

A Definition:

Dis·cour·age·ment (-ment) *n.* (1) to deprive of courage, hope, or confidence; dishearten (2) to advise or persuade (a person) to refrain (3) to prevent or try to prevent by disapproving or raising objections or obstacles

A Question:

Where are you most prone to struggle with discouragement?

A Truth:

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

Part 1: God's Will in Adversity = Joyful Endurance

²Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:2-4 (NASB)

Part 2: God's Promise in The Process = Supernatural Wisdom

⁵But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James 1:5-8 (NASB)

Part 3: God's Prescription for Perseverance = Divine Perspective

⁹But let the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position; ¹⁰and let the rich man glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. ¹¹For 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.

¹²Blessed 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 (NASB)

Hanging Tough in Tough Times Demand We...

- **Get God's Perspective on our Circumstances** James 1:9-11

How? By looking at our circumstances, through the eyes of _____.

- **Get God's Perspective on our Future** James 1:12a

How? By looking at our future, through the lens of _____.

- **Get God's Perspective on our Motivation** James 1:12b

How? By looking at our motivation, through the eyes of _____.

Summary/Review:

You Can Slay the Dragon of Discouragement!

- Re-evaluate your circumstances.

The Test: Is my **faith** in things that are perishable or things that are _____?

- Re-evaluate your focus.

The Test: Is my **hope** determined by the size of my problems or the certainty of God's _____?

- Re-evaluate your motivation.

The Test: Is the **primary motivation** of my heart to _____ or simply get relief?

Application/Discussion Questions:

1. What currently (or potentially) discourages you the most right now? Write out simply and clearly in **one sentence** your answer to the above question (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 this passage 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.