



HOUR OF POWER

Reverend Dr. Major A Stewart

A young woman with dark, curly hair is the central focus of the image. She is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt and has her right hand resting on her head, looking directly at the camera with a thoughtful expression. The background is a brick wall.

**HOW TO DEFEAT
DISCOURAGEMENT!**



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April 9, 2024

HOW TO DEFEAT DISCOURAGEMENT!

Discouragement is one of the most effective weapons in the Evil One's arsenal. Therefore, we need to know how to defeat discouragement. You may be discouraged right now because of some kind of adversity in your life. It may be a health crisis, a marriage crisis, a parental crisis, a financial crisis, a career crisis, or whatever.

All of us have bouts with discouragement. When we are discouraged, we feel like giving up because we are disheartened, dispirited, and defeated. However, the more we try to live for the Lord, the more we will have to battle discouragement because it is the devil's choice weapon. That's why, over and over again, we read in the Bible: "Do not be discouraged." The New Testament uses words and phrases like weary, faint, lose heart, give up, and dismayed to describe discouragement. What wonderful promise about discouragement does God give us in Galatians 6:9?



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In this lesson, we will look at the principles for defeating discouragement found in chapter four of Nehemiah. Here we find the reasons for discouragement and the remedy for discouragement.



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In 586 b.c., the Babylonians conquered the southern kingdom of Judah, destroying its capital city, Jerusalem, and taking many key people into exile. What does Nehemiah 1:3b tell us about the wall surrounding the sacred city of Jerusalem?

By the time of Nehemiah, the city and the wall have been in ruins for more than 100 years.

Nehemiah gets permission from the Persian king to go back to Jerusalem to oversee the task of rebuilding the wall around the city. In ancient times, a wall was essential for protection from enemies.

As Nehemiah's workers are rebuilding Jerusalem's broken-down wall, each day they become more and more discouraged. Therefore, what does Nehemiah 4:10 tell us about the laborers? In Nehemiah 4, we can find three reasons for discouragement



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1. **Fatigue causes discouragement.** This is what is meant by their strength was giving out. Have you ever been “give out”? That’s what fatigue is. When we are “give out,” we get discouraged. The number one cause of discouragement is physical exhaustion. Most of the time when I feel discouraged, it’s because I’m really tired. Sometimes, the most spiritual thing we can do is take some time off and go on a vacation. Remember: If you burn the candle at both ends, you aren’t as bright as you think you are, and you will get burned in the end. We can’t be spiritually and emotionally high if we are physically low. We don’t need to quit our jobs, divorce our spouses, or disown one of the kids—we just need some rest because fatigue causes discouragement and



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2. Frustration causes discouragement. The Israelites are frustrated because there is so much rubble in the way they think they cannot rebuild the wall (4:10). They have no heavy equipment to move the tons of broken rocks and piles of dirt. Yet, there's no more rubble now than when they started; in fact, there's less. What does 4:6 tell us?

The most discouraging part of any project is when we are about half finished. Have you ever noticed how ugly and discouraging a building site can be when a building is about half finished? When we focus on problems rather than the purpose, the result will be discouragement. So, instead of focusing on what they have already accomplished and the purpose for the wall, the Israelites see only the problem of the rubble. Their frustration causes them to lose their vision, or purpose. What does the Bible tell us in Proverbs 29:18a (KJV)? Frustration sets in when we lose our vision and focus on the rubble rather than the purpose or possibilities. Fatigue and frustration cause discouragement and ...



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3. Fear causes discouragement. The Israelites are afraid because their enemies threaten to sneak in and kill them to put an end to their work (Neh. 4:11). They think they might be attacked at any time (4:12). Have you ever had bad neighbors? The Israelites did. Their neighbors keep saying, “We’re going to drop in unannounced and kill you.”

Negative, critical comments create discouragement because they cause fear of failure. Everyone who serves the Lord will receive negative comments. I get my share; it goes with the territory. If we are trying to do something for the Lord, there will always be people trying to discourage us—the Evil One will see to that.

When Joshua and the Israelites are conquering Jericho, God tells them to walk around the city once a day for six days. Then, on the seventh day they are to march around Jericho seven times (Josh. 6:3–4).

According to Joshua 6:10, what does Joshua tell the Israelites not to do as they march around the city?



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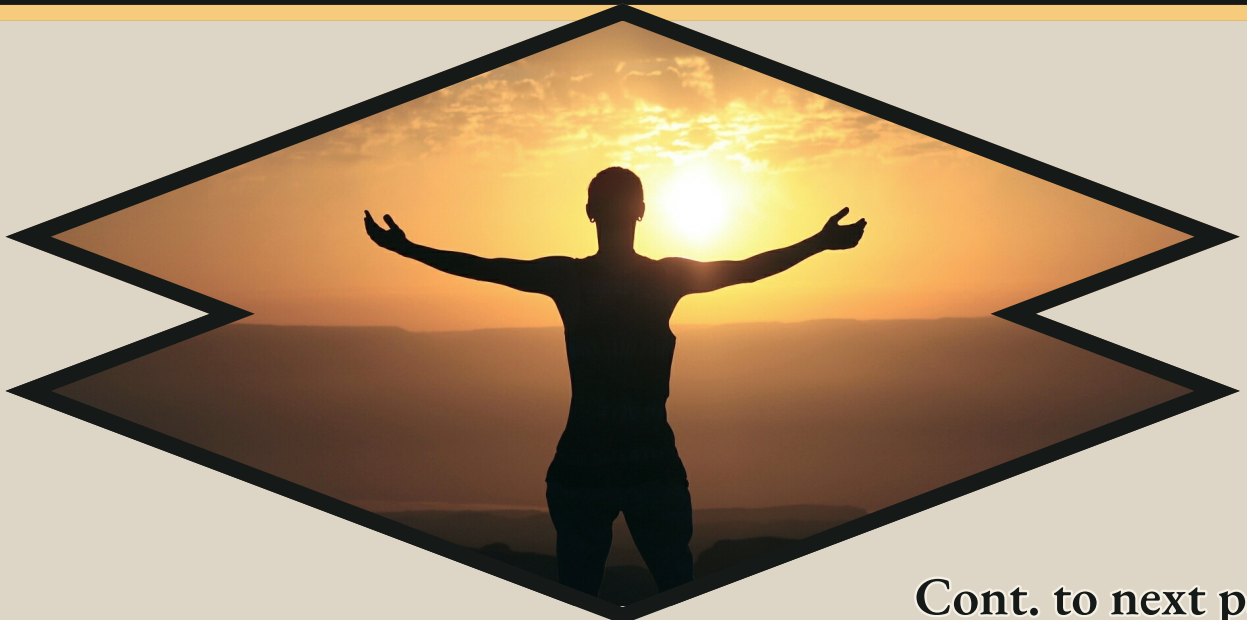
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Because he was a wise leader, Joshua knew it would take only one critic to discourage the whole group. If only one negative person were to say to the person walking next to him, "This is silly," then that person would say, "You're right; this is foolish." He would pass that negative spirit to the next person and then the next. Then, the spirit of negativism and discouragement would spread throughout the ranks.

Therefore, Joshua tells them, "I don't want anyone talking," because he knows there is always a critic in the crowd.

Criticism and negativism cause fear, which results in discouragement. So, stay away from negative, critical people. Every church has at least two or three chronic critics who spread negativism. The reasons for discouragement are fatigue, frustration, and fear.

Now, let's look at ...



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The Remedy for Discouragement

The remedy for discouragement requires doing at least three things:

1. Continue with a new approach. How does Nehemiah do this, according to Nehemiah 4:13?

There is an old saying: "Only a fool does the same thing the same way and expects a different result." Since Nehemiah wants a different result, he uses a different approach. He doesn't quit, and he doesn't change his mission.

When the going gets tough, our first reaction is to get discouraged and quit. Many people drop out of college, walk away from their marriages, or quit their jobs because they are going through a season of discouragement. That's the worst thing we can do, because it then becomes easy to get into the habit of being quitters. We all have regrets about times we have been quitters.



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Nehemiah never misses a beat in building the wall. He continues with a new approach by posting the Israelites around the wall by families because he knows everyone needs a support group. That's one of the main functions of the local church, as we see in what command in Hebrews 10:25?

Don't give up on your education; try a different study method. Don't give up on your marriage; try a "date night" or go to a counselor. Don't quit your job; take a vacation and come back with a renewed attitude. Don't give up on your business; try a new marketing strategy. The remedy for discouragement is to continue with a new approach and ...

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2. Concentrate on the Lord. Knowing this truth, Nehemiah looks over the situation and stands up to speak to the people. What does he tell them in Nehemiah 4:14b?

When we concentrate on the Lord, we remember the Lord. But, what is included in remembering the Lord? At least three things:

(A) Remember God's promises. What great promise do we find in Lamentations 3:22?

(B) Remember God's presence. One reason we get discouraged is we feel we are all alone. However, God promises He will go before us and be with us, never forsaking us so we never have to be afraid or discouraged (Deut. 31:8).

(C) Remember God's power. Nehemiah tells the people to remember the Lord, who is great and awesome. Because our God is an awesome God, we can count on what promise in Luke 4:37?

To remedy discouragement, we must continue with a new approach, concentrate on the Lord, and...

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3. Carry someone else's burden. Under Nehemiah's leadership the work continues with half the men holding spears from daybreak till the stars come out at night. To defeat discouragement, Nehemiah has those living outside Jerusalem not go home at night but serve as guards at night and workmen by day (4:21–22).

Discouragement tends to cut us off from other people. It sends us inward on a pity party. Discouragement makes us selfish, focusing only on ourselves. As someone has said: "Our own burdens become lighter when we help carry someone else's." That's how God designed us. If we want to be encouraged when we are discouraged, we must remember what eternal truth in Galatians 6:7c?

This means if we want to be encouraged, we must encourage someone else. God created us, so He knows what we must do to defeat discouragement. When we carry someone else's burden, not only will they be encouraged, we will also be encouraged ourselves because it takes our focus off our own problems. What other blessing comes from carrying each other's burden, according to Galatians 6:2b?



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**TO DEFEAT DISCOURAGEMENT, WE MUST:
(1) CONTINUE WITH A NEW APPROACH, (2)
CONCENTRATE ON THE LORD BY
REMEMBERING HIS PROMISES, PRESENCE,
AND POWER, AND (3) CARRY SOMEONE
ELSE'S BURDEN. WHICH OF THESE DO YOU
MOST NEED TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR LIFE
TODAY SO YOU CAN BEGIN DEFEATING
DISCOURAGEMENT?**



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