

# When you feel like giving up

Discouragement, I feel, is man's most deadly disease, because it is universal: everyone gets discouraged at some time. Discouragement is also highly contagious. If we are around someone who is discouraged, we can also get discouraged very easily.

## What are the causes of discouragement ?

### Fatigue is a cause of discouragement

**Nehemiah 4:6** [NIV] *“So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.”*

**Nehemiah 4:10(a)** [NIV] *“Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, “The strength of the laborers is giving out,”*

We just wear out; when we are physically “down” through fatigue it is difficult to be emotionally and spiritually “up”. Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is to get some physical rest. It is amazing how much better things can look after a good night's sleep.

Good farmers rotate crops and leave part of the land fallow each year to let it rest. Farmers know that land which has rested will produce greater harvests in the years after a rest.

Frederick Taylor in 1898 did a scientific experiment which proved that workers accomplish more if they have periodic breaks during the working day. Thank Frederick for the “coffee or tea break”.

### When does fatigue and discouragement set in ?

**Nehemiah 4:6** [NIV] *“So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.”*

Note that had reached halfway through the job at the mid-point. Everybody had energy at the beginning of a job, for it is attractively new; but as the newness “works off” you get bored and fatigue sets in, and with it discouragement.

This is why some people never complete tasks.

### Frustration in our lives causes discouragement

**Nehemiah 4:10(b)** [NIV] *“...and there is so much rubble...”*

Notice there was so much rubble. Have you experienced that when you are half-way through re-decorating a room you look around you, you realise that when you have completed the other half you will have to spend much more time clearing up afterwards, all the rubble scattered around.

It always seems that this rubble multiplies as the job progresses, and it becomes frustrating to have to walk round it or step over it.

### Frustration causes discouragement

How many have a job where the work is never finished?

That can be frustrating and discouraging.

Rubbish that multiplies like rabbits in some corners of our homes unless we purposely set aside time to clear up it will hinder our progress and cause frustration leading to discouragement.

What is the “*rubble*” in our lives ?

Whatever hinders us from reaching our main goals !

It may be television, or relationships.

Anything that absorbs time unproductively.

## **Failure can cause us to become discouraged**

**Nehemiah 4:10(c)** [NIV] “... *we cannot rebuild the wall.*”

“*How can we build the wall today*” [Good News Bible] Time for project runs out.

“*We can never get it done by ourselves*” [Living Bible] Over estimated our strength or skill.

They are thinking that they shouldn't have even tried to do this task. Why did we think we could accomplish such a big job with so little time to complete it ?

We cannot complete this job on time, we have failed.

Taking longer than we originally planned to complete a task can cause us to feel a failure and this breeds discouragement.

### **How do we react to failure when all our plans collapse ?**

Do we give in to self-pity and blame ourselves ?

Do we start blaming other people ?

Do we start complaining about circumstances ?

**Winners see failures as only temporary setbacks.**

## **Fear is a cause of discouragement**

**Nehemiah 4:11** [NIV] “*Also our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work."*”

Those who did not want the wall to be completed now threatened to kill the Jews who were trying to rebuild the wall.

First they were criticised, then they were ridiculed, then they were threatened.

**Nehemiah 4:12** [NIV] “*Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us."*”

The Jews who lived near but were not part of the re-building team repeatedly warned that their enemies would kill them. **If we live among negative people we are bound to become discouraged.**

If we are constantly hearing criticism, complaining and negative statements we will become infected ourselves with the same thoughts and attitudes.

## **What fear is causing you to become discouraged at this moment ?**

The fear of embarrassment ?

The fear of failure ?

The fear that you have to be perfect ?

The fear that you cannot handle the pressure or stress ?

## **How do we know when we are discouraged because of fear ?**

When we have an intense desire to run !

I've got to get out of this situation !

I've got to quit this job !

I've got to escape from the demands being made on me !

I've got to run from the pressure that this job is putting me under !

## **All discouragement stems from one of the above causes**

**Fatigue – Frustration – Failure – Fear.**

When we stop and analyse the situation and realise which of the above is the cause of our discouragement, we can then apply the antidote.

**What antidotes for discouragement do we find in God's Word ?**

## **Rest our body**

**Psalm 127:2** [Living Bible] *“It is senseless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, fearing you will starve to death; for God wants His loved ones to get their proper rest.”*

When discouragement is the result of fatigue the most *“spiritual”* thing for us to do is to get some physical rest.

It is amazing how better a situation can look after a good night's sleep.

**Psalm 119:73** [Living Bible] *“You made my body, Lord; now give me sense to heed Your Laws.”*

What does that mean? Eat healthily, get enough sleep and exercise your body. **A balanced lifestyle is the key to avoiding discouragement that is the result of fatigue.**

Rest is so important that God included it in the 10 Commandments.

**Exodus 20:8-10** [Living Bible] *“Remember to observe the sabbath as a Holy day. Six days a week are for your daily duties and your regular work, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest before the Lord your God. On that day you are to do no work of any kind, nor shall your son, daughter or slaves, whether men or women, or your cattle or your house guests.”*

If we ignore this we are going to get discouraged.

## Re-organise our life

**Nehemiah 4:13** [NIV] *“Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows.”*

When Nehemiah saw the discouragement of the people he re-organised the work plan: in this case organised the people to work in family groups, as support groups.

**Very often when we become discouraged it is not that we are doing the wrong thing in our lives but that we are doing the right thing but in a wrong way.** Don't give up on the dream, the goal, but consider if we are going about fulfilling that dream or goal in the wrong way! We need to try a new approach.

We are going into debt – re-organise our budget.

We are over committed – re-organise our schedule.

We are out of shape physically – re-organise our lifestyle, our eating and exercise habits.

Most of us plan parts of our lives. We have business plans, holiday plans, retirement plans, financial plans. But few seem to have *“life plans”*.

When we give the right priority to the most important things in life – God, family and church relationships, all other things will *“drop into place”*.

A survey of the most successful people in business came up with five factors that they had in common. One of these factors was strong relationships, love and support groups.

Nehemiah grouped the workers by families to help them have the support of each other in the family group. Why? Because we need each other.

This is why we need to be part of a church family.

Over and over in scripture it uses the phrase *“one another”*.

Serve one another. Love one another. Help one another. Pray for one another. Greet one another. Care for one another. Encourage one another.

## Remember the Lord God

**Nehemiah 4:14(a)** [NIV] *“After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord...”*

Re-commit ourselves to God. Draw on spiritual resources. Ask for and seek for the strengthening power of God's Grace given through the person of the Holy Spirit.

Most times when we become discouraged we have taken our eyes off God and focused only on the problem; off the solution and on to the circumstances.

**1 Samuel 30:6** [King James] *“And David was greatly distressed, for the people spake of stoning him ... but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.”*

**What do we remember about God when we are discouraged ?**

## **Remember God's goodness to us in the past**

Make a list of all the things that have been good in our lives.

*“Count our many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.”*

Make a list of all the things we are grateful for, for the healthiest emotion we can have is gratitude. The attitude of gratitude.

**Colossians 2:7** [NIV] *“...rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”*

## **Remember God's closeness to us in the present**

**John 14:18** [NIV] *“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

**Matthew 28:20(b)** [NIV] *“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

**Matthew 18:20** [NIV] *“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”*

**Hebrews 13:5** [NIV] *“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*

We are never without the presence of Christ.

There is no experience in life that God will not go through it with us.

We are not facing any trial or temptation alone.

**Psalms 139:7-12** [NIV] *“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.”*

## **Remember God's Power for the future**

**Colossians 1:10-11** [NIV] *“...growing in the knowledge of God. Being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience...”*

**Hebrews 4:16** [NIV] *“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*

**Ephesians 6:10** [NIV] *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”*

**2 Timothy 1:7** [NIV] *“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”*

**2 Peter 1:3** [NIV] *“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”*

## **Where do we find this power ?**

**Psalms 119:25** [Living Bible] *“I am completely discouraged, I lie in the dust. Revive me by your word.”*

**Hebrews 1:3** [NIV] *“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”*

Christ sustains all things of which we are a very important part.

**The quickest and most effective antidote to discouragement is God’ Word, The Bible, God’s ‘Handbook For Life’.**

What do we do when we are discouraged and feel like giving up ?

We rest our bodies – re-charge ourselves physically.

We re-organise our life.

We give our time and priorities to the important and lasting things in life – relationships: our relationship with God, our family and our brethren in the church.

We remember God.

Remember God’s Goodness in the past.

Remember His continual presence.

Remember the power available to us for the future.

We seek that power through study and applying His Word, the Manual for Life, and re-charge ourselves spiritually.

## **Finally, we resist discouragement in ourselves and in our brethren.**

**Nehemiah 4:14** [NIV] *“...and fight for your brothers, your sons, and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”*

Don’t give into discouragement without a fight – resist it.

**Satan's greatest weapon against Christians is discouragement for he knows that God cannot use a discouraged person.**

You don't judge a person's greatness by their wealth, talents, education or intellect but by what it takes to discourage them.

As Christians we are in a spiritual battle against Satan who is the accuser of Christians.

**Revelations 12:10-11** [NIV] *"Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."*

An accuser is always saying "you're not good enough", trying to discourage people. But we overcome this by our faith in what God has done for us through Christ and the encouragement that is found in the Word of God of which we are a living testimony.

**James 4:7** [NIV] *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."*

Resist Satan and his discouragement and he will flee from us taking discouragement with him, for he has plenty to be discouraged about when we don't !!

**We do not have to be discouraged, it is a choice !**

If we are discouraged it is because we are choosing to be discouraged and giving up.

**Great [mature] people simply do not know how to quit or give up, they keep on keeping on.**

Great [mature] people never give up, even when they are fatigued, frustrated, feel like a failure or fear what is happening to them, because they know the antidote to discouragement.

They get physical rest to re-charge their bodies.

They constantly re-organise their lives to give priority to what is important – relationships.

They remember God and His Power in past, present and future.

They resist discouragement, knowing it is Satan's most powerful tool to destroy them.

**We can all be great [mature] beings with God's help if we apply these encouraging words that are found in His Word, the Handbook for Life.**