

Encouraged & Inspired



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Jesus told His followers John 14:18 “*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*” He would continue to live in our heart—comforting, encouraging, and assuring us of His presence and power to inspire steadfast faith in His Atonement sacrifice no matter what trial, test, or loss we may have experienced.

The apostles revisited many places where God’s Truth had already been taught—Acts 14:21 “*They returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, 22 strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith [continue in the faith]. ‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.’*”

Even though we know that “*the Father of mercies*” is “*the God of all comfort*” 2 Corinthians 1:3, it often seems that the *discouragements* we meet with are *more* than the *encouragements* we hear. This may *seem* to be the reality, but it is our *privilege* and our divine *right* to be encouraged, strengthened, and inspired—because God has promised it. We should know the *reason* for discouragements, and the divine *way* to be encouraged by the Word of God.

Any discouragement, depression, or unhappiness we feel is due to not *reminding* ourselves of God’s *presence*, *power*, and *promise*. God does *not* condemn us for *not* knowing, but He is ready to *show* us, if we will ask Him in prayer, and in faith. God wants us to be at peace—that is His desire—as any loving parent would want their children to have.

The first Advent of Jesus was for *that* purpose. Isaiah 40:1-2 “*Comfort, yes, comfort My people!*” Says your God. “*Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned.*”

One of God’s attributes is to comfort those who are cast down, depressed, discouraged, and disheartened. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 “*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*”

After Jesus ascended, the first century church enjoyed a time of peace Acts 9:31 “*It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.*” The third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is equal with God—thus we have the God of encouragement with us at all times, and He is able to change any situation that is discouraging us.

There are *conditions* to meet, so that God can *encourage* us and give us His peace. These are the same conditions that exist in all dealings between one person and another in human situations.

Encouragement will come from believing the encouraging words God speaks; and our discouragement will come from listening to the discouraging lies that Satan suggests. Victory or defeat is right at this point. If we listen to Satan we will be defeated and depressed; if we listen to God we will be inspired and encouraged.

The devil always works through our mind with thoughts, ideas, and suggestions. If we do not know these are from him, they will influence our reasoning, and we can think they are true and right. Even though God loves us; He is always with us; and the atoning Blood He shed for

us should mean *everything*, it will mean *nothing* to us if we listen to the devil and accept his suggestions.

We must know Satan’s game plan. He never confronts us directly; never identifies himself, and never says: *I’ve come to discourage you, tell you lies, and make you unhappy.* That is not his strategy, but he *will* suggest that we are not making spiritual progress; or that we have not had an answer to prayer lately—anything that would discourage or depress us.

The devil will suggest that God does not *want* to heal us; that the financial blessing will *not* be received; or an attitude will *not* change—and give some reason why they will not. He suggests that God is displeased with us; that we do not have enough faith; or we do not deserve the answer. The devil will suggest anything and everything, but *never* what God’s Word says. Our discouragement then, comes from listening to, and believing what Satan puts in our mind.

However, the moment we listen to, and believe in, what God says in His Word, we will be encouraged and inspired. True encouragement comes from believing encouraging words of Scripture—especially when we know that there is divine power to back them up.

Every thought or any suggestion that would discourage us about God, is from Satan, who is the father of lies. The devil tells us that God has something against us, or that He does not want to help us. Satan has the ability to inject thoughts in our mind and speak directly to our conscious reasoning—and these thoughts are always depressing.

Once the devil’s identity is known and we know that the discouragement is from him, he will have to flee, because a thief will not stay in the open—only remain under cover. When we *know* that it is the *devil* who is suggesting these depressing and foreboding things to our mind,

we will not listen to him; we will reject such thoughts, and will not act on them. Satan cannot harm anyone who will not believe what he is suggesting.

Adam enjoyed a perfect environment in the Garden; he had the presence of God and a close friendship with Him. The devil could not touch him until he got Adam's attention, and began to suggest things to his mind, which led directly to Adam accepting them as true, and then acting on those proposals. When Adam believed the devil, it robbed him of everything God had given him.

Job had serious troubles and losses; he said that God just took those things away from him without any reason—to just see how much he could tolerate. Imagine how cruel a parent would be to do such things to a child—to just see how much they could stand. Those things happened to Job because of his self-righteousness; his unbelief, and his rebellion toward God, and because he did not *know* God's true character.

Satan could not do a thing to Job, or even get God's consent to harm him, until the devil got Job's consent. *Job 3:25-26* "For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came." He believed what the devil put in his mind, like Jonah did. *Jonah 2:8* "They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs."

Job listened to the devil, and it landed him on an ash heap full of sores; Jonah listened to the devil and he found himself in the stomach of a fish—in the middle of the ocean. The devil could not have harmed Adam, Job, Jonah, or anyone else, if they had not believed him. All the power Satan has to bring defeat, disharmony, discouragement, and trouble into our home, is

because we have *listened* to him and *rejected* what God has promised.

God does *not* want us to be robbed of His blessings and encouragement—but He is patient with us, and He will *teach* us how to receive and enjoy all that He wants to give us. We just need to stop *listening* to Satan's lies, and start *believing* God's Word. When we do, Satan's power will be broken over all those things that make us discouraged—in our home; concerning our health; our financial matters; any employment issue, and everything else.

The Holy Spirit always comforts, encourages, enlightens, inspires, and strengthens. The Holy Spirit always brings *positive blessings*; and the devil always gives *negative things*. It may seem that people in the Bible were *not* tempted as seriously as *we* often are, but Satan is the same in all ages. He lied and defeated Adam, and he has been lying and defeating millions ever since.

The man who came to Jesus for the healing of his son, only had to believe and accept God's Word for victory. *John 4:48-49* "Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die;" but Jesus did not go with him to heal the boy, He just gave him the promise; *50* "Go thy way; thy son liveth."

For certain, Satan was right there to suggest plenty to that man. He would have told him that the boy was *not* healed, or that he has passed away after he left the house. Satan would have painted a funeral scene in the man's mind.

If we think that it would be easy for the nobleman to believe what Jesus said at that time, the fact is, it would be harder then for him to believe Jesus; because all the people said Jesus was not who He said He was.

Also *Isaiah 53:2* "He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty

that we should desire Him." The religious teachers and the Jews said that Jesus was not the Messiah, and was deceiving people. The nobleman, then, risked the life of his son on someone everyone said was a deceiver.

Today, however, we *know* God's Word is true; that Jesus *is* the Messiah; and that every promise is *Yes* because of the Atonement sacrifice He made for us. The nobleman, however, held on to the promise Jesus gave him. "And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way."

Instead of seeing the boy as Satan pictured him, the man found him delivered as Jesus said. *John 4:52-52* "Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, 'Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.' So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, 'Your son lives.' And he himself believed, and his whole household."

Scripture will always be fulfilled, when we believe what God has written. *2 Thessalonians 2:16-17* "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word."

Whenever we face a difficult situation, and we are seriously tested in our faith, we have God's Word to encourage, strengthen, and inspire us—but it is our responsibility to *read* what He has to say to *be* encouraged. *Romans 15:4* "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."



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