

Oaks-West Church of Christ

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Discouraged or Encouraged

by Darrell Trammel

There is a lot that can discourage us while we are isolated because of the coronavirus. We can't do a lot of the things we are accustomed to doing, especially gathering together as members of the Lord's body to worship and study together. It has been a little over a week and I can feel the difference. I miss each and every one of you. You all are in my thoughts and prayers daily. In addition, every day that we turn on the news, we are bombarded with doom and gloom (I will give a little credit here – some news outlets are trying to find a silver lining and give some positive reports as well). It can be very easy to be discouraged!

Make no mistake that our adversary, the devil, is using this time to weaken your faith, erode your will, and convince you to give in to temptations to doubt and sin. This is one of those occasions, like Jesus after fasting in the wilderness, when Satan thinks it is the perfect opportunity to tempt you. Heed the words of

Peter:

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 5:6–11)

We need to recognize several important points Peter is making:

1. If you will humble yourselves

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before God (which includes submitting to His will), you will find comfort. You will be able to cast your anxieties on Him. He does not get tired of hearing our troubles. He cares for us and wants us to rely on Him.

2. We need to recognize that Satan is always watching. He is looking for an opening in your spiritual armor so he can attack you (Ephesians 6:16). If you are not equipping yourself with the help from God that He offers, then you are opening yourself up to attack. Without the full armor of God equipped, that attack will get through.

3. We must be on our guard, fully equipped with that armor of God, but we must also provide resistance. No soldier puts on their equipment for battle and then sits down on the battlefield to do nothing or merely to watch! A soldier is expected to resist the enemy and follow the lead of their generals. Fight back! We are at war every single day, coronavirus or not!

4. If you will resist, Satan will flee (James 4:7). Satan is patient. When he encounters resistance, then he will retreat and wait for another opportunity to present itself. This emphasizes that we need to always be on guard, but also that we cannot rest (spiritually) just because the current battle is over. If we do this, then we merely hasten the next attack.

5. You aren't the only person experiencing these issues, whether it be the isolation or it is some temptation or situation that you endure. Every one of us is in a battle for their souls. That means there is strength we can gain from each other but it also means that it is extremely

likely that whatever you face today, one of your brethren has already faced in their past. Seek wise counsel (Proverbs 11:14).

6. God's grace is all we need. He will take care of us. The goal of every Christian is to go home.

It is your choice how you react to the present distress. You can be discouraged or you can find encouragement through the scriptures and the promises God has made to us. He cannot lie, and He has proven Himself faithful. Let us choose to be encouraged!

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.



Upcoming Ladies' Bible Classes - cancelled until further notice.

All services are cancelled until further notice.

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.



Please remember the following individuals in your daily prayers:

June Owens
Jack Wilson
Jerry Richardson
Karen Hallmark
Autumn Felps
Smarr Family
Stinnett Family
Shirley Perkins' brother, Leon
O'Hair Family

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

We have many that face challenges on a daily basis and need your prayers as well.

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

