

# Dealing with Discouragement!

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There are times in all of our lives when we are faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles and hardships. Often, when those times come we may feel as though God and our Christian family have overlooked us and let us down. There are many great examples in the Bible of people who faced horrendous circumstances and yet ultimately prevailed with God's help: Daniel, David, Job, Jesus, and Paul to name a few. All of us become discouraged on occasion.

Discouragement is a feeling of disappointment or disheartenment, resulting from an unfavorable turn of events — either physical, material, social, emotional, or spiritual.

If not properly dealt with by seeking counsel in the Word of God (whenever possible), the heartbreaking situation can lead to spiritual stagnation and oftentimes, depression.

Too many of us are, to some degree, self-centered. We wonder why someone did not speak to us, or we are aggravated because *our* needs are seemingly not being addressed by the church. The truth is, if many would get busy seeing to the needs of others, they would have less time for anxiety about their own problems. Remember this: even while on the cross Jesus was thinking of others!

What we constantly think about, we tend to become (cf. Proverbs 23:7; Mark 7:21-23). Those who focus almost continuously upon the negative tend to drive themselves deeper into depression.

We must learn to concentrate upon more positive things, to count our blessings. Pleasant thoughts and words are "sweet to the soul and health to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24).

Sometimes those who are depressed seek companionship with others having similar problems. They then feed upon each other's distresses, and actually end up harming each other. When you are discouraged, it would be best to associate with those who can build you up.

Finally, we must leave the unsolvable to God. Trust Him no matter what. Learn to be content no matter how dire your conditions are (Philippians 4:11-13). Recognize the fact that peace of mind does not depend upon the external, but upon the internal.

For the elders,  
Gregg Woodall