

INTRODUCTION

A MYTHICAL STORY AND A BRIEF REVIEW

A definition:

Dis-cour-age-ment (-ment) n. - to deprive of courage, hope, or confidence; to lose heart.

The question

Where are you most prone to struggle with discouragement?

Discouragement is the #1 destroyer of God's plans for our lives; just before we receive God's highest and best, many of us throw in the towel.

GOD'S PLAN FOR SLAYING THE DRAGON OF DISCOURAGEMENT

A - Attitude**God's will in adversity – JOYFUL ENDURANCE**

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, **lacking in nothing**. (James 1:2-4)

R - Resource**God's promise in the process – SUPERNATURAL WISDOM**

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:5-8)

T - Theology

God's prescription for perseverance – DIVINE PERSPECTIVE

But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away. Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:9-12)

HANGING TOUGH IN TOUGH TIMES DEMAND WE:

1. Get God's perspective on our circumstances. (James 1:9-11)
 - How? By looking at our circumstances, through the eyes of FAITH.
2. Get God's perspective on our future. (James 1:12a)
 - How? By looking at our future, through the lens of HOPE.
3. Get God's perspective on our motivation. (James 1:12a)
 - How? By looking at our motivation, through the lens of LOVE.

SUMMARY/REVIEW

YOU CAN SLAY THE DRAGON OF DISCOURAGEMENT!

1. Re-evaluate your circumstances.
 - The test: is my faith in things that are perishable or things that are PERMANENT?
2. Re-evaluate your focus.
 - The test: is my hope determined by the size of my problems or the certainty of God's PROMISES?
3. Re-evaluate your motivation.
 - The test: is the primary motivation of my heart to LOVE CHRIST or simply get relief and please myself?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Write out simply and clearly in one sentence what currently (or potentially) discourages you the most right now.
2. Share with someone your answer to question number one if you are comfortable and it's appropriate to do so.
3. Discuss the power of perspective as it relates to your situation. Walk through the three points made in James 1:9-12 and talk about how they shed light on the specific challenges you are facing.
4. Pray for someone you know who is having a "broken world" experience.