

RISE Bonus Lesson 2

How to Deal with Discouragement

(Female Edition)



By Pastor Jane Evans – March 2022

All of us have faced or will face discouragement at some season of our lives.

What is discouragement?

Discourage: *to deprive of confidence, hope, or spirit; dishearten; to daunt.*

THREE STAGES OF DISCOURAGEMENT

1. **Mild:** Minor problems or pressures which affect our emotions.
2. **Strong:** Major problems or pressures which affect our spirits so that others notice.
(Note: Those closest to you may think they caused your discouragement unless you assure them otherwise.)
3. **Disabling:** Overwhelming problems or pressures which drain us of spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical strength. Our hearts melt within us, and we have no desire, energy, or ability to go on.

THE CAUSE OF DISCOURAGEMENT

At the base of every discouragement is a lie from Satan. Fear, unbelief, bitterness, self-pity, or condemnation are all based on Satan's lies.

The root cause of this is found in seeing our circumstances through the lens of our minds instead of through our confidence in God's Word. (See Ephesians 6:16.)

When we lose sight of God's ways or our resources in Christ, we remove the spiritual protection which Christ provided for us in the shield of faith. Below are some examples of lies of the enemy that become darts that embed themselves in our minds...

Lie: God has left me.

God's Truth: *"Never will I leave you..."* (Hebrews 13:5, NIV)

Lie: No good will come from this.

Truth: *"And we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose."* (Romans 8:28-29, KJV)

Lie: People hurt me.

Truth: *"For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies."* (Ephesians 6:12, NLT)

Lie: God is punishing me.

Truth: *"For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child."* (Hebrews 12:6-11, NLT)

Lie: I am weak.

Truth: *"...my power works best in weakness..."* (2 Corinthians 12:9), NLT



PERSONAL REFLECTION

Take a moment to write down a lie that you believe/believed about yourself.

What truth from the Word can you use to refute it? Write it down.

THE BENEFIT OF DISCOURAGEMENT

Discouragement offers us a significant benefit—**confirmation of our need for God.**

- He will destroy our delight in temporal things. (See Philippians 3:7–11.)
- He will destroy our confidence in human effort. (See Romans 7:22–24.)
- He has ordained that through our weakness His strength is made perfect. (See 2 Corinthians 12:9–10.)

Hebrews 11:34 (NLT) says about those who had faith as their anchor: *“Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight.”*



STEPS TO CONQUER DISCOURAGEMENT

1. Remove any guilt.

Guilt is removed through repentance and confession. (See 1 John 1:8–9.) Satan will try to use past failures to keep us from removing guilt and dealing with our discouragement.

2. Take up the shield of faith.

"In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." (Ephesians 6:16, NIV)

How do we "take up the shield of faith?" We take up the shield of faith by quoting God's truth when we recognize Satan's lies. (See 2 Corinthians 10:5.)

3. Encourage our hearts in the Lord.

David's greatest calamity came just a few days before he was established as king. (See 1 Samuel 30:6.) Satan often brings to us the greatest discouragements just before God fulfills our expectations.

How do we encourage our hearts in the Lord?

- We let God's Spirit commune with our spirits through the Psalms and other books of encouragement.
- We must not allow our mind, will, or emotions (soul) to communicate with our spirit, but rather make every effort to have God's Spirit (through His Word) communicate to our spirit.
- We meditate on God's truth every night as we go to sleep, for it is at night that we are usually faced with the most intense discouragement.

4. Establish a place to be alone with God.

We need to establish a "Bethel"—which means "House of God"—for personal times to be with the Lord. (See Genesis 28:10-19 and Luke 6:12.) It must be away from the phone, work, or other pressures.

5. Remove ourselves from fearful people as much as possible.

One of God's requirements for service in the army of Israel was to be full of faith and void of fear. (See Deuteronomy 20:8 and Judges 7:3.) A fearful person will spread his fear among others and make them fearful.

6. Read biographies of great Christians.

In doing so, we'll discover every person whom God used mightily went through times of great discouragement. God's work in their lives provides an important overview for us. We're able to see our trouble from a bigger perspective and discover God's purpose, comfort and direction. (See 2 Corinthians 1:4.)

7. Avoid making major decisions during times of discouragement.

It's so easy for Satan to get us to make major decisions during times when we're not thinking clearly or responding by faith. Never doubt in the darkness what God has shown you in the light.

"So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time, we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up." (Galatians 6:9, NLT)

8. Overcome the pride of not telling leaders, family or friends that we're discouraged and need their prayers.

Sometimes we feel reluctant to tell others that we're discouraged. We want others to believe that we're strong and able to quickly overcome setbacks. However, this can be a sign of pride in our lives. Our honesty in sharing needs will help others realize that they are not the only ones who experience discouragement. As we humble ourselves, God will give us more grace, and our response will be a living example to those who are praying for us.

9. Focus on God's reputation.

When we're discouraged, it's very important to evaluate whose reputation will suffer—ours or God's. If our reputation suffers, it means that our concerns are for our image and what others will think of us. If we're focused on God's reputation, it holds us to His standard of response using the fruit of the Spirit to corral our emotions (love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.)



DISCUSS

Take a minute to talk about how inviting God's Spirit to "hold" your discouragement gives you access to and, in fact, CREATES the fruit of the Spirit within you.

Which fruit do you need most right now?

10. Focus on our position in Christ.

Consider what Christ endured in order to glorify God and to secure our salvation. (See Hebrews 12:1-17.) Know your resources. Because we are in Christ, we're able to enter into His victory over Satan. We can accomplish victory by quoting Romans 6:1-11 and using the word "discouragement" in place of the word "sin."

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on being discouraged so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to discouragement; how can we live in it any longer?" (Romans 6:1-11)

11. Offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise to God.

It's important for us to recall God's blessings and thank Him for what He has done. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:18.) When King Jehoshaphat and the army sang and praised the Lord, God set an ambush against their enemies. (See 2 Chronicles 20:21-22.) There is a spiritual power over Satan in audibly praising God.

12. Remember the principle of the birth, death and fulfillment of a vision.

The story of Abraham and Isaac illustrates that God will give us a vision (or promise) of how He can effectively use us. God will then allow us to experience the death of that vision to build character in our lives. God will then fulfill his vision through us in supernatural way so He alone can take credit for the outcome. (Read Genesis 22:10-13.)