

Dealing with Discouragement



"11 Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God!" Psalm 42: 5, 11 NLT

- When do you get discouraged the most?

No one is immune from discouragement. Everyone gets discouraged. The theme of Psalm 42 is - *dealing with discouragement*. When you feel discouraged, remember God's love and care for you. Seek to have a greater thirst and deeper relationship with Him. Determine to trust God to lead you through your problems.

Psalm 42 was the lyrics to a Hebrew worship song. The heading says, "For the choir director: a psalm of the descendants of Korah." King David appointed men from the clan of Korah to serve as worship leaders in the Temple (1 Chronicles 6:31-38). Their descendants served in the Temple for hundreds of years (2 Chronicles 20:18-19).

Central Lesson:
Trust in God's care and control are the key to dealing with discouragement.

1. **LONGING** for God (42:1-2).

"1 As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God. 2 I thirst for God, the living God. When can I go and stand before him?"

Psalms are Hebrew poetry. It uses a large amount of figurative speech and imagery. In these verses, he pictures his desire and longing for God like the longing of a thirsty deer for water. The psalmist is expressing his desire to have a close relationship with God. Seeking a closer relationship with God can help us deal with discouragement.

2. **Process emotional PAIN** (42:3).

"3 Day and night I have only tears for food, while my enemies continually taunt me, saying, 'Where is this God of yours?'"

God created us to be emotional. We feel many different emotions—love, anger, joy, disappointment, fear, sadness, surprise, etc. Sometimes the problems of life can cause us to be overwhelmed by certain emotions. This was the experience of the psalmist. He was being insulted by his enemies. This psalm shows that he was working on the challenging task of processing his emotions. Reacting in a healthy way to criticism was the way he processed his emotions. *How well do you process your emotions? Do you too often just lose it?* Properly processing our emotions can help us deal with discouragement.

3. **Reflect upon the pleasant PAST** (42:4a).

"4 My heart is breaking as I remember how it used to be: I walked among the crowds of worshipers, leading a great procession to the house of God, singing for joy and giving thanks amid the sound of a great celebration!"

When we are facing deep disappointment, taking a deep breath and reflecting on pleasant times in the past may help us to better react to the present problems. The psalmist may have been one of the Israelites exiled far from Jerusalem during some

undesigned time. He was not able to join family and friends as they would go to the Temple to celebrate, worship, and fellowship during the Jewish holidays. *What are pleasant memories that can help you deal with discouragement?*

4. **Seek positive FELLOWSHIP** (42:4b).

"... I walked among the crowds of worshipers, leading a great procession to the house of God..."

5. **Listen to inspirational MUSIC** (42:4c).

"... singing for joy and giving thanks amid the sound of a great celebration!"

6. **Analyze the CAUSE of your discouragement** (42:5, 11).

"5 Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and 6 my God!"

7. **Place your hope & TRUST in God** (42:5b-6).

"5 ... I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and 6 my God! Now I am deeply discouraged, but I will remember you—even from distant Mount Hermon, the source of the Jordan, from the land of Mount Mizar."

A central theme of the Bible is, "The righteous will live by faith." (NIV). We must learn to trust God in every detail of life. Trust in God is a major key to dealing with discouragement.

8. **Look for God's unfailing LOVE in the midst of your storm** (42:7-8).

"7 I hear the tumult of the raging seas as your waves and surging tides sweep over me. 8 But each day the Lord pours his unfailing love upon me, and through each night I sing his songs, praying to God who gives me life."

Again, as Hebrew poetry, we see the psalmist using imagery. The psalmist described his problems as being in a storm. He pictured his problems like the waves of a raging sea sweeping over him. However, in the storm, he sees God's unfailing love. It was as if the sunlight was peaking through the dark clouds. In the same way, when we face an overwhelming day of difficulty, we should look for signs of God's presence and love. *When was there a time when you had a troubling day but yet you saw signs of God being with you?* Seeing God's love in the midst of our storms in life can help us deal with discouragement.

9. **Be HONEST with yourself and God about your feelings** (42:9-10).

"9 O God my rock, I cry, 'Why have you forgotten me? Why must I wander around in grief, oppressed by my enemies?' 10 Their taunts break my bones. They scoff, 'Where is this God of yours?'"

The psalmist is being honest with himself and with God. He is not bottling up his feelings. He is opening up his heart and expressing to God his frustration. In the same way, God welcomes our honest expressions of our feelings. He understands our irritations and cares deeply about our struggles. We must be honest with ourselves and with God. *Are you afraid to complain to God? Do you think He doesn't know what is really in our hearts if we never express it?* Being honest with ourselves and God about our feelings can help us deal with discouragement.

Central Lesson:
Trust in God's care and control are the key to dealing with discouragement.

- Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
- Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.