

# Fight Off the Spirit of Discouragement With These 4 Lessons

I have been fighting off a spirit of discouragement lately; have you? It seems that circumstances, failures, people and finances have decided to gang up on me and to bully encouragement right out of my life. I am thankful to report that I have learned several important lessons during this season of discouragement. Now, I know what it will take to move away from the loud voice of discouragement and toward a time of great productivity.

First of all, discouragement will invariably wrap its life-sucking tentacles around a man or a woman who chooses to walk by faith rather than by sight. If you are extracting emotional and spiritual stability from your circumstances, it is certain you will live in a perpetual state of dismay and even hopelessness. The most effective strategy for warding off despair and rebuking disappointment is simply by keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus and His powerful promises.

The second jarring lesson I have learned while sojourning this wasteland of melancholy is that discouragement always keeps a child of God from moving forward into the life God has for them. Moses spoke to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben with these challenging words, "And why would you discourage the hearts of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord has given to them?" (Num. 32:7). It is vital that we don't allow discouragement to determine our direction or our timing. You will only move into your God-ordained destiny when you turn down the volume on discouragement and raise the level of your praise.

The third lesson I have learned from my dreaded enemy,

Discouragement, is that he never builds anything lasting in a person's life. "Then the people of the land demoralized the people of Judah and terrified them while building" (Ezra 4:4). The native tongue of discouragement is fear, while the people of God were always meant to speak a language of hopes and dreams. If you truly want to build something lasting with the investment of your life, you will use the building blocks of joy and peace to do so.

Finally, the way that I can at last win the battle over discouragement is by choosing to worship the Lord in spite of the way that I feel. "To preserve those who mourn in Zion, to give to them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified" (Isa. 61:3).

My life was always meant to be a life that was a showcase for the splendor and glory of the Lord. I was never intended to be a vessel of discouragement, but God created me to reveal His glory both in the wilderness and in the times of ease and stability. Discouragement was never meant to be a companion for me, a daughter of the most-high God. I was made to be accompanied by faith and hope during my days on earth. I will shout down discouragement with the joy of the Lord, with the promises of God and with the song in my heart. I will not determine my direction in life by what I see in the natural but by the character of God. I will build something beautiful and something lasting because the one who made me is able to complete it! {eoa}

**Carol McLeod** is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written 10 books, including *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*; *Defiant Joy!*; *Holy Estrogen!*; *No More Ordinary*; *Refined*; *Joy For All*

Seasons; Let There Be Joy!; Pass the Joy, Please!; Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue; *and Stormproof, which releases on March 1, 2019. Her teaching DVD, The Rooms of a Woman's Heart, won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming. You can also listen to Carol's "Jolt of Joy" program daily on the Charisma Podcast Network. Connect with Carol or inquire about her speaking to your group at .*