

Prophetic Words for the Discouraged and Downtrodden

I was driving down the highway just as content as I could be when the Holy Spirit started talking to me about discouragement. I listened closely with my spiritual ears, as I always do, but my natural mind didn't understand why my Friend would bring up the topic while I was driving down the highway just as content as I could be.

"The enemy wouldn't bring discouragement to your heart if you weren't doing something he didn't like. He's trying to get you to quit doing what you are doing by making it look like you're not making a difference," the Holy Spirit whispered to my heart in that still, small voice. "Don't be discouraged."

I thought to myself, "What a great topic for an article. I know how discouraged so many people are." Of course, I usually have to walk through things before I can write about them with any authority, and this discouragement business was no different. Within hours of the Holy Spirit sharing those words with me, a flood of discouragement raged against my soul like a Category 5 hurricane.

The Danger of Discouragement

Discouragement is a dangerous weapon in the enemy's arsenal. Merriam-Webster defines "discourage" as "to make (someone) less determined, hopeful, or confident; to make (something) less likely to happen; to try to make people not want to do (something); to deprive of courage or confidence; to hinder by disfavoring; to dissuade or attempt to dissuade from doing something."

That about sums it up, doesn't it? The enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy (see John 10:10), and discouragement is often part of his strategy to steal your confidence so that you

won't do more damage to his dark kingdom through your obedient acts of service to God. The devil uses discouragement to kill your hopes and destroy your dreams with circumstances that make you want to give up and quit.

Discouragement comes in many forms, from unanswered prayer, to financial pressure, to health problems, to feeling like nothing you do ever works, to feeling unappreciated, to all manner of natural adversity and spiritual warfare. Discouragement is dangerous because it distracts your heart from God's purpose, causes you to blame others for unpleasant circumstances, robs your confidence, leads you to make unwise decisions, makes you critical, angry, or depressed—and ultimately makes you want to give up and quit.

Overcoming Discouragement

When that discouragement came at me like a Category 5 hurricane, it knocked the wind right out of me for a minute. For more than a minute—more like a day. I didn't sleep well. My mind was wandering through scenarios. I was definitely looking for someone to blame and felt like giving up and quitting. Ultimately, I had to grab hold of my mind, which is the primary battlefield in spiritual warfare. I had to go back and remember what the Holy Spirit told me and draw more from His heart. Let me share it with you again:

“The enemy wouldn't bring discouragement to your heart if you weren't doing something he didn't like. He's trying to get you to quit doing what you are doing by making it look like you're not making a difference,” the Holy Spirit whispered to my heart in that still, small voice. “Don't be discouraged. You are making a difference to God. Be faithful. Keep doing what you are doing. Your reward in heaven is great.”

We're not called to walk in discouragement. We're not called to give up and quit. We're not called to look at the world with natural eyes. We're called to encourage ourselves in the

Lord, to press in and press on, and to walk by faith and not by sight in the face of anything and everything the devil throws at us.

Don't look at things with your natural eyes, but see things through the lens of Father's promises to you. Whatever God has called you to do, let this Scripture encourage your heart: "Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged" (Deut. 1:20-22). Amen.

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