

Be Encouraged!

“Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters. But David encouraged himself in the Lord His God.”
I Samuel 30:6

Discouragement.

No one likes feeling discouraged. But occasionally life can be discouraging. With little or no warning whatsoever, discouragement raises its depressing head to disrupt our day. Discouragement is no respecter of persons. We all know how uncomfortable and unsettling it is to be discouraged. Discouragement has a way of blowing the wind out of our sails.

What do you do when you are discouraged? Who do you turn to receive an encouraging word?

I have tried different things when battling discouragement. Most of the time my “fixes” didn’t provide lasting encouragement. Through trial and error, I have learned that there is Person we can turn to when we need encouragement during a discouraging time.

In our scripture, David was between a rock and a hard place. God’s man was “*greatly distressed.*” Israel’s newly anointed king had good reason to be stressed out. King Saul was still in power and envious of David. Saul used his energy and influence to try and destroy David. David fled with is family and a small contingent of faithful men to the land of the Philistines.

They settled in the city of Ziklag. At first, the Philistines welcomed David and used him and his men as an auxiliary military force. However, the Philistines became suspicious of David and disarmed his men. On the way home from meeting with the Philistines, the Amalekites attacked David’s base, burning everything with fire. They kidnapped David’s two wives, the wives of the Israeli soldiers and their children.

Distraught and discouraged, the people David loved, served and protected desired to stone him to death. You and I have had some tough days. But I doubt if we have ever faced the possibility of being killed by a bunch of embittered people throwing rocks at our head because they were disappointed with us. Hate mail is one thing. A stoning is quite another!

David and the people wept until their strength was exhausted (verse 4). Hemmed in by distraught warriors who wanted to do him in, David had no one to turn to. No family. No friends. No visible means of support. Not a single voice to encourage his discouraged heart.

So what did David do? He encouraged (strengthened) himself in the Lord His God (verse 6). In his discouragement David turned to the Lord for encouragement.

The King looked to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to encourage him and tell him what to do next. David was encouraged, received instructions, rescued his people's relatives, and defeated the Amalekites (verses 7-20).

Everyone was encouraged because David encouraged himself in the Lord.

What did David do to encourage himself in the Lord? He turned from a potential stoning to seek the Rock of Salvation. He looked away from his depressing situation and looked to the Lord for strength and courage. David certainly needed courage to face his fears and go after his family.

To be encouraged means to be in courage. Discouragement robs us of courage. Encouragement always dispels discouragement.

Turning to the Lord, David reaffirmed his dependence upon God. He rehearsed God's promises and performances of help in previous times of need. David looked to the Lord to strengthen and embolden his faith. David called upon the Lord to deliver him from discouragement. Renewed and encouraged in the Lord, David moved forward to deliver Israel's loved ones from the enemy.

David's key to personal victory: *he encouraged himself in the Lord His God.* Please note he encouraged himself. No one else encouraged him. David sought encouragement from the Lord by himself. That's the way it is for you and me too. There will be times when the only place to turn is the Lord. Just God and me. And that is a good thing!

I am afraid we often depend too much on people and things for encouragement when we should be looking to the Lord to be encouraged. When we are wrestling with discouragement, it may be possible that people may not be available. Situations and circumstances are constantly changing and unreliable. But the Lord our God, the Lord Jesus Christ is a constant, reliable, available and a ready source of strength and encouragement. Every single time.

If you are discouraged, take courage. Encourage yourself in the Lord.

Be encouraged that God loves you, God is with you, God is for you, God has a wonderful plan for your life, God will never fail you, and that you are an over-comer in life through faith in Jesus Christ.

I am encouraged because of Jesus. I hope you are too.

“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” *Psalm 73:26*

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;” *Hebrews 10:23*

A Word For Your Week: Turn from discouragement and turn to the Lord for encouragement.