

Discouragement: The Voice of Hope

How Life Feels - part 6

Book of Psalms

May 24, 2020

DAY 1: Why do we get discouraged?

1. Why do we get discouraged? Is it because of discouraging circumstances? If that's so, then why do we get discouraged when it seems like life is going very well?

*Proverbs 13:12 **Hope** deferred makes the **heart sick**, but a **longing fulfilled** is a **tree of life**.*

2. Not only is the bible full of eternal, powerful and insightful truth but so are individual verses! List 4 or 5 observations from this incredible verse about discouragement.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

3. It may seem like we get discouraged because of what we consider discouraging circumstances, discouraging people, or our own discouragement of not measuring up. But the root cause of discouragement lies deeper than all of those!

***Discouragement exposes FALSE hopes and LESSER hopes
And leads us to CERTAIN hopes.***

4. Read Psalm 43, and underneath, jot down what you observe about discouragement.

Psalms 43:1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; rescue me from deceitful and wicked men.

² *You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?*

³ *Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.*

⁴ *Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.*

⁵ *Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.*

5. What struck you the most from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Discouragement #1. What I'm hoping for isn't working.

1. There is one main source of discouragement: misplaced hopes.
2. There are two main avenues through which we experience unmet hopes. The first avenue of discouragement is what I'll call "Discouragement #1."

What we're relying on to meet our needs isn't working.

3. What we are really hoping in isn't working.
4. Re-read Psalm 43:1-2
Psalm 43:1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; rescue me from deceitful and wicked men.
² You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?
5. What isn't working for the psalmist?
6. What do you think his real hopes are?
7. What would your hopes be?
8. Do you have some items you've placed your hopes in that aren't working?
9. What advice would you give the psalmist?
10. When what we're hoping in doesn't work we get discouraged. (Discouragement #1)

Day 3: Discouragement #2. God isn't giving me my hopes in Discouragement #1.

Psalms 43:1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; rescue me from deceitful and wicked men.

² *You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?*

1. Yesterday we looked at the psalmist's troubles and saw that what he wanted to happen wasn't happening.

2. What that happens we get discouraged. We call that **Discouragement #1**.

3. So, as Christians we go to Plan B. We'll go to God to get Him to give us what we're hoping for! When God doesn't cooperate with our agenda we get discouraged again, but not this time at our circumstances. We get discouraged because of God's inaction!

4. This is what we'll call **Discouragement #2. God, you are NOT solving Discouragement #1.**

5. Go back to Psalm 43 and underline the psalmist's disappointment with God. How many did you find?

6. Sometimes, as believers, we are discouraged not only for multiple circumstances but for multiple MISPLACED HOPES!

7. Have you had some situations where you've experienced Discouragement #2, where God did not "fix" the problems that led you to Discouragement #1? Which one comes to mind?

8. How did you deal with that situation?

9. What do you think God was doing in your life during those times?

DAY 4: Dealing with discouragement.

1. We usually try to do something about our **feelings** of discouragement as if the feelings are ***the problem***.

2. Feelings are the symptom of the problem. The bible points us in two directions when feelings are “talking to us.”

3. 2 phased approach:

A. In the immediate you “grab” courage and act with courage, knowing God is with you.

Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

(1). This verse was given to Joshua before he led the Hebrew people to cross the Jordan River and take the Promised Land in a series of battle.

(2) What do you learn about courage and discouragement from this verse?

B. Time for reflection. What’s going on inside me? What am I really hoping in?

4. Emotions sometimes act like lights on the dashboard of our car. They can indicate something is wrong under the hood of your car. The same is true with discouragement. When I feel discouraged, there’s more to do than just praying, “Lord, forgive me for being discouraged. Help me trust you.” Those are good words, but inadequate words. The smoke you smell is discouragement, but that’s not the fire. Misplaced hopes is the fire. Misplaced hopes that didn’t come through is where you’ll find the fire. That is the critical sin of which to repent.

5. When discouragement keeps coming up over and over again, you pray David’s prayer:

Ps. 139:23-24 Search me O God and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see what anxious way be in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

Discouragement exposes false hopes or lesser hopes.

Discouragement #1 has to do with **false hopes**.

Proverbs 29:25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

Discouragement #2 has to do with **misplaced hopes**. You’ve gone to God. That’s good. You’re moving in the right direction, but you’re hope is still really rooted in Discouragement #1.

6. What is your takeaway from today’s devotional?

DAY 5: Adjusting to a certain hope.

*Psalm 43:3 Send forth your **light** and your **truth**, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.*

1. Do you sense a dramatic change of attitude in the psalmist?

2. Why do you think his attitude changed so much?

3. When we face our discouragement God digs deeper into our hearts to expose (1) deeper corruption that He wants us to see, and (2) deeper desires for God and His story!

a. It appears that the psalmist's discouragement, both Discouragement #1 and Discouragement #2 has finally broken him. More corruption of the old nature has been exposed. He's now more:

- Humble than haughty,
- Surrendered than stubborn,
- Eager to learn than entitled,
- Devoted than demanding (of God and life).

b. But something else has been exposed: deeper desires for God!

Psalm 43:4 Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.

4. The exposure of both deeper corruption and deeper desires leads us to a different hope. That hope corresponds to what has been exposed!

a. As we see deeper corruption we are more convinced that God can change us.

b. We see deeper desires for Him—who else would love me the way He does knowing all the corruption that lies in my heart???

5. The compound effect is to want to:

- a. Reflect His character more, and
- b. Find my deepest satisfaction in Him!

6. As we wrap up our week on the topic of discouragement, what things do you want to remember?