



THE EXHORTER'S CALL

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Page 1 of 3

EXPOSING DISCOURAGEMENT

Dis: 1. A Latin prefix meaning “*apart,*” “*away,*” “*asunder,*” “*utterly,*” or having a privative, negative, or reversing force. 2. In classical mythology, a god of the underworld. Also called, *Dis Pater*. Cf. *Pluto*.

Courage: 1. The quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear; bravery 2. The heart as the source of emotions. 3. Have the courage of one’s convictions to act in accordance with one’s beliefs, especially in spite of criticism.

The word “discourage/d” appears seven times in the Bible. The first appearance of discouragement is in *Numbers 21:4* when the Children of Israel were forced to divert around the land of Edom “...and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.” By *Deuteronomy 1:28* the Children of Israel have arrived to their destination but, once again, are discouraged “...saying, *The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims (giants) there.*” Continuing from the Old to the New Testament *Colossians 3:21* tells us: “*Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*”

Apparently, although we may be walking along the right path, the way can seem discouraging. Sometimes we have arrived at God’s intended destination only to discover new, unforeseen obstacles confronting us. Perhaps we may even allow these difficulties to provoke us to anger. All three conditions, a hard path; unforeseen obstacles; and anger; can lead to discouragement. Nevertheless, the lesson of the Bible is to trust God totally. *Isaiah 42:4* tells us that: “*He shall not fail nor be discouraged...*” That is why God reminded the Israelites that He was with them and that they should be “*strong and very courageous.*” (*Joshua 1:7*) Only then can the people who know their God “*be strong and do exploits.*” (*Daniel 11:32*)

Billy Graham once remarked that God will never use a discouraged Christian. It follows that one of the most effective strategies of Satan in the lives of Christians has been to utilize the tools of discouragement. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the etymology of the prefix “dis-” is linked to the god of the underworld! Preventing Christians from acting in accordance with their beliefs, especially in spite of modern criticism, robs them of strength. Discouragement reflects hidden doubt in God’s provision. This is the very antithesis of faith. How then can we ACT out in faith when deprived of the motivating force of courage to do so?

Jesus Himself performed no mighty works in His own hometown “...because of their unbelief.” (*Matthew 13:58*) How can God manifest Himself in your life as long as you walk in discouragement’s hidden doubt? Will He have to wait for you to literally die-off as the murmuring generation of Israel in order to accomplish His will through another? God forbid. “*Only be thou strong and very courageous...*”



שְׁאֵלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם

Yē-rū-sha-lī'im ←--- Shalom ←--- Sha-alū



PIECE FOR PEACE?

Once again, demands are being made upon Israel to relinquish land and prisoners for “peace.” Islamic groups such as Fatah, Hamas, and Hezbollah ad nauseum insist that regardless of Israel’s overtures they will never recognize their right to exist. Whether releasing terrorist prisoners or conceding land, history has proven time-and-time again that Israel’s offering of a “piece for peace” simply does not work.

Frankly, I’m dumbfounded that this failed policy of continual appeasement is perpetually pursued by Israel and that it is often endorsed by the United States. Obviously, as a Bible-believing Christian I am opposed to Israel relinquishing God’s Covenant promises, but even when viewed through a secular lens it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to reach the conclusion that these efforts are a dead-end. Talk about a strong delusion!

Patchwork attempts to reconcile Islamic nations to Israel bring to mind *Jeremiah 6:14* “*They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.*” This verse is repeated verbatim two chapters later in *Jeremiah 8:11*. This repeated emphasis assures us that the matter is firmly established according to both Old and New Testaments.

However, there is a purpose to all this wretched ineffectiveness. The world is growing weary of turmoil in the Middle East and the continued resolve of both Israel and the United States is being worn down at a remarkable rate. The seemingly intractable problems and insurmountable challenges of peace in the Middle East cry out for almost any solution.

The world is ready to receive a wonder worker.

2 Thessalonians 2:7-11 “*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:”*

1 Thessalonians 5:3 “*For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”*

The stage is set. The clock is ticking. The Church is departing and the “peace” of Anti-Christ cometh.



John 8:36

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

FREE AT LAST

Freedom. We all highly prize what we refer to as our personal freedom. Many people avoid Jesus Christ because they are afraid that living a Christian life will limit their freedom. Perhaps you are one of those people that want to be “free” to do your “own thing.” But... are you really? Is it possible that you are in bondage to your lifestyle? Do you still do things that you regret? Have you tried to resist certain vices and failed? Have you made poor decisions despite knowing better? If so, you are in bondage to sin and not freely doing your “own thing” after all! Think about it.

Romans 8:2 “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Becoming a Christian empowers you to break free of the subtle shackles that masquerade as your personal freedom. The Spirit of life found in Jesus Christ can overwhelm you with a personal power you’ve never known before. If you ponder this deeply, you may arrive at a rather unexpected conclusion. You can continue to live in bondage as a servant to sin, or, you can freely choose to serve a higher purpose.

Romans 6:20 “For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.”

Romans 6:18 “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

Reflecting on past failures in self-control and decision-making leads to the inescapable realization that you are not doing your “own thing.” There is no middle-ground between God and Satan. Good or evil, life or death. Choose life. When you become one with Christ Jesus, His righteousness becomes your “own thing.”

Rick Wagon is a born-again Spirit-filled believer that was saved eternally and securely by the grace of God, through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. His father was a full-time pastor that raised Rick with a solid foundation of faith, knowledge, and hunger for God’s Word. Rick’s professional background has been in law enforcement, protective security, and anti-terrorism; serving as a supervisor and trainer in these fields. Recently he transitioned to the field of public health preparedness to coordinate disaster response training. He also performs additional duties related to intelligence, security, planning, and logistics. Rick is married to a beautiful, loving wife of faith and blessed with two fine sons that love the Lord. He has served as a church trustee, usher, children’s church teacher, and itinerate guest speaker. Rick believes in living as a bold witness for Christ, loves to worship the Lord, and is available for special speaking engagements in your area.

