

## Handling Discouragement

*From Pastor Jim*



Our office dictionary defines *discourage* as “to deprive of courage, hope or confidence; dishearten.” In other words, the state of *discouragement* takes place when a person has lost courage, hope or confidence—whatever the reason.

I find many expressions of discouragement in the Bible. A good number of these are in the book of Psalms. Often the discouragement is evident in the opening verses of the psalm, whereas the closing verses of the same psalm usually end on a note of triumph or confidence or hope.

For example, consider Psalms 6, 10, 13, 22, 43 and 74. The reasons for discouragement and the situations prompting discouragement vary in these, but the presence of discouragement is evident.

If we want to handle discouragement in our own lives, we should take note of that pattern. It should lead us to read, study and meditate on the psalms in which the psalmist sounds a note of discouragement, with the goal of seeing what led the psalmist out of his downheartedness and renewed his courage, hope and confidence.

There is much more that can be gleaned from such a venture, but here are three items of counsel that I find helpful when seeking to prevent or to get rid of discouragement. The first is to **go to the Lord with it**—take it to Him. That is precisely what the psalmists were doing when they wrote these psalms! To put it in New Testament terms, they were casting their anxiety on the Lord, knowing that He cares (1 Peter 5:7).

Our tendency is to internalize or to publicize. Either we let discouragement eat away at our spirits without sharing it at all or we tell everyone about our troubles whether or not they want to hear. However, instead of, or at least before taking either of those routes, we should be going to the Lord with that which has begun to get us down.

Why don't we do so? Lack of trust—in this case, lack of trust that He really cares. Lack of trust that He will actually act on our behalf. Lack of trust in His wisdom—the fear that how He wants to deal with us and our situation might not be what we want or what we think is best. Whatever keeps us from taking our discouragement to the Lord can always be traced to a lack of trust in Him.

That leads to the second item, which is to take your discouragement to the Lord **trusting in His character**. A wonderful example of this is found in Psalm 13, in which David expresses his discouragement to the Lord in verses 1-2 and then pleads with God to respond to him in verses 3-4.

That plea is immediately followed in verses 5-6 by David's expression of trust in God's loving-kindness, His deliverance and His generosity. If you look closely, you will find that just considering and placing his trust in those characteristics of the Lord leads David to rejoice and sing. While the psalm began with discouragement, it ends with jubilation! However, that jubilation did not depend on the circumstances, but on the character and actions of the Lord in whom David purposefully placed his trust.

The final item of counsel for our consideration right now is to take your discouragement to the Lord **trusting in His sovereignty**. By this I mean remembering that the God whom we worship  
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# SONG OF THE MONTH

SUBMITTED BY DOUG MUELLER

**T**he song of the month for February is *Speak, O Lord*, written by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend. Getty and Townend are well-known contemporary Christian composers, each having a substantial body of individual work in addition to their collaborations. We regularly sing several of their songs, including *In Christ Alone*, *My Heart is Filled with Thankfulness*, *The Power of the Cross*, and *Resurrection Hymn* (*See, What a Morning*). Their songs are characterized by lyrical melodies and fidelity to gospel themes.

While He was teaching, Jesus regularly admonished those around Him with the phrase “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” See, e.g. Luke 8:8 and Luke 14:35. This of course referred to more than the simple physical interaction between sound waves and ear drums, and in *Speak, O Lord*, Getty and Townend remind us that the same is true for us today. In preparing to hear God’s word, we should seek understanding. We should allow our thoughts and attitudes to be transformed and our minds renewed. We should be ready to surrender our plans and purposes to God. May God’s Word indeed dwell in us ever more richly in the weeks and months to come.

## *Speak, O Lord*

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You to receive the food of Your holy word.  
 Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;  
 Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,  
 That the light of Christ may be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.  
 Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all Your purposes, for Your glory.

Teach us Lord full obedience, holy reverence, true humility.  
 Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of Your purity.  
 Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see Your majestic love and authority.  
 Words of pow’r that can never fail;  
 Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds; Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us.  
 Truths unchanged from the dawn of time, that will echo down from eternity.  
 And by grace we’ll stand on Your promises;  
 And by faith we’ll walk as You walk with us.  
 Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built and the earth is filled with Your glory.

Words and Music by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend  
 2005 Thankyou Music  
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# FEBRUARY BIBLE READING

	<u>Exodus</u>	<u>Psalms</u>	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Acts</u>
1	1-3	24	10:21-42	15:22-41
2	4-6	25	11:1-19	16:1-15
3	7-9	26	11:20-30	16:16-40
4	10-12	27	12:1-21	17:1-15
5	13-15	28	12:22-37	17:16-34
6	16-18	29	12:38-50	18:1-17
7	19-20	30	13:1-23	18:18-28
8	21-23	31	13:24-43	19:1-22
9	24-26	32	13:44-58	19:23-41
10	27-29	33	14:1-21	20:1-12
11	30-31	34	14:22-36	20:13-38
12	32-33	35	15:1-20	21:1-26
13	34	36	15:21-39	21:27-40
14	35-37	37:1-22	16:1-12	22
15	38-40	37:23-40	16:13-28	23:1-11
	<u>Leviticus</u>			
16	1-4	38	17:1-13	23:12-35
17	5-7	39	17:14-27	24
18	8-10	40	18:1-14	25:1-12
19	11-13	41	18:15-35	25:13-27
20	14-15	42	19:1-15	26:1-18
21	16-17	43	19:16-30	26:19-32
22	18-20	44	20:1-16	27:1-26
23	21-23	45	20:17-34	27:27-44
24	24-25	46	21:1-11	28:1-16
25	26-27	47	21:12-22	28:17-31

## *The Discipleship Journal Bible Reading Plan*

*This plan offers special features that will aid you in your journey through the Bible.*

*By reading from four separate places in the Scriptures every day, you should be able to better grasp the unity of the Scriptures, as well as enjoy the variety of different viewpoints.*

*Each month of this plan gives you 25 readings, so there can be days when you catch up on the readings you may have missed in the past week.*

*If you finish the month's reading by the twenty-fifth, you could use the final days of the month to study the passages that challenged you or intrigued you.*

*In the year ahead, ask God each day to speak directly to you from the Scripture portions you read. Be expectant and let your continued exposure to God's Word reshape your attitudes and behavior as you gain a better understanding of His written testimony to us.*

# February 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
			9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time 6:30 p.m. - <b>Connecting</b> in Prayer	6:30 p.m. - Butler Care Group 7:00 p.m. - Larson Care Group		7:30 a.m. - Men's Book Study
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:20 a.m. - Worship	6:30 p.m. - Elders & Deacons Meeting	7:00 p.m. - Worship Team Practice	9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time 6:30 p.m. - <b>Connecting</b> in Prayer 7:30 p.m. - Titus 2 Ladies Bible Study	6:30 p.m. - Butler Care Group 7:00 p.m. - Larson Care Group 7:00 p.m. - Visual Arts Committee Meeting		7:30 a.m. - Men's Book Study
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:20 a.m. - Worship 1:45 p.m. - Good Samaritan Svc. 4:30 p.m. - DeCaro Care Group	6:30 p.m. - Elders Meeting		9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time 6:30 p.m. - <b>Connecting</b> in Prayer 7:30 p.m. - Titus 2 Ladies Bible Study	6:30 p.m. - Butler Care Group 7:00 p.m. - Larson Care Group		7:30 a.m. - Men's Book Study 9:30 a.m. - Worship Team Practice
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:20 a.m. - Worship 11:45 a.m. - Fellowship Luncheon 1:00 p.m. - Annual Meeting			9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time 6:30 p.m. - <b>Connecting</b> in Prayer 7:30 p.m. - Titus 2 Ladies Bible Study	6:30 p.m. - Butler Care Group 7:00 p.m. - Larson Care Group		7:30 a.m. - Men's Book Study
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<i>Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.</i>				
8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:20 a.m. - Worship 3:30 p.m. - Boutwells Service 4:30 p.m. - DeCaro Care Group						2 John 1:3

## ***HANDLING DISCOURAGEMENT*** (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

properly rules over all and does what He pleases (Psalm 115:3). He controls the seasons, the weather, the nations, the stars and planets and meteors. He knows the beginning and the end—in fact, He is the Alpha and the Omega!

The reason the sovereignty of God is important to me when I face discouragement is that it leads me to consider the fact that God never has been and never will be discouraged. He has been grieved and pained, but never discouraged.

The fall of man in the garden of Eden would have been a likely occasion for God to be discouraged. His good creation was ruined by the very ones with whom He had crowned it. Yet there is not a hint of discouragement to be found in Genesis 3. Rather, the Lord announces the ultimate triumph of a coming Redeemer over the forces of evil (Genesis 3:15). The rest of the Bible relates the outworking of that triumph, hinging on the work of

Jesus Christ in His first coming and climaxing with His second coming in power and great glory to rule in peace and righteousness.

If the God who controls the universe is working all things for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28), bringing all things in subjection to Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:25) and restoring the universe to perfection beyond our comprehension (Revelation 21)—if this God is never discouraged, why should I be discouraged? My circumstances are not frustrating Him, so why should they frustrate me? My problems are not frustrating Him, so why should they frustrate me?

The degree to which I trust the Lord is evidenced by how I handle discouragement. To put it another way, the temptation toward or the presence of discouragement provides me with another opportunity to trust the Lord! Whether or not I trust Him will be demonstrated by how I deal with that temptation or that experience.

## ***FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS***

***February 1 - Esther Jones***

***February 1 - Cheryl Talberg***

***February 6 - Ann Runk***

***February 11 - Ron Buschman***

***February 15 - Beth Anderson***

***February 17 - Thaddeus DeCaro***



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### **OCC Vision**

The vision of Oakridge Community Church is to spread a joyful passion for the absolute, eternal supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things, to all peoples.

### **OCC Mission**

The mission of Oakridge Community Church is to glorify God by delighting in, declaring and displaying the gospel of Jesus Christ.