DON’T LET DISCOURAGEMENT MAKE YOUR DECISIONS

Bishop RC Blakes Jr.

NEHEMIAH 4:10 KJV
And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.

I want to talk to the person who is about to make a major decision because you are tired of being disappointed. You have been thinking about giving up on something that once mattered deeply to you. You may be ready to withdraw from everyone, abandon a responsibility, or decide that trying again is no longer worth the risk.

Before you make that decision, give yourself room to hear from God and think clearly.
Discouragement can do more than affect how you feel. It can begin directing what you choose. It can make isolation sound wise. It can make an impulsive response
feel necessary. It can convince you that the only way to stop hurting is to stop hoping.

But a painful moment does not automatically provide a wise plan. We have established that you can be discouraged and still be destined. Today we need to consider how to keep discouragement
from making decisions that shape our future.

Nehemiah was leading the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s wall. The people faced opposition, threats, hard work, and a great deal of rubble.
Eventually, some of the workers said they could not build the wall.
Their exhaustion was real. The work was difficult. But Nehemiah did not treat their discouraged conclusion as the final verdict on the assignment.

He prayed. He assessed the danger. He organized protection and helped the people return to the work.
There are times to continue, times to adjust, and times to leave something behind. We need wisdom to recognize the difference.

QUOTE:
“Discouragement can tell you that you are hurting. It cannot, by itself, tell you what to do next.”

Let me give you five ways to protect your decisions when your heart is discouraged.

1. CHECK THE FACTS BEFORE YOU DECLARE DEFEAT

Listen to the workers’ report. Their strength was failing, there was much rubbish, and they concluded that they were unable to build.
Now listen to what had already happened earlier in the same chapter.

NEHEMIAH 4:6 KJV
So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

The wall was already joined together to half its height. These were people who had made progress before they began saying that they could not do the work.
The remaining difficulty had become so large in their attention that their actual progress was no longer shaping their conclusion.
That can happen to us.

You focus on the debt that remains and forget the habits you have already changed. You focus on the conversation that went badly and overlook the healthier boundaries you are learning. You focus on the unfinished project

and forget that you now know things you did not know when you started.

Progress does not make the remaining problems disappear. It does give you a more complete picture.

QUOTE: “An unfinished life is not an unsuccessful life.”

Before you announce that nothing is working, take an honest inventory. What has changed? What have you learned? What has been completed? What specifically remains difficult?
Do not exaggerate the progress, and do not erase it.

EXAMPLE: A student fails one examination and decides to leave the program. Looking at the full record may show several completed courses and one area that needs tutoring. The disappointing result deserves attention, but it does not tell the whole story.

When you identify the actual problem, you can make a more useful decision.

“Everything is falling apart” leaves you overwhelmed. “This part needs help” gives you something to address.

Give the facts a hearing before you allow discouragement to announce the verdict.

2. ASK GOD FOR WISDOM BEFORE YOU MAKE A MOVE

When we are hurting, we often ask for relief before we ask for direction.
We want the conversation to end. We want the pressure to stop. We want to do something that will make us feel in control again.
But an action can bring immediate relief and still create a problem we will have to live with later.

JAMES 1:5 KJV

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James addresses believers facing trials, and he directs them to ask God for wisdom. Difficulty is a time to seek guidance.
You can pray, "Lord, help me see clearly. Show me what I need to accept, what I need to change, and what I need to stop doing."
Then make room for counsel.

PROVERBS 15:22 KJV
Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

Wise counsel can help you notice an option that discouragement has hidden from view.
Choose people who will listen carefully and tell you the truth. A person who agrees with every frustrated thought may offer sympathy without offering wisdom.

Before a major decision, consider the question: Would I still believe this was wise if I were rested, supported, and able to examine it calmly?
That question does not make your pain irrelevant. It helps you separate a considered decision from an urgent desire to escape a feeling.

Some departures are necessary. Some situations require immediate protection. This message is not a command to remain in harm or preserve every arrangement.
The point is to let truth and wisdom direct your response. When a decision can safely wait, allow time for prayer, reliable information, and sound counsel.

You may still decide to make a change. But make it with clarity about what you are choosing and why.

3. CHANGE THE PLAN WHEN THE PRESSURE CHANGES

Nehemiah did not respond to the people's fear by demanding that they ignore the danger.
He took practical action.

NEHEMIAH 4:9 KJV
Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

They prayed, and they established a watch. Their trust in God was expressed alongside a responsible response to the threat.
Later, Nehemiah reorganized the work.

NEHEMIAH 4:16 KJV
And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.

Some worked while others provided protection. The assignment continued through an adjusted arrangement.
This is a principle we can apply without pretending that our circumstances are identical to theirs: faithfulness can require a wiser method.

Perhaps the commitment needs a team. Perhaps the schedule needs to change. Perhaps you need training, a clearer budget, or fewer obligations at one time.
Do not limit your options to exhausting yourself or abandoning everything.

QUOTE:
"You may need a different way of carrying the responsibility, not a decision to discard it."

EXAMPLE: A ministry volunteer has begun dreading every weekend because

they are serving in several roles without a break. A rotation and a trained replacement may help them serve with joy again. The problem may be the arrangement, rather than a lack of love for the work.
Ask what specifically is making the present plan unsustainable. Then make a specific adjustment.

An adjustment is not automatically compromise. Nehemiah's people continued building while acknowledging that the conditions had changed.
At the same time, difficulty does not prove that every project is an assignment from God. Examine what you are doing honestly. A clear mistake may need to be corrected. A completed season may need to be released.

Seek enough wisdom to recognize whether God is calling you to persevere, reorganize, or move in a different direction.
You are allowed to learn while you are moving forward.

4. PROTECT YOUR PURPOSE FROM DISTRACTION

Discouragement makes attention expensive. You have less energy available, yet you may spend more of it replaying criticism and defending yourself.

Nehemiah faced repeated attempts to draw him away from the work. His opponents invited him to meet, while intending to harm him.
He answered with clarity.

NEHEMIAH 6:3 KJV
And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

Nehemiah recognized that accepting that invitation would interrupt the work and expose him to danger.
Every demand for your attention does not deserve control over your schedule.
You can spend an entire day explaining your intentions to someone who has already decided to misunderstand you. You can give your best energy to an argument and leave nothing for the responsibility that actually belongs to

you.

Ask yourself what the response will accomplish. Will it resolve something necessary? Will it protect someone? Will it correct an important error? Or will it simply pull you into another round of the
same conflict?
That is a question of stewardship.
We must also use this passage honestly. Nehemiah was dealing with people who intended him harm. Every person who disagrees with you is not a Sanballat. A loving correction may be exactly what you need.

Stay open to accountable relationships while limiting conversations that repeatedly drain you without producing understanding or change.
You can answer briefly. You can set a time to discuss a real concern.
You can decline an argument that has become circular.
Protect enough attention to pray, think, care for your family, and do the work in front of you.

You do not have to win every exchange to remain faithful to your purpose.

5. TAKE THE NEXT FAITHFUL STEP

After the threat was addressed, the people returned to their work.

NEHEMIAH 4:15 KJV
And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

Notice the practical movement. They returned, each to the work assigned to them.
The wall would not be rebuilt by deciding its entire future every morning. It required people to return to a particular section and do the work they could do there.
Some of us become overwhelmed because every small action has to carry the emotional weight of our entire future.

An application becomes a judgment on our worth. A conversation becomes a prediction about every relationship. One difficult day becomes evidence that our whole life is going wrong.

Bring the task back to its proper size.
Make the appointment. Complete the next part of the assignment. Ask the question you have been avoiding. Follow through on the responsible decision you have already made.

You do not have to feel certain about everything in order to do the next thing wisely.
And you are not being asked to manufacture all the strength within yourself.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13 KJV
For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Paul reminds believers that God is at work within their willing and doing. Our obedience rests on His active grace.
When your willingness feels weak, bring that to God too. Ask Him to renew your desire to do what is right and to help you act on the light you have.
Later in the rebuilding account, Nehemiah prayed a simple prayer for strength.

NEHEMIAH 6:9 KJV
For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.

There is a prayer you can carry into your week: “God, strengthen my hands.”

Strengthen me for the conversation. Strengthen me to make the necessary adjustment. Strengthen me to do my part without pretending that I control everything.
The discouraging report was not the final report in Nehemiah’s story.

NEHEMIAH 6:15–16 KJV
So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

The people who had said they were unable to build lived to see the wall completed.
Their fifty-two days are part of their history, not a timetable we can impose on every situation. But their story shows us that exhaustion and opposition did not make their first discouraged conclusion the final truth.
You may need care before you continue. You may need a better plan.
You may need counsel that helps you make a necessary change.
Give yourself room for all of that before you decide there is nothing left to build.
Do not hand your future to the most discouraged version of yourself.
Bring your decisions into the presence of God, the light of truth, and the company of wise people.
There is still a faithful step available to you today.

Father, we bring You the decisions we have been trying to make through disappointment. Quiet the pressure within us long enough for us to hear and consider what is true.
Give us wisdom to recognize real progress and real problems. Help us receive honest counsel without defensiveness. Show us what to continue, what to change, and what to release.

Protect our attention from needless conflict. Give us courage to make responsible adjustments and humility to receive help.
Strengthen our hands for the work You have entrusted to us. Renew our willingness to obey You one step at a time. Let our choices grow out of trust in You and clear understanding, rather than the fear that nothing good can happen again.
In Jesus' name, amen.