

Discouragement - cont.

ment. Consider the following causes:

- Illness (Philippians 2:25ff; 2 Timothy 4:20), or death (John 11:14).
- Material loss (Job 1-2), or physical needs (Psalm 37:25; 84:11).
- Friends turning on you (Psalm 41:9; 2 Timothy 4:10,14ff).
- Changed plans (Acts 16:7ff; 1 Thesalonians 2:18).
- Handicaps (2 Corinthians 12:7ff).
- Family unfaithfulness (Luke 15:11ff).
- Local church unfaithfulness (Revelation 2-3).
- Being surrounded by worldliness (John 16:33; 17:14-19).
- Personal failures (Luke 22:31-32).
- Teaching failures (Matthew 13:15; John 6:66).

Discouragement is a fact of life, but you don't have to let it beat you. Next week, Lord willing, I will show how you can win out over discouragement God's way. - *Chris Reeves*

- Scripture of the Week -

"but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." "

- *Joshua 24:15* -

Joshua, late in life, said that he and his family would choose to serve the Lord regardless of what their fellow-Israelites chose to do. Let us make the same choice to serve the Lord over all else, now and always.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Overcoming Discouragement - Part I

*But God, who comforts
the discouraged, comforted us by the
arrival of Titus
- 2 Corinthians 7:6 -*

The Bible is clear that people can sometimes get discouraged and quit serving the Lord. This is what the Devil wants. He wants some hardship in life to get you down so that you will stop serving Jesus faithfully. And, it works. Many people fall under the weight of some pressure and give up.

You can read in the Old Testament about different cases of discouragement (the following references are taken from the *New American Standard Version*). For example, the Israelites allowed the 10 spies to discourage them from entering Canaan land:

For when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the sons of Israel so that they did not go into the land which the Lord had given them (Numbers 32:9).

The Jews who returned from captivity allowed their adversaries to discourage them from rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem:

Then the people of the land discouraged

*the people of Judah, and frightened them
from building (Ezra 4:4).*

Later, the Jews' enemies tried to discourage Nehemiah and the others from rebuilding of the wall in Jerusalem:

*For all of them were trying to frighten us,
thinking, "They will become discouraged with
the work and it will not be done." But
now, God, strengthen my hands
(Nehemiah 6:9).*

When you turn to the New Testament, you will find that Jesus talked about discouragement in prayer (Luke 18:1) and Paul talked about discouragement in Christian living (Galatians 6:9; Ephesians 3:13) and in parenting children (Colossians 3:21).

Yes, even the best of Christians will face disappointments and discouragements from time-to-time. Discouragement often leads to despondency, despair, depression and dropout. But, God says, "Be of good cheer..." (Matthew 14:27; Acts 23:11; 27:22,25). Friend, you can overcome discouragement!

Bible Characters Who Faced Discouragement

There are several Bible characters, just like you and me, who had to face various

discouragements in their lives and for various reasons. Consider the following:

- Job faced discouragement and even wanted to die when he was caused to suffer greatly by Satan (Job 3).
- Moses faced discouragement when he had to lead the Israelites who were constantly complaining about what they had to eat (Numbers 11).
- Elijah faced discouragement when he had to flee the wrath of Jezebel who wanted to kill him (1 Kings 19).
- David faced discouragement when he had to go on the run for his life from Saul who was envious of him (1 Samuel 18-30; Psalm 41-43).
- Jeremiah faced discouragement when he had to preach to a people who did not like him or want to listen to him (Jeremiah 20).

Occasions of Discouragement

Not all discouragement comes about from the same causes. Different problems in life can cause discouragement.