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# EMBRACING THE CALL

## *You & Titus 2 Newsletter*

### JANUARY 2023

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### *Dealing With Discouragement*

Discouragement literally means the opposite of courage. Our circumstances and feelings can steal our courage to press forward and persevere in righteousness. I am not talking about living in disobedience to God. We should be discouraged about whatever sins persist in our lives and repent to follow the authority of God's will. However, it can be a struggle for many Christian women who feel discouraged in doing well. God knows us, and He knew we would need a verse like Galatians 6:9, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." For a servant of God, giving up is not an option.

When God charged Joshua with the responsibility of leading the people of Israel, He knew the discouragement that such a difficult task would bring. God told him, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). I imagine Joshua revisited this command many times, holding to the most significant promise this life has to offer. God was with him!

The last words of Jesus before His ascension give us, His followers, the same words of encouragement. It is our constant truth, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). When we are discouraged in well doing, we must revisit this same great promise just as Joshua did. We are not preserving alone. We are not left defenseless in the battles of life we face.

Not only does our great King constantly lead and guide (Deuteronomy 31:8), but He has also provided our armor (Ephesians 6:10-17), our weapon, the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17), and even rest (Hebrews 4:9-11) we need for the effort. How sad it is for Christian women to walk around in discouragement when Christ has given them all they need to take courage. Psalms 31:24 24 Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the LORD!

Major heroes of the Bible, including Abraham, Moses, David, and Elijah, all suffered from this same problem of discouragement (they were human). It hindered their service and needed to be dealt with. God did not design His servants to handle the details of an eternally purposeful life in their own strength and wisdom.

David was inspired to prescribe a battle plan for dealing with discouragement, "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad (Psalm 34:1-2). And again, Psalm 42:5-6 says, "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God." Praising the Lord is the boast we make in our souls. We preach the gospel to ourselves. We can confidently say, "I am never alone, for the great I AM is always with me."

I have found that when I check my motives (1 Corinthians 10:31, Matthew 22:37-38), it is much easier to preach God's Word to myself and experience His encouragement. We must encourage each other with tenderness, knowing this is a common struggle. When we walk in the courage of the Lord, it will inspire others to remember the victory concerning whatever battle of discouragement they face has already been won in Christ!

"The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, 'O God, forgive me,' or 'Help me.'" - Billy Graham

## Learning To Praise God When You Are Discouraged

The following Scripture passages and discussion questions can provide conversation starters on learning to praise God when you are discouraged.

### **Isaiah 41:10 ESV**

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

### **Deuteronomy 31:8 ESV**

It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.

### **Matthew 28:20 ESV**

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

### **Psalms 42:5-6 ESV**

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

### **Galatians 6:9 ESV**

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

### **1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV**

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

### **Matthew 22:37-38 ESV**

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.

## Discussion Questions:

- + Read Isaiah 41:10. How can fear and being dismayed (overwhelmed) create discouragement in our lives? Can you identify any specific fears or feelings of being overwhelmed that have caused discouragement in your life?
- + Read Deuteronomy 31:8 and Matthew 28:20. How do these verses inspire courage for a Christian? Why would an unbeliever find no help for their discouragement in these passages? How we respond to life situations provides a testimony of God's faithfulness. Do you have an example of how your testimony of courage in Christ has impacted a nonbeliever?
- + Read Psalm 42:5-6. David is talking to himself in this passage. How do you think self-talk impacts your emotions? How did David speak to himself about his downcast spirit? What can you learn from his example? Give an example of good or bad self-talk in your life and the consequence of it.
- + How do you think God defines "due season" in Galatians 6:9? Why is it essential that we trust His timetable in our obedience to His will?
- + Read 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Matthew 22:37-38. What motives should we have for continuing to do good when we are hindered by discouragement? Have you ever experienced a season of discouragement that helped you identify a problem with your motives?

## Trainer's Prayer List

Pray that they will beneficially love their husbands

Pray that they will beneficially love their children

Pray for their self-control

Pray for their purity

Pray for their work at home

Pray for their hearts to show kindness

Pray for wisdom in following their husband

