



BECKY COMBEE MINISTRIES, INC.

The Voice of Discouragement

There are few people, perhaps none, who would say, “I have never been discouraged.” The truth is discouragement comes to all of us. It is a bitter and ungodly foe that knocks us completely off track. It is destructive beyond measure.

When we bake a cake, we measure the ingredients carefully, with the understanding that certain measurements are required for a perfect product. Once, I baked a birthday cake and did not count the cups of flour. Needless to say, an extra cup of flour would have ruined the texture and taste of the cake, and it would not have been good to eat.

Similarly, if we add discouragement to our lives, we forfeit our success. Discouragement pollutes our mind and destroys our peace until we cannot navigate the ordinary affairs of our day. When it rules, our knees buckle, our strength fails, and our mind grows weary. The Scripture captures this mindset declaring that our minds can faint.¹ I almost fainted when I was in sixth grade. Suddenly, the world faded and there was nothing in view but my own agony. My mind did not capture the beauty of the day or the activities of my classmates. I was out of touch with everything around me.

Discouragement highlights our dilemma and

minimizes our awareness of the grace and power of God. No matter how you label it – discouragement, depression, despondency, or despair – it is the same. There is so much concern about my need that the goodness and faithfulness of God retreats to the shadows of my mind. My thoughts and my words voice only my problem, my difficulty, and my predicament.

No dilemma, no trauma, no concern is too big for our God.

THE HELP OF HEAVEN

The Scripture records four important keys to help us overcome this dreadful foe. The first key is to **KEEP OUR EYES FIXED ON GOD’S WORD**. Proverbs 4:20-22 declares that God’s Word gives us life and health. Certainly, this includes the mind. The first instant we realize our thoughts have gone astray, we must run to the Word of God, raise our hands to heaven, even in the middle of the night, and begin to read or quote life-giving Scriptures.

We fix our minds on God’s Word, wholeheartedly. We stare at it continually until it penetrates and energizes our spirit. We are single-minded with nothing in view but the Word of the living God. God’s Word illuminates our hearts so

that we can step forward in faith, knowing that God is for us and He will help us.

The second fundamental principle is to LOOK INTENTLY AT THE CROSS. It is through our knowledge of the cross and Jesus' shed blood that we overcome.² In Numbers 21, we read that the people of Israel had sinned against God by murmuring and complaining. Because of their sin, fiery serpents invaded the camp and many died. Previously, they had been protected from these serpents, but sin removed their wall of protection. When they confessed their sin, the Lord instructed Moses to make a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole. This pole represented the death of Christ for all men. It was as they looked to the pole that they were healed.

There are two important words in this story that we must note. First God said, "He that LOOKETH" upon the pole shall live." It is also written that those who "BEHELD the serpent of brass" lived.³ These two words, *look* and *beheld*, do not depict a casual, occasional glance at the serpent on the pole. Instead, Israel must look intently at this type of the cross. She must LOOK and LIVE.

Today, we, too, must look intently at the cross and the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can hold our problem close to our heart and continue to be discouraged or we can look to the cross of Jesus and be set free. When I look toward the cross, I like to spend time reading Isaiah 53 over and over again. I want the image of God's work through Jesus to shine brightly in my life. I want the work of the cross to dominate my thinking because through the cross, we are saved, healed, delivered and preserved. This is the picture I want in my heart and mind.

The third principle that enables us to overcome discouragement almost escaped my attention until I read Hebrews 12:3 in the Message Bible. The King James Bible speaks of the Jesus saying, "CONSIDER HIM that endured such

contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds." The Message Bible writes, "When you find yourself flagging in your faith, go over the story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through." What a simple yet profound answer to discouragement!

We must read and study the life of Jesus item by item, one event at the time. We begin with His SUPERNATURAL BIRTH and then comprehend His OBEDIENT LIFE. We look carefully at His SACRIFICIAL DEATH and RESOUNDING VICTORY over Satan. We rejoice in His GLORIOUS RESURRECTION and with the disciples we see His DRAMATIC ASCENSION. Item by item, we enlarge our vision until He is our EXALTED LORD seated at the Father's right hand. This clear picture of Jesus' life routs out all discouragement.

The fourth, and final, truth that helps us to overcome discouragement is to REMEMBER THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD. Hebrews records that Sarah received strength to conceive and deliver Isaac because she "JUDGED HIM FAITHFUL who had promised." When we consider the faithfulness of our great and mighty God, discouragement takes a back seat. It cannot triumph because we know "that the Lord [our] God, he is the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him."⁴ We trust our faithful and compassionate Father and are not conquered.⁵

What great and magnificent truths! No dilemma, no trauma, no concern is too big for our God. Instead of bowing before our need, we fix our eyes on His Word and look intently at the cross. We consider the life of Jesus, item by item, and rejoice in the faithfulness of God. This fills our life with peace — perfect peace with our mind fixed on Him.⁶ Peace beyond understanding! What a gift from heaven!

1. *Keep our eyes fixed on God's Word.*
2. *Look intently at the cross.*
3. *Study the life of Jesus, item by item.*
4. *Remember the faithfulness of God.*

¹Heb 12:3 ²Rev 12:11 ³Num 21:8-9 ⁴Deu 7:9 ⁵Lam 3:22-23 ⁶Is 26:3