

When Courage Feels Heavy

How to stay strong when discouragement hits

Scriptures

Joshua 1:9
 1 Chronicles 28:20
 2 Chronicles 20:15
 2 Chronicles 32:7
 Isaiah 35:4
 Isaiah 41:10
 Isaiah 57:15
 2 Corinthians 4:9
 Isaiah 7:4
 Isaiah 54:4
 Exodus 13:17
 Ezra 4:4
 Nehemiah 4:5
 Nehemiah 6:9
 Haggai 2:4
 Galatians 6:9, 2
 Chronicles 15:7
 Psalm 34:18
 Jeremiah 23:4, 2
 Corinthians 7:6
 1 Chronicles 22:13
 Zechariah 8:6
 1 Samuel 1:15
 Psalm 42:11
 Isaiah 54:11
 Exodus 6:9
 Isaiah 51:7
 Ezekiel 3:9
 Psalm 34:2



Settle in

Take a deep breath. Turn off notifications on your phone. Tell God about any areas where you feel discouraged or tempted to give up. What battles feel too big or too heavy? Ask him to help you believe the promises in the verses you will read today.



Thought starter

Scripture reference

I've commanded you to be strong and brave. Don't ever be afraid or discouraged! I am the LORD your God, and I will be there to help you wherever you go.

God doesn't just suggest that we have courage; he commands it. Not because he expects us to be naturally fearless, but because he is with us. He is fighting battles we can't see, carrying weight we can't lift, and rebuilding places in us that are broken by storms.

Discouragement is loud. But God is louder.



Metaphor moment: The bent tree

Think of a tree after a brutal storm. The wind bends it, shakes it, and strips away its leaves—but the roots hold. Courage isn't the tree standing perfectly tall. Courage is the roots refusing to let go.

These verses are all about God strengthening our roots so we can survive the wind.

Here's what we'll learn in this Quick Quiet Time:

- Courage comes from knowing that God is with us.
- Discouragement is a weapon the enemy uses to wear us down and stop us from doing God's work.
- God steps in to rescue us from our discouragement and make our faith strong again.



God never commands courage without promising his presence.

1 Chronicles 28:20 CEV

But you must see that everything is done according to these plans. Be confident, and never be afraid of anything or get discouraged. The LORD my God will help you do everything needed to finish the temple, so it can be used for worshiping him.



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Notes:

2 Chronicles 20:15 NCV

He said, "Listen to me, King Jehoshaphat and all you people living in Judah and Jerusalem. The LORD says this to you: 'Don't be afraid or discouraged because of this large army. The battle is not your battle, it is God's.'

2 Chronicles 20:17 CSB

You do not have to fight this battle. Position yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD. He is with you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Tomorrow, go out to face them, for the LORD is with you.

2 Chronicles 32:7 NIV

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him."

Isaiah 35:4 GNT

Tell everyone who is discouraged, "Be strong and don't be afraid! God is coming to your rescue, coming to punish your enemies."

Isaiah 41:10 NLT

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

 **Truth bomb:** God's presence is the key to courage.



- Courage comes from knowing that we don't have to fight any battle alone. Some battles are God's, not ours.
- Many of these verses are addressed to God's strongest leaders. They battled discouragement, too. This tells us that discouragement can be a sign that we are on the right path; it means we are wrestling to do God's will. If we weren't trying or didn't care, we probably wouldn't be discouraged.
- 2 Chronicles 20 tells us to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." When we are afraid or discouraged, we may feel tempted to speed up—to take control of our situation or keep ourselves busy so we don't have to think about our discouragement. Instead, we need to slow down and pray more.

Notes:

**Reflect**

- What would it look like to practically “stand still and see the salvation of the LORD” this week?

**Fear exaggerates the strength of our opposition.****Isaiah 7:4 TPT**

Give him this message: ‘Stay calm! Be quiet and guard your heart! Don’t panic or be discouraged over these two smoldering stubs of firewood, because of the rage of Rezin and Aram, the son of Remaliah.’

Isaiah 54:4 CEV

Don't be afraid or ashamed and don't be discouraged. You won't be disappointed. Forget how sinful you were when you were young; stop feeling ashamed for being left a widow.

**Truth bomb:** Fear exaggerates.

- Fear makes us discouraged by exaggerating the size of the obstacles in front of us.
- In Isaiah 7:4, God was talking about two enemy kings whose power was dying out. They weren’t actually strong and powerful—they were more like smoke than fire.
- God was essentially saying, “Don’t let fear exaggerate their strength.”
- Fear also exaggerates our shame, making us dwell on the sins of our past as a reason to doubt God’s plans for our future.
- Fear steals our courage, and we can fight back by telling ourselves the truth rather than listening to it.

**Discouragement tells us that the battle is too big.****Exodus 13:17 TLB**

So at last Pharaoh let the people go. God did not lead them through the land of the Philistines, although that was the most direct route from Egypt to the Promised Land. The reason was that God felt the people might become discouraged by having to fight their way through, even though they had left Egypt armed; he thought they might return to Egypt. Instead, God led them along a route through the Red Sea wilderness.

Ezra 4:4 AMP

Then [the Samaritans and others of] the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah, and frightened them [to deter them] from building ...

Notes:

Nehemiah 4:5 ERV

... They have insulted and discouraged the builders.

Nehemiah 6:9 AMP

For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, "They will become discouraged with the work and it will not be done." But now, [O God,] strengthen my hands.

Haggai 2:4 ERV

But the LORD says, "Zerubbabel, don't be discouraged!" And the LORD says, "Joshua son of Jehozadak, you are the high priest. Don't be discouraged! And all you people who live in the land, don't be discouraged! Continue this work, because I am with you." This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

Galatians 6:9 AMP

Let us not grow weary or become discouraged in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap, if we do not give in.

2 Chronicles 15:7 GNT

But you must be strong and not be discouraged. The work that you do will be rewarded.

**Truth bomb:**

Discouragement is a weapon of the enemy that makes us feel too worn down by the work before us.

- Sometimes the spiritual battle is intense, and the enemy tries to stop us from building for God. He deters us by convincing us that the work is too dangerous or difficult.
- Discouragement can lead us back into the old lives we lived before we believed.
- It's okay to admit when we are afraid or discouraged, but we can't let fear have the final say. And we can't quit. We have to keep doing God's work.



Discouragement tells us that the battle is too big.

Psalms 34:18 CEV

The LORD is there to rescue all who are discouraged and have given up hope.

Notes:

Isaiah 57:15 NET

For this is what the high and exalted one says, the one who rules forever, whose name is holy: "I dwell in an exalted and holy place, but also with the discouraged and humiliated, in order to cheer up the humiliated and to encourage the discouraged."

Jeremiah 23:4 CSB

"I will raise up shepherds over them who will tend them. They will no longer be afraid or discouraged, nor will any be missing." This is the LORD's declaration.

2 Corinthians 7:6 NASB

But God, who comforts the discouraged, comforted us by the arrival of Titus ...

1 Chronicles 22:13 CEV

If you obey the laws and teachings that the LORD gave Moses, you will be successful. Be strong and brave and don't get discouraged or be afraid of anything.

Zechariah 8:6 TLB

The Lord says, "This seems unbelievable to you-a remnant, small, discouraged as you are-but it is no great thing for me."

1 Samuel 1:15 NLT

"Oh no, sir!" she replied. "I haven't been drinking wine or anything stronger. But I am very discouraged, and I was pouring out my heart to the LORD."

Psalms 42:11 CEV

Why am I discouraged? Why am I restless? I trust you! And I will praise you again because you help me, and you are my God.

Isaiah 54:11 CEV

Jerusalem, you are sad and discouraged, tossed around in a storm. But I, the LORD, will rebuild your city with precious stones; for your foundation I will use blue sapphires.

Notes:

 **Truth bomb:** Things that seem too great for us are not too great for God.

- God can rescue the discouraged and those who have given up hope.
- God brings comfort into our lives as we turn to him in prayer and listen to his words through Scripture.
- God also encourages us through the people he sends into our lives.

 **When we defeat discouragement, we discover faith.**

Exodus 6:9 CEV

When Moses told this to the Israelites, they were too discouraged and mistreated to believe him.

Isaiah 51:7 CEV

If you want to do right and to obey my teaching with all your heart, then pay close attention. Don't be discouraged when others insult you and say hurtful things.

Ezekiel 3:9 CSB

I have made your forehead like a diamond, harder than flint. Don't be afraid of them or discouraged by the look on their faces, though they are a rebellious house.

2 Corinthians 4:9 MSG

... We've been spiritually terrorized, but God hasn't left our side; we've been thrown down, but we haven't broken.

2 Corinthians 4:9 NLT

We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.

Psalms 34:2 TLB

I will boast of all his kindness to me. Let all who are discouraged take heart.

 **Truth bomb:** We can't have a believing heart if we are filled with discouragement.

- We need to work through our discouragement so we can keep believing, or rediscover our faith if it's slipped away.
- We may feel "spiritually terrorized" or knocked down by life's challenges, but with God, we are never knocked out. Like a boxer on the mat catching his breath, we rise again.

Notes:

- We can strengthen our faith and courage by remembering God's kindness to us and sharing it with other people.

Supportive note:

Everyone experiences feelings of discouragement and despair at times, but these feelings can also be linked to physical, mental, or emotional health conditions. If that's true for you, getting clinical help can be the first step toward having a believing heart and mind again.

**Reflection questions:**

- Where do I feel most discouraged right now—and what does God command me to do with that feeling?
- Which verse today hit me like a spotlight? Why?
- What “battle” am I trying to fight right now that God says actually belongs to him?
- Who in my life needs me to speak courage into them today?

**Humor break!**

Did you hear about the guy who's afraid of escalators?
He takes steps to avoid them.

Share the inspiration!

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and share it with a friend.



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