

Slaying The Giant Of Discouragement

Nehemiah 4:10-14 - NIV

¹⁰ Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall."

¹¹ 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."

¹² Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us."

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.***"

What exactly are the limits to human tolerance???

What are the units of measurement for pain and discouragement???

And how does your discouragement threshold differ from mine???

The dictionary defines discourage as "to deprive of courage, to deter, to dishearten, to hinder."

All of these **D words** and you can throw in doom, depression, defeat, and despair.

- The mind dwells on these **when life has us pinned down**.

The New Testament uses three Greek words to carry the ideal of being ***disheartened, dispirited, or discouraged***.

We always translate them as ***"to faint"*** or ***"to grow weary"***.

2 Cor. 4:1 -Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, ***we faint not***;

2 Cor. 4:16 For which cause ***we faint not***; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

Ephes. 3:13 - Wherefore I desire that ***ye faint not*** at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

It happened during the darkest days of Israel and Judah, when the invaders rolled in.

The Babylonians destroyed the holy city of Jerusalem, looting its glories and carrying away its people to enslavement in a distant land.

It seemed that God's people had lost it all- their land, their pride, their very identity as a nation set apart for special destiny, **for now** God's people were dispersed across the nations.

These were the darkest times, days of lamentation and weeping and silence.

But then a ruler named **Cyrus the Persian came to power**, and he gave permission for the Jewish exiles to **begin to go back home**.

In the time of the first return and the rebuilding of the Temple, we think of two biblical heroes: **a priest named Ezra and an administrator named Nehemiah**.

Ezra was the priest to broken hearts
Nehemiah was the rebuilder of broken dreams.

From the book of Nehemiah we can learn a lesson
The renovation of hope from the rubble of discouragement.

With the walls lying in ruins, **the people of Israel hadn't had a peaceful night of sleep.**

Raiders from the outlying provinces had been able to attack by night and keep the Israelite settlers **discouraged**.

They were under attack from every side, and **the greatest weapons in the arsenal of their enemies** were fear and discouragement.

In this forth chapter of Nehemiah they were **half way through their project of rebuilding the walls**.

At this halfway point **a fresh wave of discouragement breaks out** and Nehemiah has to deal with this discouragement, and the way he done it will still work today.

1. Recognizing Discouragement.

A. Factor One: Fatigue

Vince Lombardi observed that ***“fatigue makes cowards of us all”***.

Vs.10 “The strength of the labors is failing”, said Judah.

- 52 days of backbreaking labor, ***fatigue was catching up with them***, and when energy runs short, ***so does courage***.

The devil’s business is to wear the saints of the most high out!!!!

B. Factor #2: Frustration

They were not only weary, discouraged, but they were frustrated.

Vs 10 “There is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall”.

They ***no longer*** saw the proud, gleaming walls of their dreams.

- Visions of glory seemed like a mirage in the desert.
- There was nothing but broken bricks, mud, and debris.
- ***They were burned out!***

You can live out, you can wear out, or you can burn out.

- To burn out don’t mean you work too hard.
- The true nature of burnout is working too hard at the wrong things.
- It’s striving for a goal you can’t accomplish.
- It’s a feeling of despondency.

C. Factor #3: Failure

Neh. 4:10 - ¹⁰ Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, “The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.”

- ***Fatigue and Frustration*** are a good recipe for failure.

We are tired, fed up, we ***can't do this***.

- ***Negative talk*** is infectious, spreads like a virus to infect a whole community.
- ***Failure is universal***, what makes the difference is how we handle failure.

When things go wrong we are more apt to give an ear to the enemy!!!

D. **Factor #4**: Fear

Neh. 4:11-12 - ¹¹ ***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."

¹² Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, ***"Wherever you turn, they will attack us."***

Recognizing Discouragement – Factor's: Fatigue, Frustration, Failure, Fear!!!

2. Responding to Discouragement.

A. **First Response**: Cry out to God!

Neh. 4:4-5 - ⁴ ***Hear us, our God***, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity.

⁵ Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

- *We often cry out to God* last instead of first!

B. **Second Response**: Continue the Work God has given you to do!

Neh. 4:6 - ⁶ So we rebuilt the wall till all of it ***reached half its height***, for the people worked with all their heart.

- Are immediate reaction is to quit!

Neh. 6:3 - ³ so I sent messengers to them with this reply: ***"I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down***. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?"

- The times we most feel; like quitting are the times we must do are best to keep holding on.

C. Third Response: Concentrate on the Big Picture.

Neh. 4:13 - ¹³ 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.

D. Fourth Response: Claim the Encouragement of God's Promises.

Neh. 4:14 - 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, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes."***

David encouraged himself in the Lord!

Psalm 46:1-3 - *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*

² Therefore **we will not fear**, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

³ though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

Galatians 6:9 - ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

E. Fifth Response: Carry Someone Else's Burden!

If we read a bit farther into this *fourth chapter*, you will find a band of stragglers, the *remnant of fallen Israel*, ***had bonded together to become a team.***

Some were carrying, some were guarding, some were building, and all were wearing swords.

United We Stand!

- ***Discouragement tends to cut us off from the ones we need!***

The best way for you to be encouraged is to find someone else and encourage them!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!