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Discouragement

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The leading of the Holy Spirit today is teaching on discouragement. In the following scriptures, God is encouraging Joshua to be strong and of good courage. Joshua is getting ready to lead the children of Israel into what God had promised them, crossing over the Jordan River into the Promised Land, Gods plan and purpose had never changed, but He told Joshua, you will have to be courageous, you cannot lead from the standpoint of discouragement. In this season of our lives it is important that we hear with hearing ears what the spirit of God is saying to us, receiving spiritual understanding.

Josh 1:6-7, 9-18 "Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest.9-18 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. 10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it. 12 And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, 13 Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, The Lord your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; 15 Until the Lord have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the Lord your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the Lord's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising. 16 And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. 17 According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. 18 Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage." KJV

If we are going to be a doer of the word of God, you must be very strong and courageous, being obedient to what the spirit of God is speaking to you, you don't need courage until you begin to do what has been spoken. If you are never going to do anything for the kingdom of God or finish your course or fulfill the purpose that God has for your life, it is not necessary to have courage. Courage means to be alert physically and mentally. Courage and discouragement has to do with our minds, almost a type of physiological warfare. We must possess our minds in a proper way and not let them get out of control. Courage means steadfast minded, strong and stronger, establish and fortify, to prevail and to strengthen self, almost becoming obstinate. When it comes to doing the will of God, we must have a sense of stubbornness, setting our faces like flint, making the quality decision to follow God.

Many things will tend to discourage Gods people. Discouragement and offense are close to each other, they are tools that the devil uses against us. The enemy will use offense causing

people to become discouraged. If he can get God's people to take offense or discouragement, they will want to quit. The Bible tells of the people that became discouraged by the challenges that they encountered on their way to having what God had promised them. When God gives us a promise and we begin to pursue the promise, there will be obstacles on the way that will cause us to become discouraged. The people in the Bible began to look around at everyone else and saw that others weren't doing what they were to do. This is a challenging problem in the church world today, by looking at other people's problems we may become discouraged, God has never called us to do that. Peter put this question to Jesus, wondering what others would do and Jesus informed him that he was to do what he was told and the others would be taken care of.

What is the purpose of discouragement in our lives? Discouragement comes to get us to quit. Discouragement means to refuse, to forbid, to neutralize, break down, make of no effect, can't see beyond circumstances. If we can't see beyond circumstances we are already out of the arena of faith, because faith has the ability to see beyond adversity and see the answers. The word neutralize means that something is not going anywhere. This is the intent of discouragement that the devil wants us to have, putting us in neutral, making our spiritual progress unable to go anywhere, we are stopped. That is the ultimate goal of discouragement, to make us stop, focusing on the problem, not able to see the answer, losing sight of God's promise for us.

If discouragement is not dealt with, it will cause us to go back into our old way of life, picking up old habits and old ways, out of faith and not believing. Peter said after the death of Jesus, that they should go back to fishing, nothing else to do. There may not be anything wrong with the old life style, but that is the purpose of discouragement. We may not think that God is going to fulfill what He has promised, we get out of faith.

In chapter 18 of First Kings, the story is told about Elijah and the prophets of Baal and the prophets of the groves, about 850 prophets total. Elijah had begun to think that he was the only prophet left in Israel, so a challenge was made with the prophets of Baal that whoever was the winner of the challenge, the other would serve Baal. As they prepared their sacrifices, He encouraged them to try different approaches to the challenge, doing all their chants and etc. and yet every time, they did as he instructed them, nothing happened, it would turn to his favor, being that the final challenge was that he would build his sacrifice, covering it with an excessive amount of water at which time, the Lord consumed it with fire from heaven, it was such a miraculous thing that the fire not only consumed the sacrifice but the water as well, showing them that there was only one God. Elijah then killed all the prophets of Baal and spoke to Ahab the king, telling him that God was going to send a supernatural rain and that the king needed to make ready to leave so that he wouldn't get stuck in the mud. At this time there wasn't a cloud in the sky, but as Elijah began to pray, clouds appeared and it began to rain, Elijah supernaturally began to outrun the king's horses on foot. It was a day with tremendous victories.

The following scriptures are an example out of the life of Elijah, he was a prophet of God, he had such a relationship with God that he never died a natural death; the Lord took him in a fiery chariot. Elijah had prophesied that there would be no rain in Israel for a period of time. He had a great anointing upon his life, having many miracles. When we deal with discouragement there are two times when discouragement seems to have an open door, before great victories, putting

us in neutral and after a great victory. This is how it was with Elijah.

1 Kings 19:2-7 "Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. 3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. 5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. 6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. 7 And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee." KJV

Discouragement begins to set in on Elijah, Ahab goes to Jezebel and tells her what Elijah had done, he had also prophesied the death of Ahab and Jezebel earlier. She is incensed at what Elijah had done, all her prophets are dead, she was a follower of Baal. When Elijah saw a picture in his mind what she was saying, he became afraid and ran for his life into the wilderness. His mind was weakened in discouragement, getting him out of faith and putting him into fear causing him to run. This is what happens to believers when discouragement overtakes them, putting them into neutral. After the tremendous victories that he had had, a woman speaking those words put him in fear. People in discouragement want to be left alone, that is what happened with Elijah, he sat down under a tree and requested that he might die asking the Lord to take away his life.

When discouragement sets in people do not want to do anything, they become tired of fighting the good fight of faith, just wanting to quit, there is opposition when we are following God, but we must pursue our faith. Elijah's attitude was he wanted to die, but God made provision for him, bringing him what he needed, God didn't condemn him but gave him rest.

1 Tim 6:12 "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." KJV

God encourages the believer to arise, in the word He is encouraging us, arise is opposite of the adverse circumstances, the intent being to cause us to quit, not doing anything and get up from depression. Circumstances have the power to bind you and put a fence around you keeping you from arising to a new life. However, the greater one in us has power over circumstances, greater is He that is in us than he who is in the world. Jesus is with us in the midst of our troubled times.

Isa 60:1 "Arise [from the depression and prostration in which circumstances have kept you—rise to a new life]! Shine (be radiant with the glory of the Lord), for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you!" AMP

God told Elijah that He wasn't through using him and what there was to do was beyond Elijah's ability and beyond his power, He would strengthen him supernaturally. So He fed him and Elijah was able to go 40 days longer on just the one meal. God gets involved, continues to give him a word encouraging him, God visits him supernaturally, there was a strong wind, an earthquake and a fire that God was not in and then came a small still voice. God began to speak to him, told him that there 7,000 others who had not bowed to Baal.

1 Kings 19:8-9, 13, 15 "And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. 9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? 13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? 15 And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:" KJV

You can run from God all you want, but God has not forsaken you, He is still working. What is it that God is wanting to do during your times of discouragement? He wants to strengthen you supernaturally, He doesn't want you to quit, He gives grace and mercy, grace is always associated with power and enables you to do what you can't do in your own strength and ability, this is what God wants to do and wants you to know that He is not done with you, He has to much invested in you.

God gives Elijah a specific assignment to do, anoint two men to be kings over Syria and Israel and to anoint Elisha to be raised up as a prophet in his place. Elisha served Elijah, 9 to 11 yrs., mentoring and preparing him to stand in the place of prophet and Elisha was bold enough to ask if he could have a double portion of Elijah's anointing, Elijah told Elisha that Elisha would have to be there and see Elijah as he was taken up. 2 Kings chapters one and two, tell the entire story of what happened. Elijah discouraged Elisha several times, but Elisha continued to hold on to what he was believing for.

How do we not yield to discouragement? The devil loves to get people discouraged, putting them into neutral, their minds out of control and they can't see anything but bad. The devil cannot plant the seed of discouragement in a grateful heart, so be of great courage and God will strengthen you.

Psa 77:3 "I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed." KJV

Becoming a complainer, murmurer or fault finding person, opens the door to discouragement and it will begin to come in and attach itself to you. Despair sets in and then progresses to hopelessness, nothing is ever going to change, God has never told us to dwell on our problems, illnesses, poverty or relationships, He has told us to keep focus on Him, dwelling on those problems will only poison our future, there is no will to fight, words spoken are full of fear and have lack of faith, but words spoken in faith will get you out of the situation, so have a thankful heart.

Luke 18:1-8 "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. 7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" KJV

Luke 18:1-8 "Also [Jesus] told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not to turn coward (faint, lose heart, and give up). 2 He said, In a certain city there was a judge who neither revered *and* feared God nor respected *or* considered man. 3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and

saying, Protect *and* defend *and* give me justice against my adversary. 4 And for a time he would not; but later he said to himself, Though I have neither reverence *or* fear for God nor respect *or* consideration for man, 5 Yet because this widow continues to bother me, I will defend *and* protect *and* avenge her, lest she give me intolerable annoyance *and* wear me out by her continual coming *or* at the last she come and rail on me *or* assault me *or* strangle me. 6 Then the Lord said, Listen to what the unjust judge says! 7 And will not [our just] God defend *and* protect *and* avenge His elect (His chosen ones), who cry to Him day and night? Will He defer them *and* delay help on their behalf? 8 I tell you, He will defend *and* protect *and* avenge them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find [persistence in] faith on the earth?" AMP

Jesus is speaking a parable to His disciples about an unjust judge and a woman who would not be refused her request. He mentions that men should always pray and not faint. A prayer consistent or a habitual kind of prayer sets up a guard that will repel or turn back discouragement, fainting means to lose courage, coward, lose heart or give up. A person that has fainted appears to be dead, there is no life, they have no mobility, behaving like a dead person. This is what discouragement will do, even if we are born again and have life in us, we are like a person that has fainted, even though God dwells in us, prayer will repel this area of discouragement, will keep us from focusing on the problem. Jesus teaches that the widow woman had no one to help her with her cause and she goes before the unjust judge, he feared no one, not even God and had no feelings for anyone. Yet she would not be ignored, didn't faint, didn't give up, didn't become discouraged, the judge finally gave in and met her needs. Jesus is wanting to know if He will find people with this kind of faith when He comes back, will He find people like this woman who refused to give in and give up. We must stay in the arena of faith not giving up, it is another antidote of turning back discouragement.

2 Cor 4:16-18 "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." KJV

2 Cor 4:16-18 "Therefore we do not become discouraged (utterly spiritless, exhausted, and wearied out through fear). Though our outer man is [progressively] decaying *and* wasting away, yet our inner self is being [progressively] renewed day after day. 17 For our light, momentary affliction (this slight distress of the passing hour) is ever more and more abundantly preparing *and* producing *and* achieving for us an everlasting weight of glory [beyond all measure, excessively surpassing all comparisons and all calculations, a vast and transcendent glory and blessedness never to cease!], 18 Since we consider *and* look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are visible are temporal (brief and fleeting), but the things that are invisible are deathless *and* everlasting." AMP

The outward man is slowly perishing, but the inward man is getting stronger, being renewed every day, that is God's plan for man. When discouragement comes, we have to look beyond the eye of faith, that is what Moses did, he saw ahead looking to things to come. God can muzzle any storm that we are going through. God is not done with us.

1 Sam 30:6 "And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." KJV

This scripture in 1st Samuel tells the story of all the circumstances that David faced with his family and his warriors. Because of king Saul wanting to kill him, he had to go into another country with his people. The story tells all that transpired while they were there, how after

going with the Philistines to fight in a battle, that another country had attacked his city, stealing all the provisions and people of David's camp and totaling destroying the city. The men of battle that were with him were so upset finding that all their families had been taken too, they were ready to stone him, but David encouraged himself in the Lord, not allowing discouragement to enter into him. He was able to rescue all that had been taken and bring all the bounty back with him. Not only did David receive everything back, but everything that had been taken from the other cities that had been raided. He was able to give to others, God richly rewarded him. It pays to be of good courage. God is not done with us yet, He wants to continually bless us.

We can't wait for someone to come to us and encourage us, we will have to encourage ourselves, going into the house of God or church, with a purpose or with intent, seeking a word from God, of what we need to do, the Lord will give us a word, God wants to speak to us in the time of our discouragement, we must become doers of that word.

A word of encouragement given to the believers: "Even when you can't see or feel God at work, He wants to nourish you spiritually and give you rest so that you can get back to your race, stronger than ever before to fulfill your unique destiny and calling on your life. God wants you back in the race. No one likes being hurt or betrayed, but God will come to you in your brokenness, He takes all the pain and the broken pieces and shows us that He is greater than the difficulties that are trying to consume us, God isn't done blessing you, so rise and be strong in the Lord, because He is for you and not against you."

(This is a song written years ago and given to Pastor Charlie.)

"Sometimes when you are discouraged and nothing seems to work out right, it is another opportunity to quit, but rest in the Lord, wait patiently, He will see you through, trust Him, and unto His word submit, He can turn it around for your good just like He said He would, so cast not away your confidence, trust Him like you should, so He will turn it around for your good. So when you are discouraged and all seems lost, go to the house of the Lord, and worship and seek Him and you'll surely hear Him say as you cry out to Him, His voice you will hear, so rejoice for God will turn it around for your good."