

## **Disappointment and Discouragement**

### **Objective**

Identify the causes of discouragement and how to overcome it.

### **References**

www.intouch.org – Dr. Charles Stanley

### **Scriptural Verses**

“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.” (Psalm 42:5)

### **Lesson Guidelines**

**Disappointment** is an emotional response to failure or a loss. It is inevitable and cannot be predicted.

Remember that God has a unique plan for your life that does not change according to circumstances, environment, public opinion, or secret fears. When you are disappointed, follow these steps:

- Trust God’s guidance – sometimes God allows you to be disappointed in personal expectations so that you learn to rely on Him more fully, to walk in faith and not by human measures.
- Act in love towards those involved with the disappointment.
- Anticipate a blessing – see Isaiah 43: 18-19

**Discouragement** is losing the desire and motivation for something that brings fulfillment and purpose in life. When disappointments are not resolved and not dealt with in a spiritual way, they turn to discouragement.

Characteristics of discouragement:

- It can be temporary or can ruin your life-Numbers 21-4
- It is a choice-Numbers 32:7-9
- It is recurring
- It can be contagious- Deutronomy 1:27-9
- It is conquerable-Isaiah 42:4
- It is an attack by Satan- Ezra 4:4

Causes of discouragement

- Unresolved disappointment
- Constant criticism-Hebrews 12:3
- Feeling of low self esteem
- Unanswered prayer
- Feeling unappreciated
- A continuous form of weakness in which Satan has a stronghold
- Bad working or family conditions - Colossians 3:21

- Lack of opportunities in life
- Setting goals that are beyond your capacity
- Lack of faith and hope- Hebrews 12:5
- Feeling that you cannot please God
- Lack of spiritual support and guidance from friends or father of confession

#### Consequences of discouragement

- Divided mind – loss of focus
- Anger or depression
- Self-centeredness
- Poor self image and loss of confidence
- Critical attitude
- Making unwise decisions
- Drifting of spiritual life

#### How to avoid discouragement

- Look within yourself (Psalm 42:5)
  - Identify the specific cause of discouragement and try to avoid them if possible e.g. continuous criticism by a person.
  - Admit discouragement is a choice and that you are in Satan's grip.
- Look to the Father and recognize that this is an opportunity to grow.
  - Study the Word of God and it will lift you up
  - Pray to God acknowledging He is in control of your life and that He is going to turn everything to your good (Romans 8:28).
  - Consult and share your feeling with good spiritual friends and/or your father of confession

#### Conclusion

One is bound to experience disappointment in life but we must learn not to let these circumstances bring us down and discourage us. We must learn to rely on God and trust in the plan He has for our lives. Through prayer and reliance on Him, we can prevent ourselves from entering the stage of discouragement which could have devastating consequences on our lives.

#### Activities/Discussion Points

1. How can you apply what you have learned today to periods of disappointment in your life?
2. Can you identify with some of the causes of discouragement? How can these causes be addressed?
3. List some Bible characters who went through disappointment or discouragement, what did they do about it?