

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Don't Be A Discourager

Bill Brinkworth

Moses and the tribes of Israel left their bondage in Egypt and were headed for a land God had promised them west of the Jordan River. They were all to cross the river, and before they claimed their new properties, they would have to fight the enemies there.

However, before they reached the promised land, two of the tribes, Gad and Reuben, traveled through a land they really wanted. It met the needs of their many flocks and appealed to them. They wanted to go no further and occupy the land they were in.

They went to their leader, Moses, and asked if they could have the lands of Jazer and Gilead, rather than what was on the other side of the river (Num. 32:1-4). Wisely, Moses advised against it, as he knew doing it would discourage others.

"And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? 7 And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?" Num. 32:6-7

Moses recited another instance where God's people were discouraged because of the actions of others. He reminded them of the impact the discouraging report of ten faithless and hopeless spies caused among Israel. Moses also recapped how their dissuasion of others angered God and brought on serious repercussions to His people (Num. 32:8-13).

The two tribes realized what harm their lack of helping the others would cause. They made a commitment, and kept their promise, to keep the land but support the others by faithfully joining them in battle. They committed themselves not to take possession of the land until the others had theirs.

Like the Gadites and Reubenites, our words, actions, or lack of actions can also discourage others: Christian and non-Christian alike. Our words, although many times meant to be helpful, can discourage others, from serving the Lord. "Why so-and-so says I'm doing a lousy job teaching my Sunday school class, so I'll just quit," or "Well, if they don't like how I dress, I'll just stop going to church, or find one that lets me come as I want" and many other "suggestions" discourage more than we would like to know.

When the preacher is away on vacation and folks stay home because "Deacon So-and-so is going to preach today that deacon, who may have put a lot of effort into preparing for the sermon, will be greatly discouraged when attendance is low. The preacher will be very discouraged when only he shows up for church-wide visitation. Mid-

week church service's drop in attendance may have the faithful few, that do attend, wondering if they should continue going to church on that evening.

There is a time to stand up for what is right, and speak out against wrong. Many times situations have to be corrected. Sometimes people do not know a better way unless someone shows them differently. No one likes correction, but we all need it from time to time.

However, some of us do correcting far more often than we should, and never realize the discouragement we cause to others that are trying to live and do right. We need to be led by God's Spirit when to say something to others, rather than our own critical spirit. Many times it is not even our position to correct others. Usually, it is the Holy Spirit that should be doing the correcting and not us!

To know when and when not to correct someone or a situation is not an easy task. Our worldly flesh wants to do it too often. It takes great discernment to know when to speak out. Pray first! Ask the Lord's guidance in direction in what to say, or if one should even say anything. Ask Him to give the right opportunity if you are to say something about a situation. We can have more liberty if the Holy Spirit is behind the advice giving, then if we do it in our own strength.

Realize that others have feelings also. Kindness and gentleness certainly get more positive results than our own bluntness. Think how you would react if you were

approached the way you are considering addressing a situation.

Also, realize that participation or lack of it in social events, particularly in church situations, can affect others. Getting our minds and thoughts off our own desires, and considering others reactions, may also help us not be detrimental to others. Our goal should be to encourage others to live, and do as the Lord desires, not to hinder anyone from doing His will. Other's needs and their reactions should be of a higher concern to us than we often make them.

Living for the Lord and wanting to do right are often difficult in the world in which we live. Encouragement to do so is very limited. All need encouragement to do right. It is pleasing to the Lord when we encourage others! Are your actions an encouragement to others around you, even in your church, or are they a discouragement hampering the work of the Lord?

“When God is your reason to live, you'll never have a reason to quit.” — *Author Unknown*

“Hold the Fort, for I am Coming!”

D. L. Moody

I am told that when General Sherman went through Atlanta towards the sea, he left in the fort in the Kennesaw Mountains a little handful of men to guard some rations that he brought there.

General Hood got into the outer rear and attacked the fort. For a long time the battle raged fearfully. Half of the men were either killed or wounded. The general, who was in command, was wounded seven different times; and when they were about ready to run up the white flag and surrender the fort, Sherman got within fifteen miles. Through the signal corps on the mountain he sent the message, "Hold the fort; I am coming. W. T. Sherman." That message fired up the men's hearts, and they held the fort till reinforcements came, and the fort did not go into the hands of their enemies.

Mr. Philip Bliss has written a hymn entitled, "*Hold the Fort for I am Coming.*" We need to hold our "fort" and not give up serving the Lord and doing what is right. Our Saviour is in command, and He is coming.

*Ho! My comrades, see the signal
Waving in the sky!
Reinforcements now appearing.
Victory is nigh!
"Hold the fort, for I am coming,"
Jesus signals still,
Wave the answer back to heaven,
"By Thy grace we will."*

*See the mighty hosts advancing,
Satan leading on;
Mighty men around us falling.
Courage almost gone.
"Hold the fort, for I am coming,"*

*Jesus signals still,
Wave the answer back to heaven,
"By Thy grace we will."*

*See the glorious banner waving.
Hear the bugle blow.
In our Leader's name we'll triumph
Over every foe.
"Hold the fort, for I am coming,"
Jesus signals still,
Wave the answer back to heaven,
"By Thy grace we will."*

*Fierce and long the battle rages,
But our Help is near;
Onward comes our Great Commander,
Cheer, my comrades, cheer!
"Hold the fort, for I am coming,"
Jesus signals still,
Wave the answer back to heaven,
"By Thy grace we will."*

Praise God!

D. L. Moody

There was a man converted here some years ago, and he was just full of praise. He was living in the light all the time. We might be in the darkness, but he was always in the light. He used to preface everything he said in the meeting with, "Praise God."

One night he came to the meeting with his finger all bound up. He had cut it, and cut it pretty badly, too. Well, I wondered how he would praise God for this; but he got up and said, "I have cut my finger, but, praise God, I didn't cut it off." And so, if things go against you, just think they might be a good deal worse.

"A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success." — *Author Unknown*