YOU CAN BE DISCOURAGED AND STILL BE DESTINED

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2 CORINTHIANS 4:8–9 KJV
We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

I want to speak today to somebody who is tired.
Not necessarily physically tired, but emotionally exhausted. Mentally overwhelmed. Spiritually drained.
You've been trying to hold everything together while quietly wondering how much more you can take.
You've been praying, believing, working, sacrificing, and doing everything you know to do. But if you were completely honest, there are moments when you wonder whether things will ever really change.

Some of you are discouraged because life hasn't happened the way you expected.
Some are discouraged because people disappointed you.
Some are discouraged because you've been fighting the same battles for so long that you've almost
forgotten what it feels like to live without pressure.

And some of you are discouraged because you're watching other people experience the things you've
been praying for.

But I want to remind you of something today.

YOU CAN BE DISCOURAGED AND STILL BE DESTINED.

Discouragement is not proof that you have lost your faith.
Sometimes discouragement is simply evidence that you've been carrying a

heavy load for a long time.

Even strong people have weak moments.
Even faithful people have questions.
Even people who genuinely trust God sometimes wrestle with disappointment.

Paul said we are troubled, perplexed, persecuted, and cast down.
But notice what he did not say.

He did not say we were abandoned.
He did not say we were defeated.
He did not say we were destroyed.

YOUR PRESENT STRUGGLE DOES NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO CANCEL GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR
LIFE.

You may be disappointed, but you're not disqualified.
You may be delayed, but you're not defeated.
You may be wounded, but you're not worthless.

And you may be going through one of the most difficult seasons of your life, but that doesn't mean
you're living through the final chapter of your story.

There are five things I want you to remember when discouragement begins to overwhelm your heart.

1. DON'T CONFUSE YOUR EMOTIONAL CONDITION WITH YOUR SPIRITUAL POSITION

One of the greatest mistakes we make is assuming that because we feel discouraged, something must be wrong with our relationship with God.

We assume that if our faith were stronger, we wouldn't feel this way.
But the Bible is filled with people who were genuinely called by God and still experienced emotional exhaustion.

Consider Elijah.

1 KINGS 19:4–5 KJV
But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

This is the same Elijah who had confronted the prophets of Baal.
The same Elijah who had witnessed the fire of God fall from heaven.
The same Elijah who had experienced extraordinary demonstrations of divine power.

Yet here he is, exhausted, discouraged, and asking God to take his life.

What does this teach us?

SPIRITUAL POWER DOES NOT ELIMINATE HUMAN VULNERABILITY.

You can love God and still become exhausted.
You can have faith and still experience fear.
You can be anointed and still need rest.
You can be called and still have moments when you question your ability to continue.

But notice God's response to Elijah.
God did not immediately rebuke him for being tired.
He provided rest and nourishment.

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is acknowledge that you need recovery.
Some of you are trying to pray your way through something that also requires rest, boundaries, support, and a healthier pace of life.
You cannot continue carrying everybody else's burdens while ignoring the condition of your own soul.

RESTING IS NOT QUITTING.

MATTHEW 11:28 KJV
Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Jesus did not condemn people for becoming weary.
He invited them to come to Him.
Stop condemning yourself for being human.
You don't have to pretend that you're strong every moment of every day.

Sometimes faith sounds like, "Lord, I believe You, but I'm tired. Help me recover."

DON'T MAKE PERMANENT DECISIONS ABOUT YOUR FUTURE WHILE YOU'RE IN A TEMPORARY STATE OF EXHAUSTION.

2. DON'T ALLOW DELAY TO DESTROY YOUR EXPECTATION

One of the greatest sources of discouragement is the distance between what we expected and what we are experiencing.

You thought you would be further along by now.
You thought the business would be successful.
You thought the relationship would have worked.
You thought your family would be different.
You thought certain doors would have opened.

And when life doesn't happen according to your expectations, you begin questioning your worth, your decisions, and sometimes even God.

But here's something I want you to understand.

JUST BECAUSE LIFE ISN'T HAPPENING ACCORDING TO YOUR TIMETABLE DOESN'T MEAN GOD HAS ABANDONED HIS PURPOSE.

HABAKKUK 2:3 KJV

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

God was speaking to Habakkuk concerning a revelation that would be fulfilled in His appointed time.
The principle is that God's faithfulness must not be measured by our impatience.
Not everything God is doing will happen when we expect it.

And not everything we desire is necessarily something God has promised.
But we can trust His wisdom even when we don't understand His timing.
Sometimes we're discouraged because we're comparing our lives with somebody else's.

We're measuring our progress against their accomplishments.
We're comparing our beginnings with their established success.

And we're allowing their timeline to make us feel inadequate.
But your assignment is not to become somebody else.
Your responsibility is to faithfully develop what God has entrusted to you.

SLOW PROGRESS IS STILL PROGRESS.

PSALM 27:14 KJV
Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Waiting on God does not mean becoming passive.
It means continuing to trust Him while doing what wisdom and obedience require.

Keep learning.
Keep developing.
Keep preparing.
Keep improving.
Keep showing up.

And stop allowing what hasn't happened to blind you to what is happening.

DON’T LET THE LENGTH OF THE WAIT DESTROY YOUR WILLINGNESS TO BELIEVE.

3. DON’T ALLOW WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU TO DEFINE WHO YOU ARE

Some of you are not discouraged because of where you are.
You’re discouraged because of what you’ve been through.

Somebody betrayed you.
Somebody abandoned you.
Somebody broke a promise.
Somebody failed to appreciate what you brought into their life.

And now you’re carrying the emotional weight of an experience that has begun to shape the way you see yourself.

But I want you to hear this clearly.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU IS PART OF YOUR HISTORY. IT IS NOT THE TOTALITY OF YOUR IDENTITY.

You are not your divorce.
You are not your rejection.
You are not your financial failure.
You are not the mistakes you made when you didn’t know better.
You are not the worst thing somebody ever said about you.

And you are not the worst thing somebody ever did to you.

MICAH 7:8 KJV
Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.

Notice the confidence in that declaration.

“When I fall, I shall arise.”

Not because falling is insignificant.
Not because darkness is imaginary.
But because the presence of God gives us hope beyond our present condition.

FALLING IS AN EXPERIENCE. IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BECOME YOUR IDENTITY.

You may have experienced rejection, but you are not rejected by God.
You may have experienced failure, but you are not a failure.
You may have experienced abandonment, but your future has not abandoned you.

Stop giving people who hurt you the authority to determine what you believe about yourself.

Their inability to recognize your value does not diminish your value.
Their unwillingness to love you properly does not mean you’re unlovable.
Their departure does not mean your purpose departed with them.

ISAIAH 43:18–19 KJV
Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.
Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

God spoke these words to His people concerning His power to bring about a new work.
And the passage reminds us that God is not limited by what has happened before.

There comes a point when you must stop allowing yesterday’s disappointment to dominate tomorrow’s expectations.

You cannot move into a new season while emotionally living in every injury of the old one.
Healing doesn’t mean pretending that nothing happened.
It means refusing to allow what happened to control everything that

happens next.

DON’T BECOME SO ATTACHED TO WHAT YOU LOST THAT YOU FAIL TO RECOGNIZE WHAT STILL REMAINS.

4. LEARN TO ENCOURAGE YOURSELF WHEN LIFE BECOMES OVERWHELMING

There will be seasons when the people around you don’t understand what you’re carrying.
There will be moments when nobody calls.

Nobody checks on you.
Nobody recognizes the sacrifices you’re making.
And nobody seems to understand how close you are to giving up.

That’s why you must develop the ability to encourage yourself in the Lord.

1 SAMUEL 30:6 KJV
And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

David had experienced a devastating situation.
His city had been burned.

The families had been taken captive.
And the very people who had followed him were now speaking of stoning him.
David was surrounded by people who were hurting, angry, and looking for somebody to blame.

Yet the Bible says David encouraged himself in the Lord.
He did not deny the seriousness of the situation.
He did not pretend everything was wonderful.
He turned toward the God who had sustained him before.

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO REMIND YOURSELF OF WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY BROUGHT YOU THROUGH.

There were situations you thought would destroy you.
But you're still here.

There were nights you cried yourself to sleep.
But you got up the next morning.

There were seasons when you didn't know how you would survive.
But somehow God sustained you.

And if you're not careful, you'll become so consumed with what hasn't happened that you'll forget what you've already overcome.

PSALM 42:11 KJV
Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Notice that the psalmist speaks to his own soul.

He acknowledges his discouragement, but he refuses to let discouragement have the final word.
Sometimes you must challenge the conclusions your emotions are trying to make.

You may feel defeated, but that doesn't mean defeat is your destiny.
You may feel forgotten, but that doesn't mean God has forgotten you.
You may feel hopeless, but that doesn't mean hope no longer exists.

YOU CANNOT ALWAYS CONTROL WHAT LIFE SAYS TO YOU, BUT YOU CAN CHOOSE WHAT TRUTH YOU CONTINUE TO SPEAK TO YOURSELF.

Encourage yourself with the Word.
Remember God's faithfulness.
Surround yourself with people who strengthen your faith.

And when the burden becomes too heavy to carry alone, don't be ashamed

to reach for help.
Faith and receiving support are not enemies.
Sometimes God's provision comes through the people He places in your life.

5. REFUSE TO BELIEVE THAT YOUR BEST DAYS ARE BEHIND YOU

This is where I really want to encourage you.

One of the most dangerous things discouragement does is convince you that your future can never bebetter than your past.

It makes you believe you've missed your opportunity.
That you're too old.
That you've made too many mistakes.
That too much time has passed.
That too many things have gone wrong.

But I want to remind you that your life is not finished simply because one season has been difficult.

PHILIPPIANS 1:6 KJV
Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Paul was expressing confidence in God's continuing work among the believers at Philippi.

And that truth gives us a foundation for confidence in God's faithfulness.
God is not limited by your age.
God is not intimidated by your past.
God is not confused by your circumstances.
And God has not exhausted His ability to work in your life.

YOU HAVE NOT SEEN EVERYTHING GOD CAN DO WITH YOUR LIFE.

There are still things you can learn.

There are still gifts you can develop.
There are still relationships that can bring meaning and joy.
There are still opportunities to serve, contribute, grow, and become.

And there are still possibilities you haven't imagined.

GALATIANS 6:9 KJV
And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Notice that the Scripture does not deny that weariness can come.
It encourages us not to allow weariness to stop us from doing what is right.

You don't have to figure out your entire future today.
You don't have to solve every problem tonight.
You don't have to know every detail of what comes next.

Sometimes faith is simply having enough courage to take the next responsible step.

ISAIAH 40:29–31 KJV
He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Your strength may be depleted.
But God's supply is not exhausted.

Your resources may be limited.
But God's ability is not.

Your vision may be clouded by pain.
But that does not mean your future has disappeared.

DON'T ALLOW A DIFFICULT CHAPTER TO CONVINCE YOU THAT THE ENTIRE BOOK IS A TRAGEDY.

I want to leave you with this.
I don't know how long your night has been.
I don't know how many disappointments you've had to absorb.
I don't know how many times you've had to encourage yourself because nobody else understood what you were carrying.

But I want you to remember something.

PSALM 30:5 KJV
For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

NIGHT IS A SEASON. IT IS NOT YOUR IDENTITY.

You may be going through a painful season, but you are not required to build your entire identity around your pain.
You may be facing uncertainty, but you can still trust God.
You may be experiencing disappointment, but you can still have expectation.
And you may be tired, but you can recover.

Stop measuring your future by the worst thing that has happened to you.
Stop allowing people who walked away to determine whether you can move forward.
Stop comparing your life with people whose journey you don't fully understand.
And stop speaking about yourself as though God has nothing left to do in your life.

Lift your head.
Take care of your heart.
Rebuild your expectations.
And give yourself permission to believe that something beautiful can still happen.

YOU CAN BE DISCOURAGED AND STILL BE DESTINED.

You can be tired and still be called.
You can be wounded and still be valuable.
You can be delayed and still be developing.
You can be disappointed and still have a future.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16 KJV
For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

And that's my prayer for you.
That God will renew your strength.
That He will restore your courage.
That He will heal the places in your heart that have been wounded by disappointment.
That He will give you wisdom for the decisions ahead.

And that He will help you recognize that your present circumstances do not have the final authority over your future.

You may not be able to run today.
Then walk.

If you cannot walk, take time to recover.
But don't surrender your belief that God can lead you forward.

YOU HAVE SURVIVED TOO MUCH TO ALLOW DISCOURAGEMENT TO CONVINCE YOU THAT YOUR LIFE HAS NO MORE PURPOSE.

There is still life to live.
There is still purpose to fulfill.
There is still wisdom to gain.
There is still love to experience.
And there is still joy to discover.

GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH YOU. AND THE BEST PART OF YOUR STORY MAY STILL BE AHEAD OF YOU.