

Thoughts on Discouragement

Discouragement is a disease unique to human beings, and it's universal -- eventually everyone gets it, including those in ministry. I have no doubt you've experienced discouragement at times, maybe many times. You might even be discouraged at this very moment. Here's what I've learned about battling discouragement:

WHAT CAUSES DISCOURAGEMENT?

#1 Cause - FATIGUE

When you're physically or emotionally exhausted, you're a prime candidate to be infected with discouragement. Your defenses are lowered and things can seem bleaker than they really are. This often occurs when you're halfway through a major project and you get tired.

#2 Cause - FRUSTRATION

When unfinished tasks pile up, it's natural to feel overwhelmed. And when trivial matters or the unexpected interrupt you and prevent you from accomplishing what you really need to do, your frustration can easily produce discouragement.

#3 Cause - FAILURE

Sometimes, your best laid plans fall apart -- the project collapses -- the deal falls through -- no one shows up to the event. How do you react? Do you give in to self-pity? Do you blame others? As one man said, "Just when I think I can make ends meet -- somebody moves the ends! That's discouraging!"

#4 Cause - FEAR

Fear is behind more discouragement than we'd like to admit. The fear of criticism (What will they think?); the fear of responsibility (What if I can't handle this?); and the fear of failure (What if I blow it?) can cause a major onset of the blues.

WHAT'S THE CURE FOR DISCOURAGEMENT?

Use these methods to cure discouragement, they are:

REST YOUR BODY

If you need a break -- take one! You'll be more effective when you return to work. If you're burning the candle at both ends, you're not as bright as you think!

REORGANIZE YOUR LIFE

Discouragement doesn't necessarily mean you are doing the wrong thing. It may just be that you are doing the right thing in the wrong way. Try a new approach. Shake things up a little.

RESIST THE DISCOURAGEMENT

Fight back! Discouragement is a choice. If you feel discouraged, it's because you've chosen to feel that way. No one is forcing you to feel bad. Hang on! Do what's right in spite of your feelings. No feeling lasts forever.