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ENCOURAGE
YOURSELF



Encourage Yourself

By

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1 Samuel 30: 1-8 says,

"And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire. And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God. And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. And David inquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all."

Verse 18 says that David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away. Discouragement is a terrible disease and a very powerful weapon in the hand of the enemy of our soul. Consider this illustration. Something went bad for a lady and she became so sad that she cried herself to sleep. As she slept, she saw a vision where she was in a big market place. As she moved round the market, she found a particular shop called Mr. Devil's shop. She said, "Wonderful, the devil has a shop in this place." She went in to see what the devil was selling and found on the shelf, Anger, Hypertension and Diabetes with their prices attached. She said, "Mr. Devil, what is the most expensive material in your shop?" He brought something out on which was written "Discouragement," and said, "This is the most expensive thing. When I get Christians to be discouraged and worried, I send fear into them and from there all kinds of other things will go in.

It is sad but true that many people actually wage war against themselves. Imagine that you take your car to a mechanic and he says, "I should have been a bricklayer. All the cars I have repaired pack up. In fact, I don't know what I am doing here." What will you do? Of course, you will take your car away. Or you go to the hospital for surgery and the surgeon complains: "I should have been a motor mechanic. All the patients I operated on die." I am sure that you will go

somewhere else.

Many people downgrade themselves continually with their mouths. Whenever the devil wants to box you to a corner, encourage yourself in the Lord.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE WORD "DISCOURAGE?"

It is a simple English word that is made up of two words: "Dis" and "Courage." Discourage means lack of courage. The trouble with discouraged people is that they cannot hear from God. The Bible says, "Therefore with joy shall you draw water from the well of salvation." The devil knows that discouraged people cannot commune with God properly or hear His voice.

Encouragement brings hope but discouragement causes hopelessness and despair. It is so easy to know the size of a person's faith by observing how much trouble it takes to discourage him. I read an article about a man who tried to sell soap to a certain customer. He started going to the customer in the morning and continued until the customer got wearied and said, "Ah! This is the tenth soap seller that has come here. What is the problem? Okay how much is the soap? I will buy so that they stop worrying me." And he bought the soap. The man then said, "Point of correction sir, I am the only one that has been coming. In the morning, I wore a suit and you turned me away. I went and changed and came back. I have been here ten times. Thank you for buying." This is the kind of people who can make headway.

When people are encouraged, they keep on their feet and smile even when it looks like they are faced with defeat. But discouraged people have a lot of loose ends to tie up. When discouraged people are sick, they give up and die quickly. I have seen where some people were trying to purge a lady who swallowed excessive tablets because she wanted to die.

As they were doing that, she kept saying, "Leave me, let me die, let me die." Why? She was discouraged.

Discouraged people sometimes forget that certain mistakes might have been made in the past and God would require time to correct them. So, they conclude that God has gone on holiday. Discouraged people believe that life is a failure. To be quite honest with you, I think discouragement has killed more people than typhoid and malaria. Discouraged people snatch defeat from certain victory. They see victory coming and snatch defeat out of it.

They borrow problem from the future. They are worried about tomorrow even though they do not know what will happen tomorrow. They borrow the problems of the future and transfer them to the present. This does not make sense at all. Tomorrow is too early now to worry about.

Discouraged people drink the wine of frustration. When you hear somebody always saying, "I don't like this, I don't want this at all," there is frustration in place. It is very easy to know frustrated ladies. Discouraged people advertise the devil's disgrace. Devil is already disgraced and they are advertising it. They have faith but the faith is in failure. So, before David could hear God, he had to encourage himself. He shook off discouragement and believed that God would turn his calamity into goodness. Therefore, it is only a heart that is encouraged that is conditioned to hear good news.

In Exodus 6:9, we see the situation of the children of Israel in Egypt. God had already raised a deliverer for them. What happened when the deliverer came? Exodus 6:9 says, "And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." They could not accept the good news because their spirits were down. But when David encouraged himself in the Lord he prayed with confidence and the wonderful promise came from the Lord: "You shall surely pursue, and overtake and by all means recover." David would not have heard anything if he had chosen to remain discouraged. I would like you to take note of the following important truth: that discouragement is a personal decision. A person could decide to give up on something that would help him or her. When a woman says, "I am tired of begging the man. Everyday I kneel down and say forgive me, forgive me. Even when I have not committed any offence, I still say forgive me, forgive me. Why am I always the one begging? I am tired of begging." It is better for such a woman to keep begging. If she gives up, discouragement will come in. One man said, "*I am tired of greeting people without any response from them, after all I am not wood I am tired. I greet them and they answer with their heads and eyes. Don't they have mouth to answer?*" Please, keep greeting them.

Some people would say, "Prayer has finished in the house of prayer warriors, deliverance has finished from deliverance ministers." Keep praying or someone may say, "I am tired of coming to meetings and laying hands on the same place everyday." Keep laying hands. Your breakthrough may come with the next laying of hands.

The mountains that we are facing get weaker as we pray against them. So, it is

dangerous to get discouraged because it could be when you are just about to have your breakthrough.

Discouragement is very expensive in the devil's market because you pay with your life. Someone may say, "I have been paying my tithes. I have been very faithful in doing it, but I have not had any big breakthrough." What you should do is to even give more violently. But if you say you would no longer give, you would be like the man whom God blessed and by the time he made his first breakthrough the tithe was N5000. As he held the N5000, his hands were shaking and he said, "Ah should I put the whole of this down? Ah! Do we really have to pay tithe?" He ran to the man of God and said, "Excuse me, sir this money is too large to pay just like that. For example I can invest it in this, that, that, that, that. Why can't I just pay part of it and thank God?" The man of God answered: 'Do you want the Lord to return you to your former state, when you were earning N10,000 per month and paying N1000 tithe?' He said, "No, that too is not good."

If you have been sowing your seed and it is like no blessing is coming, sow more violently instead of being discouraged. See all impossible situations as opportunities in disguise.

Discouragement is a personal decision. You need to make a conscious decision to be discouraged. This is why sometimes they call people who have faith mad people. They call them mad people because when they are supposed to be rolling on the floor and crying they are busy jumping and rejoicing. No one can discourage you except you decide to discourage yourself. Do not say, "Ah! It is our pastor. He does not give me much to do. He does not recognise me." If you go to a bus stop and lay your hands on two mad people and they get healed, or you convert 200 people per week, no matter who your pastor is, he will show you recognition. So take a conscious decision not to be discouraged. Take a decision this moment to always encourage yourself in the Lord, then you can hear Him clearly. Do not wait for somebody to come and encourage you. There is scarcity of people who encourage others. Rather when you tell them your problem, say, that your husband ran away, they would tell you that your own problem is even better. One would tell you, "My own husband is running after me with an axe." So, what kind of encouragement is that? Encourage yourself in the Lord and render thanksgiving to Him. Tell Him you appreciate His blessings and faithfulness. Decide that circumstances will not enslave your soul no matter what.

The Lord once said to me that many people who come to church need

deliverance from grasshopper spirit.

WHAT IS GRASSHOPPER SPIRIT?

It is the spirit of "we are not able," the spirit that afflicted Israel, whom God told to go and take possession of the Promised Land. They said, "No, we are not able, we are like grasshoppers." You need also to stand against the spirit of evil expectation. It would be very sad if something happens and a believer opens his mouth and says, "I know that problem would occur and now it has occurred. It is a very powerful spirit which we must stand against. It is the devil who should be wondering when we will shoot our arrow next, not we saying that we don't know when to attack.

WHAT THEN IS THE MEDICINE AGAINST DISCOURAGEMENT?

There is no one that trial and frustration period will not face at one time or the other. Somebody has said that life is a jungle. That is true.

1. Release your situation into the hands of the Lord: A songwriter says, "take your burden to the Lord and leave it there." Refuse to doubt; refuse to waste your night working it out with your brain. The Bible says, "Casting all your cares upon Him for He cares for you." It does not say cast some, but all. If you do not hand your cares over to Him, then don't blame Him if He does not work on them.

2. See divine possibilities: See that the blessings you need can come You must see that every problem has an end and that the end of a trial will come. Begin to see that God can do something in your life; that the pain, the fear and the financial problem can come to an end. Begin to see that possibility and things would begin to happen.

In the Bible, those who violently claimed their blessings did so because they saw that it was possible. They pursued it seriously, they did not give up, and they kept going and going until what they wanted came into their hands.

Look at the woman with the issue of blood. Before she left her home she had it settled: "I know that all I need to do is to touch the hem of His garment and I shall be made whole. I don't even want the man to pray for me. It is not necessary." She had already seen the possibility.

It does not matter what any doctor has said about your problem. It does not

matter what any prophet has said. Neither the prophet nor the devil has the last say about anybody's life. God has the last say. The woman saw the possibility and that was it.

Jacob too saw the possibility and stood there until he got it. Blind Bartimaeus saw the possibility. The Syrophenician woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter and Jesus said, "No, I cannot take the food of the children and give it to dogs." The woman was not discouraged. She was not upset. She was determined to get what she wanted. She stayed there until the Saviour had to answer her prayer.

Maybe men of God have disappointed you, made you frustrated and bitter. There are some people who have resolved never to step into the church again because of what one pastor or the other did to them. If you are like that, encourage yourself in the Lord. A man and his wife had a terrible fight one day. The woman decided to beat the man seriously. When the man saw that the fight was too hot for him, he ran out of the house and went to report to the pastor to come and settle the quarrel. But a few metres to the pastor's house, he found that the pastor and his wife were also boxing each other. He stood and said, "Ah! I better go and sort out my own problem. If you are like that man, encourage yourself. Stand against all forms of anxiety. One great problem that God has with us is that we hold on to our problems and are not experts at solving them. At times when we have messed everything up we carry the leftover to God.

3. Believe that all things are possible: Jesus says that all things are possible to him that believes. Perhaps you have problems that seem to defy solution. You have come to your wits end. You have decided, "well, this place is my last stop. I am going to run away from God. No, all things are possible to him that believes.

The Bible does not say that all things are possible to him that worries. When we say things are impossible, it means that we have arrived at self-defeat. God is a gentleman, He will not grab the problem out of your hand if you do not hand it to Him. So, whatever the situation may be, believe that all things are possible. I remember the testimony of a six-year old boy who could neither walk nor talk. His mother was carrying him all over the place and brought him to our crusade. As the crusade was about to close, I said, "We have a project to do here and people should give to the Lord." The woman cried and said, "I have been here for one week and nothing has happened and she took all the money she had and dumped it in the offering bag. It was then the word of knowledge came that the boy had been healed and right before her eyes, the first thing that happened was

that the bent bone of the boy stretched and a cracking sound could be heard as it moved. By the time God finished with the boy, a medical doctor at the meeting could count 26 miracles performed on him. The enemy had finished his case completely but God turned it around. That God is still around. So, see that possibility and you will see what the Lord will do.

4. Do not give up: When the whole of your eyes are turning red, do not give up. When life is becoming disjointed and disorganised, don't give up. When you feel you cannot take another step ahead, don't give up. When trials surround you everyday and your enemies are showing themselves as friends, don't give up. When you think that all is lost, don't give up. When all things are moving up and the road is so rough and tiring, when you try to smile and the smile is hard work or when the debts are so much, do not give up.

Many strugglers have given up at the edge of success. One sister was praying, "O Lord, give me breakthrough." The Lord said, "You have already had it." And still after five years there was no breakthrough. You know that God is a God of suddenlies. One morning, God sent an angel to go and give the sister what she wanted. The angel came to church before the service and waited for her to arrive, but that morning the devil went to her to give a satanic lecture. A certain pastor said that the devil is a great pastor. He knows the house of every member, he knows their names, he knows where they work, he knows everything about them.

He is present at every table where they eat. He is present at all their family meetings. No pastor can do all these. The devil came to the sister and said, "Look at you, at your old age you are sweeping the floor of the church for the mates of your children, cleaning benches. Since you have been going there, what have you brought out of this place? Stop wasting your time." And for the first time in five years she listened to that lecture and did not go to the service that day the angel came for her. The angel waited in vain till the end of the service. Well, the Bible says, "The word which I have spoken from my mouth shall not come back to me void." So after the grace was said, the angel gave the blessing to somebody else and departed.

Many strugglers give up at the edge of success, but David encouraged himself in the Lord and his spirit became calm. While he was crying he could not hear God, but immediately he stopped crying and encouraged himself in the Lord, his spirit was now calmed. All the crying exercises did not let him hear God but immediately he stopped crying and he encouraged himself in the Lord, the voice

of God came to him saying, "Surely you shall pursue, overtake and by all means recover."

Discouragement is a very clever spirit. If somebody used to run to service and now he is walking slowly to the place, the spirit of discouragement has started working. When somebody who used to pray and smile is now depressed and unhappy, that spirit is setting in.

Discouragement has many powerful children, like fear, worry, depression, death, sickness and hindrances. That is why the Bible says, "Let not your heart be troubled."

Get to die level where the devil will say, "This one? I am not able to defeat him." The Bible says Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God in the prison. With all the wounds in their bodies, they just refused to be discouraged.

PRAYER POINTS

1. Every spirit of discouragement, I am not your candidate; I bind you, in the name of Jesus.
2. Every good thing I have lost because of discouragement, I recover it, in Jesus' name.
3. Every enemy of joy in my heart, fall down and die, in Jesus' name.
4. I pursue my enemies, I overtake them, I recover my stolen properties, in the name of Jesus.
5. I bind every spirit of evil expectation, in the name of Jesus.

ABOUT D. K. OLUKOYA

Dr. D. K. Olukoya is the General Overseer of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries and the Battle Cry Ministries. He holds a First Class Honours Degree in Microbiology from the University of Lagos, Nigeria and a Ph.D. in Molecular Genetics from the University of Reading, United Kingdom. As a researcher, he has over eighty scientific publications to his credit. Anointed by God, Dr. Olukoya is a teacher, prophet, evangelist and preacher of the word. His life and that of his wife, Shade and their son, Elijah Toluwani, are living proofs that all power belongs to God.

ABOUT MOUNTAIN OF FIRE AND MIRACLES MINISTRIES

Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, is a ministry devoted to the revival of apostolic signs, Holy Ghost fireworks and the unlimited demonstration of the power of God to deliver to the uttermost. Absolute holiness within and without, as the greatest spiritual insecticide, and a condition for heaven is taught openly. MFM is a do-it-yourself Gospel Ministry, where your hands are trained to wage war and your fingers to fight.

A brief history of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries Incorporated

The Mountain of Fire and Miracles was founded in 1989. The first meeting was held at the home of Dr. D. K Olukoya and had 24 persons in attendance. The Church later moved to No. 60, Old Yaba Road, Lagos, and then to the present International Headquarters, site on 24th April, 1994. The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries' Headquarters is the largest single Christian congregation in Africa, with attendance of over 200,000 in single meetings. Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries is a full gospel ministry devoted to the revival of apostolic signs, Holy Ghost fireworks and the unlimited demonstration of the power of God to deliver to the uttermost. Absolute holiness, within and without, as the greatest spiritual insecticide and a pre-requisite for heaven is taught openly. MFM is a do-it-yourself Gospel ministry, where your hands are trained to wage war and your fingers to do battle.

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