

How to Encourage Yourself in the Lord

by Shane Idleman

To overcome discouragement and achieve spiritual growth and maturity, we must learn to encourage ourselves in the Lord by going to the source of spiritual strength: God.

Duration: 41:09

Scripture: 1 Samuel 30:6, Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 46:1, Proverbs 18:10, Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Encouragement", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the necessity of encouraging oneself in the Lord, especially during challenging times following spiritual highs. He highlights that discouragement is a tactic of the enemy that can lead to spiritual stagnation and urges believers to seek strength from God, as exemplified by David in 1 Samuel 30. Idleman discusses the importance of worship, gratitude, and seeking God's will in times of distress, while also warning against the dangers of fatigue and disobedience. He encourages the congregation to recognize the spiritual battles they face and to actively combat discouragement by focusing on God's promises and maintaining a thankful heart.

Transcript

I'm hoping the message this evening can encourage you. Sometimes they might go long, sometimes they might be short. It's not really a sermon per se, but something that I feel that is relevant, especially where we're at in our lives.

Because what happens is, I don't know how many of you experienced the Revival Conference, or were here Sunday a week ago, or have been what we call maybe a spiritual high. I don't know if that's a right term, but there's no high like the Most High. Right? And there's just that, the presence of the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the message is how to encourage yourself in the Lord. Because with every mountaintop experience, I'm here to tell you that there will be valley experiences. Any time God is working powerfully in your life, the enemy is coming after you.

And the more I grow in ministry, the more I grow even as a Christian, the more I realize sometimes you have to encourage yourself. You're not going to get that phone call, you're not going to get the spouse necessarily sometimes, or your kids, or the church, or a pastor. We have to learn how to encourage ourselves in the Lord.

Because what we're doing with Christianity and being as Christians, there's a cost to this. It's not always a bed of roses. It's not every day is a great day.

Sometimes there's hard days, there's difficult days. God brings you up and you start to just focus on God and the enemy comes in and wants to drive you back down. It's a battle.

That's why it's called a spiritual battle. It's called spiritual warfare. And one of the biggest ways the enemy will knock you off course and knock me off course is through discouragement.

Because when I'm discouraged, I don't even want to be here. I don't want to prepare a sermon. I don't want to preach.

I don't want to minister. I'm discouraged. I don't know what, Lord, I just want to take a drive and not talk to people.

I'm discouraged. And that can happen with health issues and those you love and yourself, challenges, habits, besetting sin. Anybody goes back to a besetting sin and they're like, oh, why did I go back to that? I'm so discouraged.

I thought I was through that. And I've talked about this before, but those who come out of addictions, I saw Dave, you reminded me of this because I believe you've got a ministry in this area to help those who've come out of addictions. And one of the ways the enemy keeps us bound is by repeating and you fall back.

What's that old phrase? Fell off the wagon. Because when that happens, you're discouraged. And that fuels the addiction to continue.

That fuels the discouragement to continue. Now, not all those can relate to addiction, but maybe with God, you're doing great with God and then something happens and you get discouraged. And you don't want to read your Bible anymore.

You don't want to come to church. I believe that the reason the majority of people don't want to come to church nowadays is because they're discouraged. Or they've got the pleasures of the world pulling them in a different direction.

Because when you're encouraged, right, you get up in the morning, I can't believe it's Sunday already, I'm excited for church, I wonder what songs are doing, I wonder what Shane's going to talk about, I hope it's not too convicting. You know, you want to get to church. Or maybe actually when you're encouraged, you want to be convicted.

You want to get to church, but many of us wake up, we don't want to go to church. It's, does it work today, honey? What do you think? And discouragement works. Discouragement is a big tactic of the enemy because it will keep you from changing and growing and maturing.

Because you get discouraged, you don't want to progress. And that's where depression can sit in. Anybody can relate now? It's registering a little bit.

And the enemy doesn't like an encouraged Christian. Because an encouraged Christian is encouraged to what? Share their faith. To get on their face and pray for their family.

To pray for our nation. He would like nothing more than to have us all discouraged and not show up on Wednesday nights. Well, Morgan would come, she has to be here, right? Meredith, you'd probably come, my sister would come.

You know, Randy, David, Joe, okay. You know, there's six of us, that would be so discouraging. Right? And then now I'm discouraged, you know, let's just stop Wednesdays.

See how this works? Discouragement, you've got to learn how to encourage yourself. And I actually had a lot of 1 Samuel 30, it's a long chapter. And I thought, you know what, I don't want to sit here and read a lot of that, but I do want to encourage you to go back to 1 Samuel 30.

I think we have a portion of this up on the screen. And the reason I want to encourage you is because what I'm about to read would be a bad day times 10. David goes out to battle.

He comes back and his wife and children have been taken. Talk about, I don't know what you're going through, but I'm pretty sure it's not quite on this level. And you can read it there.

Now what happened when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day that the Amalekites had invaded the south and Ziklag, Ziklag, that's a little blurry back there, but stick with here, and burned it with fire and had taken captive the women and those who were there from small to great. They did not kill anyone. Not yet.

You can imagine what's going through David's mind, but they carried them away and went their way. So David and his men came to the city and there it was burned with fire and their wives, their sons, their daughters had all been taken captive. And did I put another, is there anything at the end of that? There we go.

David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him. Each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.

Another translation says that David strengthened himself. So if you can imagine, I really can't even imagine this scene. Men, can you? You just go out on a raid, which you probably shouldn't have been on.

I'm going to talk about that in a minute. He comes back and everything's gone. All his possessions are gone.

The wives of the men are gone. Their children are gone. And David, in all of that, he had to strengthen himself in the Lord.

So when you get to a point sometimes where there's nowhere else to turn, you're going to have to strengthen yourself in the Lord. There's no other option. Instead of going up to the Lord, you're going to go down in depression and self-pity and beating yourself up and just, oh, woe is me and my life stinks.

And you've got to encourage yourself in the Lord because those are two options. Discouragement or encourage yourself in the Lord. And I'm pretty sure David didn't feel like it.

That's why I talk about often not trusting your feelings. So here's some things I pulled from this week as I was reading it from my own edification I want to share with you. Problems can come from the inside as well as the outside.

It was an outside problem, but it was about to get really bad when they were going to now stone David. See, it's one thing if David would have went into this, okay, they've got our wives, they've got our children, here's our plan. Okay, and you've got the whole team with you on your side.

But what happens when the team's not on your side? What happens when family members may be, or those within your household, or those at work, or those in the church, what about when in the midst of a terrible day, they're not on the same page with you? In one of your hardest days, a trying time, nobody's there to build you up. They want to stone you. What would that look like today? Well, gossip, backbiting, slandering, complaining.

I knew you'd do this. I knew this would happen. See, we should have never trusted you.

So not only do you have the outside voices, you have the inside turmoil. Anyone been there? Or do I need to save this for Sunday morning? Okay, the Wednesday night crowd, you know exactly what I'm talking about. But praise God.

God always, always will allow you to strengthen yourself. That's why I like worship, just a personal time of edification. Sometimes I joke about this, but it's true.

During the first song, it's hard. Because you've had struggles, you've had challenges, things have not been going your way. I get an email, a text message, or somebody's back in the hospital, or delays, or denies, or this broke down, or this, you know, it's just, and that, by the time I start listening to the worship songs, I stand, arms stretched out, wide open, and you begin to see how worship, I didn't even put that down, but that's a good place to start.

Worship is one way to start to strengthen yourself in the Lord, and being built up. So remember that problems come from within as well as outside. And sometimes the internal strife is greater than the external.

The internal strife of what's going on, that is sometimes greater than the external. Right? Because it's when those closest to you can do the most damage. It's those who do the most harm.

I think about a week ago, or two weeks ago, I think I preached a message, and this one picked up a lot of momentum. Oh, sorry. Are you talking to me, Larry? Oh, no.

Oh, you're on the, okay, I heard you, I thought you said something. I said, that's a good sermon illustration. But the, where was I? Oh, yeah, so on Facebook, I think I've been called every bad word there is, and some I didn't know existed.

But that's a lot different than when somebody close to you, and you begins to say something. Those begin to hurt at even deeper levels. So here's what else David did.

You have to go to the source of the nourishment. He reminded himself who God was and who God is. You'll have to do that.

When it says take your mind, your thoughts captive, you have to do that. You have to bring your thoughts captive. What I found, your feelings will eventually pick up and follow.

But we don't do it because we don't feel like it. But the feelings come later. You have to, you have to, okay, for example, God, I know you are a good God.

I know you are a righteous God. I know you are just God. I know you're still on the throne.

I know the devil is your servant. I know, God, I know all this. And you start to internalize it and say, Lord, help me.

Remind me again who you are. You're Jehovah Jireh. You're my provider.

You will provide when the time is right. It's all about your timing. So you have to go to the source of the nourishment.

If you're starving, where are you going to go? To the food. If you're thirsty, where are you going to go? To the water. Why? Because those restore you and replenish you.

The only way to get built up spiritually is to go to the source that builds you up spiritually. There's no other way to get filled up spiritually. We look for it often in everything but God.

Netflix, pills, drink, on the computer, things, we look to that. I need to be built up. We go to everything else but God.

I made the mistake this morning needing some encouragement to go to the news. Do I want to hear the seven minute audio of the journalists in Saudi Arabia being tortured? What in the world? I was more depressed than when I woke up. This is horrific.

The stats on sex trafficking, 130 children found. Well, I didn't know 130 were lost and what they were doing to them. I mean, it's like you can't go to those outside sources.

Many times I think we need to back away from those outside sources. I don't think we need to know what's going on all over the United States and all over the world at our fingertips because it's too much to absorb and we get into fear factor mode and we're worried about everything and that's going to be counterproductive. So you have to go to the source of spiritual strength.

Where is that? God and God alone. So even when you don't feel like it, even when your mind's telling you something different, you have to go and you go to the promises of God. I would just start in Psalm.

Read the Psalms. How he's a good God and like a deer panting after that brook, it makes you think of that water he has to have and Lord, you will refresh me. You will pour down waters on a dry and thirsty and barren land.

You will bring out rivers from the desert that there's nothing there except dirt. And you start, oh, that's right. I remember the God I serve because the only way the enemy's going to attack you is in your mind.

That's it. He'll harass you and it's always mentally as well as physically in regard to using other people in circumstances, but he's going to harass you in your mind. So here's some good reminders.

Psalm 46, God is our refuge and strength and ever present help in trouble. Proverbs 18, the name of the Lord, the name of the Lord, just his name is a strong tower. The righteous run into it and are safe.

Now towers, we don't, we really can't benefit from this nowadays. Towers in David's time, especially were around the city, right? They usually had a wall. What were the towers doing? They were guarding.

They're acting as, as, as, as watchmen, watchmen on the towers. So when everybody was sleeping quietly, the watchmen weren't. The watchmen were on the towers doing what? Well, you see the towers out the prison, right? What are they watching for? Huh? You think they have paintball guns up there? No, they've got some arsenal.

They're watching this, the setting, they're watching the scenarios. And so you, that name is a name you run to. He's the tower.

He's going to watch over and see, ah, I'm watching if there's an enemy at the gate. I'm watching the devil who's on the prowl. I'm running to you, God.

You're my strong tower. Your, your name is the name I'm going to look to and I'm going to trust. And you build yourself.

I'm just getting encouraged reading the scriptures. I don't know about you, but I'm a lot more encouraged now than when I got here. Because that's right.

You have to remind yourself who God is. Nehemiah, do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength. What is the joy of the Lord? You start being thankful again.

Don't let the enemy rob you of thankfulness. There's anybody in this room right now can start being so thankful. Oh, but Shane, you don't know what I'm going through.

Would you have running water? It's getting cold. You're able to go set a heater at 75. Refrigeration, vehicles, health.

Most of us, there's so much to be thankful for. And you start to take joy because I'm not sure God likes grumbling and complaining. Every time I read the New Old Testament, I don't think he likes grumbling and complaining because we do minimize it, don't we? We minimize, it's not that big a deal.

He actually judged the whole nation of Israel. You're going to grumble and complain and you're going to wander for 40 years. I'm going to bring your children into the promised land.

Because at the heart of grumbling and complaining is it's against God. I've talked to pastors that they have, we're considered now like a big church, but talk to pastors, what they would consider little churches and they got to be careful because they'll grumble and complain. Oh, why am I here? Oh, this and that.

Why did God stick me here in this little \$2.10 town in Oklahoma or wherever? Why? Oh, here I go. And grumbling and complaining. Or what about when we go to work? Do you know what, I don't know, it's like half the world now, I saw this on the news site that I shouldn't have been on.

Half the world lives on like, I don't want to say the wrong number, but \$5 a day. I had to open, I'm like, are you kidding me? And I see all these people posting complaints and grumbling and complaining, taxes, higher gas taxes. I'm all for low taxes.

Get that gas price down. Let's control OPEC, okay? I'm with you. But we shouldn't be grumbling and complaining.

That shouldn't be the mark of us. Because most are considered millionaires in third world countries. Most of you would be considered millionaires in third world countries.

So we put that perspective, grumbling and complaining, and God, why did you, it's grumbling and complaining against God. Why did you put me in this situation? Why did you put me in this circumstance? Why are you allowing this to happen? Why, why, why? And I'm grumbling and complaining and I tell others and it becomes to foster division and promote and fuel division. But here's something David did in the midst of all this.

You know what's interesting? I don't know about you, but I probably would have grabbed a weapon and got on the horse and let's go now. And this bothered me a little bit. I haven't got quite an answer.

But he stopped and he sought God and said, Lord, is it your will that we pursue him? Is it your will that we pursue these guys that took our wives? Well, hello? No, just let him. But of course you can't read too much into text. But I think it's just a safe way to, Lord, is this your, because he's not saying no, let them take your spouses necessarily, your kids and everything.

But it could be in his timing. It could have been, hold on David. Hold on, I'm dealing with something right now.

I mean, if he killed 185,000 with one angel, you know, it's always good to go to God and say, Lord, is this attitude right? Is this next step right? What about if David was going in the wrong spirit or was going to maybe not rest? And we actually find out that they almost, many of them think 200 didn't make it because they were too tired. They couldn't go on. They couldn't go on to fight.

So David said, Lord, is it your will? Lord said, absolutely, it's my will. Go take them and take back everything. But he stopped and he sought God.

And that is so important because if we don't do that, what happens? Impulse. We react instead of respond. You know, the difference is somebody hits, hit them back.

That's reacting. Responding is somebody hits me. Why'd you do that? And you respond.

You're able to make a better decision there. So whatever this, however this would apply to you, always remember that stop and seek God. And that's really about refocusing.

You get okay, here's what's going on. I'm not going to let my temper, any anger in here? I'll save that one for Sunday morning too. But I'm going to refocus.

I'm not going to let my temper, my anger. So many people make hasty decisions in anger. Hasty emails, hasty text messages, hasty, hasty, and just that anger.

But when you need to encourage yourself, just stop and say, Lord, what is your will? And if you're like me, he's not going to just, you're not going to hear, you know, sounds from heaven. Oh, that was clear. Thank you.

It's usually that deep peace, that deep, okay, God heard me. I'm listening. I have this, this desire to move forward.

I think this is your will. And you step out in faith, trusting God, but you sought him first. And then what I didn't read, what I just talked about though, is fatigue set in.

Fatigue set in and it brought in new challenges. Be very careful of fatigue. Be very careful of fatigue.

It's always a tactic of the enemy to get you when you're down and tired. Actually, back to addiction ministry, there's a principle called halt. Halt, you have to watch out when you're hungry, angry, lonely, and tired.

That's usually when the devil attacks in those areas. And they were tired, they were wiped out. So David actually did something interesting.

He allowed them to stay with their goods while the other men went and fought the battle. Then when the other men came back, it created another problem because they didn't want the 200 that were tired to share in their conquest. And it's that famous statement, some people use it to raise money and different things, and I'm not going there, but where David talked about that those who are here with the material, with the booty, with the food and all the supplies, they will receive and share in what we also accomplished when we overtook this army.

So all of us will still share in that success, not going to isolate this small group of men who didn't go to fight because they're too tired. Also I picked up from this that we need to wipe out everything the enemy is doing. Wipe out everything the enemy is doing because if you leave him a stronghold or a foothold or if you leave the door open or cracked, he's going to come in in that area.

I had to sneeze. I was thinking, how am I going to do that? I haven't done that before in a sermon, I don't think. So anyway, back on track.

So you have to wipe out everything the enemy is doing. If you see the enemy doing something, if he's coming in in any area, if he's bringing in discouragement, be careful because it's often discouragement that leads us to take a step away from God. That's how he usually reels us away from God.

Discouragement. Then we start to compromise our values. Then we say, well forget it then, I'm just going to, whatever.

And when you're discouraged, you can begin to fall back into the hands of the enemy. So wipe out everything the enemy is doing. That's what David did.

Wipe out everything that Satan is doing in your life. Can you isolate it now tonight? Is there anything in your marriage, in your life, spiritually, where the enemy is coming in and there's a foothold there? It means that there's a foot in the way of you closing the door. It's that entrance point.

And we like to play with the devil. The Bible says, flee. Remember that game Patty Cake? Patty Cake with the devil.

That's a good sermon title, but it's not a good thing to apply to your life. You can't negotiate. He doesn't sleep.

He doesn't slumber. What I really don't like about the devil is when you're having a bad day, he doesn't say, let's back off now. What does he do? Full throttle.

Goes in for the kill. Merciless. So you have an adversary that is described as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

He's going about, he's merciless. He could care less if he lies and deceives. His whole agenda is to dethrone the God he sees in you, to have you lose your testimony, to have you be ineffective.

Can you imagine if this whole church were spirit-filled believers, evangelizing daily, praying for healing, and it happens? Like the book of Acts. We read in the Bible. He would hate that.

So what's he do? He tries to discourage the majority of the people. Discourage them from being filled with the Spirit of God. Discourage them from fully surrendering their lives.

Can you imagine if you said, God, I want to be fully used of you. I don't care what it means. I don't care what it involves.

I want to be fully used of you. And God begins to shape you and pull out things that shouldn't be there. And the enemy is still there.

So we have to wipe out everything that the enemy is doing. If you see something he's doing, what does the Bible say to do with sin? Coddle it or crucify it. Let it grow a little bit or pluck it out.

Feed it or starve it. And I've noticed when I begin to honor God in this area, I encourage myself because I'm obeying his word. Something I didn't know earlier, but disobedience leads, always leads to discouragement.

When we disobey God's word, when you know you're not doing what God's word says, do you think you're encouraged and happy? And just loving life even though I'm outside of God's will? No. I believe a majority of people are discouraged because they are disobedient in what God says. Now, let me encourage.

God is just looking for us to say, it's wrong. I have been disobedient. Lord, would you please help me get back on track? I'm going to begin to honor you again.

I'm going to watch my mouth or whatever the problem is. I'm repenting. I'm going to fix that.

I'm going to make that right. I'm going to give up these habits. I'm going to make a complete shift in my lifestyle.

I want to honor you. God, would you help me with that? And you're right there. You're back in the center of God's will.

Is that interesting? You could drive off the road and God will put you right back on the road. Now, there's consequences. See, that's where we get a little confused.

I just got a letter, I think I told some of you a while back. A friend of mine, I actually let him preach for me in Lancaster. Started to slide.

Started dating somebody he probably shouldn't have been. And then began to sleep together and would use Old Testament examples of, we've consummated it in God's eyes. You know, this baloney.

And that led back to alcohol, which he said he would never touch. That led then into crystal meth, methamphetamine, heroin. He preached for me.

Heroin, he preached for me. And to feed that desire, he stole from a home. And the people I know took him, went to court.

It was the right thing to do and forgave him right there. But they had to move forward and I gave him eight years. Eight years felony back in RGD, correctional institute down by Tijuana.

I went down there twice. And I don't think I've left there yet not crying. He hasn't.

He says, you've got to cut the sin off early. You've got to cut it. He should have aborted it when it first started.

But it is hard. You get on that slippery slope. But can you imagine how to, I can't even fathom it, falling that far.

It took about two or three years. So you have to wipe it out. If there's something in your life that you know is not right, confide in someone.

Gosh, in my past I've told people before, hey, I struggle in this area. Hold me accountable. You bring it to the light.

You bring it to the surface. If it's starting to come in again, with guys with pornography now, women, the statistics on that is alarming as well. There's no shame in telling, going to a group and telling someone, hey, this is an area I struggle with.

Don't ask me to hold you accountable. It's not really their job. It's the Holy Spirit's job.

It's an extra layer there. But you've got to be accountable to God. And you've got to put safeguards on your phones.

And you've got to say, I want this bad enough to do that. It's interesting. I've talked to guys, especially I went to men's conferences.

And I've mentioned there's software you can put on your phone that I have. And it'll send your wife what you visit once a week. Oh, I'm not doing that.

Well, wait a minute. How bad do you want this? Well, see, see, that's where the rubber meets the road. Now, that might not be a good idea for some of you.

You know, I'm not saying it's a blanket approach that everybody needs to do because, you know, there's wisdom there, but you can put somebody on there. You know, that's just one layer of accountability because you're showing God how bad I want it. Lord, I want deliverance.

I want freedom. Because if your plan's not working, it's time for a new plan. It's time to take these changes seriously.

Now, something I don't want to get into too much, but David was actually off fighting with the enemy. He was on the side of the Philistines when this happened, fighting with them. There's a lot to that.

David had to kind of take that side because Saul was after him, and there's a lot to it. But it just made me think for a minute. It was counterproductive.

Had he not been fighting for the enemy, would he have been home guarding his family? And back to the watchtower men, I believe God has called us to be those watchmen on the tower, watching. So if the enemy's got our hands tied behind our backs, our feet bound, and we're not fulfilling that watchman role, we could be fighting for the enemy on his side. Not really technically, but being caught up in all these things that are driving us away from God.

David probably shouldn't have been with the Philistines. They're raiding the children of Israel, different camps, and taking things and plundering them. Again, just speculation here.

Scripture doesn't talk about that. But I don't think it was productive. And this could have been why.

He should have been watching his own family, watching those he was given care of, instead of off doing this, with possibly the enemy could have called him away. So be careful. Any time prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God, when God has called you to do something.

Especially men, I know this is being a little direct here, but if God's called you to do something, or even women in certain areas, you have to stay in that role, fulfill that role. So let me just end with an encouraging point here. When you're being challenged, when you're being what you maybe consider harassed, when there's resistance, know that God is working in all of that.

I've given this example before, but it fits perfectly. Do you know how muscle builds? It's first torn down. So if you work out or do things and you're doing curls, say, right, that muscle fiber is being broken down.

It's being hurt from the resistance. That's why they call it resistance training. It's being broken down.

So it builds up stronger for the next time. Same thing spiritually speaking. There's a story, I hope I remember correctly, by Jenson Franklin.

He talked about a fisherman who would always come in from fishing, and every time he'd stop at the dock, he would sell out of his fish, because you could sell it right there at the dock. True story, I believe. And he would always sell out his fresh fish, still alive, and he was a top fisherman.

These other fishermen didn't know how he was doing this, because by the time they were way out, miles out in the ocean, by the time they got in, the fish are in those water wells, they're dead or lifeless. And people didn't want to, I don't want to buy a dead fish, unless it's, you know, been dead fairly recently and in the cold water and things. So they'd wonder, how do you, how are these fish so fresh? And, you know, they would pull them out and here's this live fish.

And so one of the fishermen went and he looked in his big tank, and he saw this huge catfish in there. And he said, why is the catfish in there? He goes, it keeps the fish moving. It keeps them alive.

It keeps them running from the catfish. So maybe what the parallel now with the enemy after us is a battle, it'll keep us spiritually alive, spiritually active, not set into boredom and laziness, but that enemy knowing that there's a lion, I might keep an eye on my door a lot more. And the same thing with muscle resistance, that resistance, without the resistance, there's no growth.

So if you're going to grow spiritually, if you're going to grow spiritually, you will be faced with difficult seasons. You will get discouraged. How do you know God is all these things I just read unless you've been discouraged? How do you know is the God who sustains when you felt breathless, and like giving up? How do you know the God that really provides when you've been without, if you haven't been without? So that's how we learn a lot of these things is through God, working through resistance, through spiritual warfare, as we submit and surrender.

Actually, I'll give you a secret to spiritual maturity. Talk to those that you know have been around a while, if they are spiritually mature in the faith, ask them if they've had any spiritual battles. Ask them, have you

ever been discouraged? Well, sit down because it's going to be a while.

Maturity, Christian maturity is just like a person who's been lifting weights a long time. They know the attacks of the enemy, they've fought through discouragement, they've built themselves up, they haven't fallen back, and they stand before us as overcomers of those who have walked and fought the good fight of faith. That's what Paul said towards the end of his life.

I fought the good fight. Isn't it interesting? I fought the good fight. Not I laid on the cot all month.

I mean, you just don't find that. Well, I'm at the end of my life, gosh, I've been down at Mazatlan with Coronas for the last year and retired, and this is just a wonderful life. You don't see any of that.

I fought the good fight. See, if you can remember that, okay. See, it is about changing perspective, isn't it? Because if you say, okay, okay, I know what's going on.

I'm lifting weights, right? I'm discouraged. The enemy, whatever this is part of building, am I going to throw in the towel? Am I going to get discouraged? Am I going to get negative and grumbling, complaining? Because that's the end result I think he's also looking for, is to start grumbling and complaining. Because I don't know about you, but when I'm discouraged, I'm not a happy talker.

And you get around those people that are, they just drive you crazy. Like mom, she's an encourager. Like, girl, be discouraged sometimes.

You know, it's just that attitude of encouragement, and it becomes, and you do have to get yourself back to that spot. So David encouraged himself in the Lord. You can encourage yourself in the Lord.

You're going to have to learn how to do that. What happens when we don't do that? We actually, we think sometimes we can just find the middle ground. I've talked about this before.

There's encouraging ourselves in the Lord or we're getting discouraged. There's not a fence to walk. We have to learn to encourage ourselves.

Okay, Lord, I'm going to focus on, what do we learn? I'm going to focus on thankfulness. I don't know what you're going through, but I'm pretty sure you can find some things to be thankful about. If you have a good job, a good family, health, good church, good friends, there's so many things to be thankful.

And you close the door on the enemy. You don't play around with sin because ultimately his goal is to kill, steal, and to destroy. He leads us down one step at a time, one compromise at a time, one wrong choice at a time.

And make sure you're not on the enemy's side and playing into his game plan.

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