

Avoiding Discouragement - Hebrews 12:1-3

8-2-15 PM

Are you suffering from discouragement? There are signs of discouragement according to Scriptures that reveal that we are struggling. In Mark 4:16-19 Jesus warned us of the danger of falling away. Falling away is often caused by spiritual discouragement, and this can be observed by a lack of desire to engage the brethren and a lack of motivation to pray or study. Let us consider four reasons we become discouraged.

We Become Discouraged Because We Have the Same Weakness as Before.

There is an excitement of becoming faithful that is seen in images such as the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:39). However, we soon discover that temptation is just as strong as before, and that there is no “supernatural” change in our temptation levels. So how do we remain encouraged? By understanding that transformation is an ongoing process (Romans 12:2) and by knowing that God desires to forgive us of our sins (1 John 1:9).

We Become Discouraged Because Of The Failings of Our Brethren.

There is a great joy in the Family of God. But then we witness an inconsistency and hypocrisy among us (as Paul did in Galatians 2:11-14). We see in brethren an ill treatment by Christians in Bible classes, meetings, at work, at play; ultimately, harsh words and evil eyes can be devastating. What do we do to remain encouraged? First, we should remember that ALL Christians are growing (Philippians 3:12). Second, we need to use church discipline to prevent bullying by brethren (2 Thessalonians 3:6). Finally, we need to set better examples among ourselves (1 Timothy 4:12).

We Become Discouraged Because We Bear The Reproach of Christ.

The joy of being right with God is sometimes contrasted when the world attempted to draw us away. In Mark 4:18-19 Jesus said we would suffer when exposed to cares of this world, the deceitful riches, and the desires for other things. So how do we remain encouraged? We need to learn to “seek first the kingdom” and not the world. We need to clarify internally what we love the most, and to emphasize a deep relationships with brethren for encouragement.

We Become Discouraged Because We Feel Like We Have a Lack of “Success”.

We seek to convert everyone around us, but we are discouraged when no one listens, or we do not see results. Elijah and Paul both experienced failings (1 Kings 19:4, Acts 17:32-33). How do we remain encouraged? We need to understand God’s expectations. First, God does not count numbers. Second, even Jesus was rejected by family and friends (Isaiah 53:3). Finally, we need to remember the work being done is being done by God (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

Avoiding Discouragement: We can find the sources of discouragement and we can then act to avoid discouragement. Being discouraged does not need to cause us to lose our hope.