hall of Fame” are two very different things.

Hebrews 11:7 says, *“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an*

ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

Noah had more than opposition from a few church members, he stood against the world. He had nobody outside of his family to encourage him. There were no Bible conferences he could go to and be encouraged by preachers of like faith.

He didn't have a list of great preachers of the past to listen to by recorded messages. He didn't even have a Bible!!!

What Noah did have was faith in God and the character needed to finish what God had sent him into this world to accomplish! Genesis 6:22 tells us, *“Thus did Noah; according to ALL that God commanded him, so did he.”*

When Paul the Apostle left this world he said, *“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”* (Second Timothy 4:7). Be sure when life's journey is over that you can say, *“I've finished my course, I have kept the faith.”*

Hebrews 12:1 says, *“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”*

Notice the word “ALSO.” This verse is not referring to people in Heaven looking down at us as we work for God.

In Hebrews chapter 11 God names those who finished the course. The chapter begins saying they, *“obtained a good report”* (V.2). The chapter concludes with, *“And these all, having obtained a good report”* (V.39).

When people talked about them
they did not talk about quitters!!!

Hebrews 12:1 says, "we also are
compassed about with so great a cloud of
witnesses."

In Matthew 5:16 Jesus said men
will, "see your good works."

Acts 9:36 tells us Dorcas was
remembered for her, "good works."

First Timothy 5:10 speaks of
being, "Well reported of for good works."

Titus 2:7 says we are to be, "In all
things shewing thyself a pattern of good
works."

Titus 3:8 says, "be careful to
maintain good works."

LITTLE IS MUCH WHEN GOD IS IN IT!

"Does the place you're called to
labor Seem too small
and little known?

It is great if God is in it,
And He'll not forget His own.

When the conflict here is ended
And our race on earth is run,
He will say, if we are faithful,
'Welcome home,
My child—well done!'

Little is much when God is in it!
Labor not for wealth or fame.
There's a crown—and you can
win it, If you go in Jesus' Name."

**When your life's work is ended be sure you
can pray before you leave and say,**

"I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

(John 17:4)



The Choice Is YOURS!!!

First Corinthians 9:26

*"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so
fight I, not as one that beateth the air."*

First Timothy 6:12

*"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on
eternal life, whereunto thou art also called,
and hast professed a good profession before
many witnesses. I therefore so run, not as
uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that
beateth the air."*

Second Timothy 4:7

*"I have fought a good fight, I have finished
my course, I have kept the faith."*

