

# The Four D's

## Today's Message: "Discouragement"

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### Message Study Guide

#### Introduction

It was once announced that the devil was going out of business and would offer his tools for sale, to whoever would pay the price. On the night of the sale, they were all attractively displayed, even though they were a bad lot. Malice, hatred, envy, sensuality - and all the other implements of evil were spread out, each marked with a price. Apart from the rest lay a harmless looking, worn-out wedge shaped tool priced higher than any of the others. A potential buyer asked the devil, "What is that tool?" "That is the tool of discouragement", replied the devil. "Why is it priced so much higher than the rest of the tools?" the prospective buyer inquired. "Because it is the most effective and useful weapon to me than any of the others. I have used it to pry into the hearts and consciences of Christians for centuries when I was unable to get near them with any of the other tools I possessed."

"Once I have gained access in his or her mind with discouragement, I can use them in whatever way that suits me best. I have used it over and over very effectively." In the end, the price for this tool was so high that it never sold. In fact, Satan still owns it and uses it today.

No matter where you are in your personal spiritual journey, you must remember that no one is immune from this potentially destructive vice of Satan. Some of the greatest people in the bible suffered through long periods of discouragement at some time in their lives: Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:3), Job (Job 10:1,3), David (1 Samuel 30:6); Israel (Numbers 2:4; Numbers 14:1), Judah (Ezra 4:4), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 15:10), Moses (Numbers 11:15), The Disciples (Luke 24:17), and many, many more.

One of the most interesting illustrations of discouragement found in the bible is the story of Elijah. He certainly is one of the most unique and spiritually powerful men in the entire Bible. After publicly defeating 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, only hours later he is running for fear of his very life discouraged and defeated.

#### Discussion Points

After Elijah stood and successfully faced and defeated the 450 prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18, we then find him fleeing from the Queen to an abandoned cave and discouraged fearing for his very life in 1 Kings 19. Evidently, as seen in this account, Christians are the most vulnerable after a great spiritual victory in their lives. We must keep our guard up at all times.

#### Discussion Questions

1. It is clear from 1 Kings 19 that Elijah's discouragement was closely associated with isolation. Why do you think that isolation from other Christians would only increase your chances of being discouraged?
2. Why was Elijah feeling discouraged, afraid, and all alone? What specific circumstances happened that led to his discouragement? What can we learn from these circumstances to help us in our walk with the Lord?
3. How did God take care of Elijah during this crucial time in his life? Did God abandon him at any time?
4. Has there ever been a time in your life when you found yourself afraid, discouraged, and seemingly all alone? What did you do about it? Better yet, what did God do about it?

#### Think About It

It should be alarming to the average Christian that so many "giants" of the Christian faith in the Bible and throughout history have fallen into the deep, dark, pit of discouragement for long periods of time. Realizing that this has happened to so many people, what can you do in a practical way to guard against this happening in your own life?

#### Do Something About It!

Christians were never meant to survive in an atmosphere of discouragement. God's will is for us to be "encouraged" in the Lord (Joshua 1:8). Knowing how destructive this vice can be, what can you do to prevent discouragement? Try to find your answers in 1 Kings 19.

#### Be Willing To Change

"And David was greatly distressed; for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of the people was grieved, every man his sons and his daughters; but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God" (1 Samuel 30:6).

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