



“Living a Chosen Life”

Lesson 5: Strengthening Yourself

LESSON OBJECTIVE: To learn how to encourage yourself in the Lord.

INTRODUCTION:

One of life's battles is staying encouraged. Life happens, our goals are not accomplished, our dreams don't come true, and setbacks occur. It's easy to become discouraged, lose enthusiasm, happiness, and joy. It would be nice to have a coach, a friend, a relative, or mentor to cheer us on when we feel down.

When you need other people to encourage you, they themselves may be having a life crisis, your family member may be having a bad week, your pastor may be out of town. Often times, when we need the encouragement for ourselves, others often don't meet us at our place of need. They may not speak the words that pertain to our discouragement. Sometimes people do not have that sensitivity to go in to where your spirit is hurting.

The reality is that other people cannot encourage you or cheer you on. They may put a brief smile on your face or give you a little boost, but that encouragement must come from within. We have to learn to encourage ourselves.

APPLICATION: The Effects of Covid-19: Loneliness and Social Isolation

A person could be experiencing loneliness because of being isolated and not having the fellowship of family and church. One could experience stress from fear of catching the virus, from cabin fever, not fulfilling what is on their goal list. All of these factors could contribute to developing mental health issues, like anxiety or depression. One would need to be creative in encouraging themselves:

1. Go for walks around the neighborhood
2. Participate in online courses
3. Do video chats using FaceTime or Zoom
4. Practice writing in a journal each day
5. Give yourself a reading challenge by developing a list of books

LESSON FOCUS

Read I Samuel 30:1-6

I. Setbacks Are Inevitable (vs. 1-2)

Everyone will experience a setback. Everyone will experience some type of life deflating moment. When you face these moments, it can be discouraging. David dealt with this issue.

Background to the Text

- A. David, in I Samuel 29, had befriended King Achish and was hanging around with the Philistine army. However, the commanders of the Philistine Achish wondered why David was tagging along with them and wanted David to go back to his place. So Achish told David he could no longer stay with them to go into battle.
- B. David and his men came to Ziklag. The Amalekites:
 - a. Made a raid on Negev and Ziklag and burned it with fire
 - b. Took David's men's women captive and carried them off
 - c. Ziklag is David's city. It was given to him by the Philistine King Gath as a place to live, I Samuel 27:6

APPLICATION: There are times when you deal with unexpected setbacks:

- 1. Some type of tragedy
- 2. Immediate loss of a best friend, due to jealousy in the relationship
- 3. Being fired or released from an assignment

QUESTION: Have you had a recent setback? How did you handle that setback?

II. Distress and Discouragement Sets In (vs. 4-6)

- A. The strong men that were in David's army were crying until they had no strength. Their children and their wives were gone. They were uncertain whether or not they were alive.
- B. David's two wives were taken (vs. 5)
- C. David is distressed because the people spoke of stoning him because their loved ones were gone, and they were blaming David. (vs. 6)

Definition of Distress: Extreme, anxiety, sorrow or pain. Been upset about a misfortune.

Scripture Reference: I Samuel 26:24. David dwelt with all types of distress

- 1. Crossed by Nabal – I Samuel 25
- 2. Spiritual process sparing the life of Saul twice – I Samuel 26:6-9; 24:4-10
- 3. Hiding from Saul pursuits – I Samuel 23:15; 24:2
- 4. Betrayed by the people of Keliath – I Samuel 23:6-9
- 5. Jealously of Saul – I Samuel 18:29; 18:14

Some Causes of Distress:

- 1. Interpersonal relationship problems
- 2. Conflict, death, divorce, or abuse of a loved one
- 3. Financial difficulties
- 4. Preoccupation with work problems
- 5. Lack of sleep

APPLICATION: Distress and discouragement is not a place you can stay. Your mind may be telling you it's over, it's not worth it, and just settle down where you are because it is not going to get better.

However, something deep down ought to tell you, there is some resolve to this. You should tell yourself God has a great plan for my life and I am pressing forward to become and do all that God wants me to.

III. Encourage Yourself: When You Have A Setback (vs. 6)

A. David was down, and he was feeling pretty low.

Scriptures for Encouragement

- **Psalm 18:2 (NASB)** - The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
- **Psalm 27:14 (NASB)** - Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.
- **Psalm 31:24 (NASB)**
Be strong and let your heart take courage, All you who hope in the LORD.
- **Isaiah 40:31 (NASB)**
Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up *with* wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

QUESTION: What is your scripture for encouragement? David Strengthened himself in the Lord His God.

QUESTION: How do you strengthen yourself in the Lord?

You remind yourself of previous victories that God has won in your life:

1. Replay the victories in your life
 - a. God chose David over his brothers.
 - b. He remembered how he killed the lion and the bear with his bare hands.
 - c. He remembered how God helped him defeat Goliath.
 - d. He remembered how God protected him when King Saul was trying to kill him.
2. Replaying the victories gives you new vision. Thus, he created a new vision of what God could do in his life now.
3. Replaying the victories, invokes a spirit of praise and thanksgiving.

David went from being depressed and defeated to rising up and seeing what God will do.

- B. David sent for the ephod and inquired of the Lord (vs. 6-7)
1. Down but not stupid, he wanted to know God's will.
 2. He strengthened himself with the will of God.

Conclusion: Strengthen Yourself

1. David was self-motivated – Motivate yourself not stay in the current situation.
2. David used his courage – the ability to stand for truth to rise up within himself. Use your courage and fight for what is right and true.
3. David strengthen himself in his calling – the king inside of you is called and is willing to serve. Remember you have been called.
4. Change the channel you are watching – If you keep replaying the same channel, you will remind yourself of the discouragement. You have the ability to change the channel and watch something different.

If you have lost your joy, steam, enthusiasm, happiness, or joy, start cheering yourself on. Draw a line in the sand and cheer for you! Let yesterday be gone and live today fresh. Remind yourself, "this is the day the Lord has made." Yes, you may have gone through a setback, but prepare for your comeback! Remember God did not bring you this far to leave you. You are chosen and there is a plan of God on your life. God already has the solution and He knows the ending before the beginning ever starts. Trust in the Lord and He will lead you and guide you.