

HOW TO STAY ENCOURAGED

TEXT: 1 Samuel 30:1-6

INTRODUCTION: Discouragement is one of Satan's favorite tools to use against believers. If he cannot damn their souls, he will try to render them ineffective for God. He causes many to quit, to fall prey to sin that never sorely tempted them before, or to make rash decisions they later bitterly regret.

David, running from King Saul, is a classic case study in discouragement and how to deal with it. He was bereaved, robbed, and ready to die when he returned to Ziklag and found it in smoke. He didn't need to hunt for any ashes to put on his head!

But the Lord's anointed shows us the way to deal with discouragement. He *"encouraged himself in the LORD his God"* (v. 6b). It was not long until his faith in God was renewed and he *"recovered all."*

OUTLINE: How can we encourage ourselves in the Lord continually?

I. Shun Discouragement.

- A. Tune out the voices of "gloom and doom" around you.
- B. Hope in God (Ps. 42:5, 11).
- C. Conquer your unbelief (Job 13:15).

II. Seek Encouragement.

("in the LORD [your] God")

- A. Reflect on God's mercies in the past.
- B. Be reassured of God's choices.
- C. Rely on God's blessings in disguise (v. 8).
 - 1. Distrust your own wisdom (*"Shall I pursue?"*).
 - 2. Distrust your own strength (*"Shall I overtake?"*).

III. Share Encouragement.

- A. Pass on a blessing or testimony (Heb. 3:13; 10:25).
- B. Look for traits that others overlook (ex: Barnabas).
- C. Be quick to empathize with others (Rom. 12:15; Isa. 50:4).

CONCLUSION: A holy, healthy, happy believer is an awesome weapon in the hands of the Holy Spirit! If God has delivered us from our fears and troubles, we have an obligation to help others. This is more than the mere "power of positive thinking." This is focusing our attention and faith upon the One Who alone can deliver our soul from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling (Ps. 116:8). Let us open our hearts to receive divine consolations and then share encouragement with others.

