

When Discouragements Come

O our God...we are powerless...we do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You (2 Chronicles 20:12, NASB).

Each of our lives and our work has its own share of discouragements. My work in the publishing field is certainly no different. Though the last few years have been the most satisfying in my life, I've also had the most discouragements to handle. However, prayer has helped turn these setbacks into benefits in several ways.

1. Discouragements force me to look to God and seek His will for my life. First and foremost, I want to be where He wants me to be, no matter how the situation looks.
2. Once I know that God has led me to this point, I can stand on that. I can rest in the face that God always finished what He starts. When we invest our lives for the Lord, we don't need to check the daily Dow-Jones averages. He's into long-term investments – but His yields are terrific. Feeding the five thousand from a few loaves and fishes is not an isolated event with Him. Just look at your own life, and you'll doubtless see lots of times when He reaped a lot from a little. But this process often requires patience. Don't be distracted by the daily ups and downs. Focus on following Him, and trust Him for the harvest.
3. When things don't seem to be going right in my area of service to Him, I know I can't just pray out of selfish interest. Thus I'm forced to set aside my own ego and personal concerns. I must pray simply for what is best for His purposes and for the good of His people. I believe that's what is meant by praying "in His name." When we pray solely for the good of God's own work, having removed our own motivations, we can pray boldly and ask largely. Praying like this also helps focus our hearts on loving God's people and keeping their good in view.
4. When I get discouraged, I frequently find God reminding me that my work is not my joy: He Himself is my joy. Being in His presence, knowing Him, sharing life personally with Him – these are my satisfaction and my reason for being. My heart and my hope are to center upon Him, not upon my work. God is a jealous God who wants our love personally. It's easy to let our service to Him become our focus, rather than making Him our focus, with our service being a natural outflow of our personal relationship. He desires that relationship more than any works we can do.

Disappointments can truly strengthen our trust in God, purify our motives, and re-center our hearts on Him alone.

Hymn: [Back to You](#)