

THE DEVIL'S TOOL **(Numbers 21:4-6)**

I. Focus on our faith.

- A. Discouragement, if left alone, will turn to doubt.
- B. Doubt is a lack of faith.
 - 1. Instead of turning to doubt, we ought to focus on the things we know about God and His word.
 - 2. Despite what brethren may do or what may go on in the world, God is not leaving us (Hebrews 13:5).
- C. When Elijah got discouraged after having defeated the priests of Baal and still was being persecuted, God took care of him.
 - 1. He allowed an angel to minister to him.
 - 2. He then provided a place to rest and talked with him.
- D. Now I know God will not send angels to make a meal for us or come down to talk to us.
 - 1. However, God has given us many blessings.
 - 2. He has spoken to us through His word.
 - 3. He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).
- E. If we falter when discouraged, it is because of a lack of faith.
- F. We should realize that the hard times will pass, the sinful actions of our brethren will pass, the sin of our family members will be dealt with at some point.
- G. Whatever is going wrong in the world or our life will pass away at some point and the Lord will still be with us.
- H. Romans 8:31 - when God is with us, man cannot prevail.
- I. In those times of discouragement, we must seek to strengthen our faith, not let it falter.
 - 1. Turning to God's word will increase our faith.
 - 2. It will remind us of God's presence and love for us.
 - 3. It will reveal to us whether or not we are right with God.
 - 4. It will help us get right with God or get over whatever discouragement we are facing.
- J. Our faith will allow us to be victorious (1 John 5:4).

II. Focus on our family.

- A. Chances are that if I'm discouraged, those in my family will be as well.
- B. We need to look out for the well-being of our family members.
- C. Spouses need to encourage one another through difficult times.
 - 1. I love being a part of a congregation that has several couples who have been together 40+ years.
 - 2. You have gone through difficult times and helped one another through them.
 - 3. That is a blessing for me and others to see that it can be done.
- D. We are to put the needs of our spouses before ourselves (Ephesians 24-25).

1. When that doesn't happen discouragement will always arise.
 2. When discouragement in a marriage arises, there comes a flood of temptations that, if given in to, will endanger the marriage.
 3. There must be communication or sin will result.
- E. We need to look out for our children.
1. We can discourage them (Colossians 3:21).
 2. Just this week I was reminded of this and had to tell one of my children I was sorry and would do better.
 3. Discouraging our children can lead them to turn away from us and from the Lord and we must avoid that.
 4. Discipline must still be administered but it has to be out of love and concern.
- F. When discouraging events or actions take place, a family can allow itself to drift from God.
1. When the bad things happen, we can turn to God and His people or we can turn to people of the world.
 2. We need to make sure that, as parents, we have instilled in our children a love for the Lord and a knowledge of His presence in their lives.
 3. The Psalmist understood the feeling of discouragement (Psalm 77).
 - a. Notice his questions for God in verses 7-9.
 - b. Thankfully, he remembered God's presence beginning in verse 11.
- G. Our families are vital to the well-being of the community as well as this congregation.
- H. We can't let discouragement keep them from being the salt of the community and reflectors of the light of the God.

III. **Focus on our future.**

- A. Someone has said that discouragement is dissatisfaction with the past, distaste for the present, and distrust of the future.
- B. We can't let the discouragement of the present keep us from the glorious future that awaits us.
- C. A crown of victory awaits those who are found faithful in the end (Revelation 2:10).
- D. The discouragement of life can rob us of blessings in the present.
 1. It happened to the Israelites in Numbers 21.
 2. God had constantly taken care of them, but because of the difficult way they became discouraged and many lost their lives.
- E. Discouragement is a killer of any hopes and dreams for our future that we may have.
- F. Heaven is too wonderful to miss out on because someone let us down here on earth.
- G. Thoughts of heaven and the glories that await us should serve to lift our spirits and get us out of the discouragement before all the temptations come our way.