

In **2 Timothy 3**, the apostle Paul warns young Timothy that the end times will be especially dangerous because of the moral degeneration of mankind

“For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,”

(2 Timothy 3:2–3, NKJV)

- And of course, this is the world in which we are now living

In the world, we now live it can be easy to feel defeated and overwhelmed yet the Bible shows us that through Jesus we are More than Conquerors

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

Romans 8:37 NKJV

In this series, we will see how we can be over-comers and live in victory in every area of life!

The Apostle John says we have the capacity to overcome the world and everything that is the enemy of Christ

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” **(1 John 5:4–5, NKJV)**

We have looked at overcoming Rejection, Fear, Comparison, Shame and Unforgiveness

Now let's look at overcoming Discouragement

The enemy will do everything in his power to stop us from fulfilling God's plan for our lives

He wants us to be so overwhelmed by our circumstances that we give up and stop doing what God has called us to do

David was a fearless shepherd, a valiant warrior, and a champion of the faith

- He also had some incredibly low points in his life
- Times when the odds seemed against him

In one of those times, David fought against discouragement encouraging himself in the Lord

“Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, and had taken captive the women and those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way. So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God. Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?" And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all."

(1 Samuel 30:1–8, NKJV)

- David's story begins in **1 Samuel 16**
- His father, Jesse, is a Jewish man who lives in the town of Bethlehem and has eight sons
- David is the youngest son and takes care of his father's flocks of sheep
- One day, the prophet Samuel arrives and invites Jesse and his sons to join him in a ritual sacrifice

They do not know that the prophet is actually there because God sent him to anoint one of Jesse's sons to be the next king of Israel

King Saul disobeyed God repeatedly

- Samuel warned Saul that his disobedience has caused God to reject him as king
- Saul does not realize that Samuel has gone to anoint the next king of Israel

Jesse presents his seven older sons to Samuel, while David is left behind tending the sheep

- The prophet is initially impressed with the older sons, but God is not

He tells Samuel...

“But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

(1 Samuel 16:7, NKJV)

Samuel asks to see the youngest son, and when David arrives, God immediately tells the prophet...

“So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!”

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.”

(1 Samuel 16:12-13, NKJV)

- You may think that being anointed the next king would ensure David an easy, happy, and peaceful life
- However, almost everything in David’s life becomes more difficult

Yes, David goes on to defeat the giant Goliath and wins the admiration of the people of Israel

- However, Saul becomes extremely jealous
- He tries to kill David by throwing a spear at him
- David has to flee for his life
- King Saul pursues David all around Israel

Finally, David has to leave Israel and take refuge with the Philistines

- David gets kicked out of the Philistine camp – **1 Samuel 29**
- Saul still wants to kill him, and the enemy wants nothing to do with him

David and his men return to Ziklag and find that the Amalekites had invaded the city, taken their families captive, and set the place on fire

- David's men are courageous and loyal to David
- They have followed him from the comfort of their homes to enemy territory and back again
- Seeing their burned city and fearing for the lives of their loved ones greatly discourages them
- They talk of stoning David
- This is what a bad day looks like

Yet, in the middle of confusion and chaos, David encourages himself in the Lord

Discouragement is Not a Condition it is a Choice

- All of us get discouraged from time to time
- Even overwhelmed or depressed

As long as we live on the earth the devil will attack us with discouragement from time to time

- Any of us can become discouraged
- Staying there is a choice!

David could have been overcome with grief and anxiety, instead, he encouraged himself in the Lord

To Overcome Discouragement You Must Have A Godward Mindset

“I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.” (Psalm 16:8, NKJV)

- Having a Godward mindset means focusing your attention on God
- David was a master of this skill

Out of 150 Psalms, 73 of those are attributed to David

- The man was a worshipper
- He wrote many of those songs during very difficult times in life
- They are a great comfort to you and me today!

When Goliath taunted the Israelite army the trained soldiers shook in their boots

- David showed up with a slingshot and defeated the enemy

“Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.” (1 Samuel 17:45, NKJV)

- David chose to see God in everything
- That is a choice we can all make
- God is right there with all of us

However, our attitude and state of mind have everything to do with our choice to acknowledge God or not

If we do not see Him in our circumstances we will find ourselves overwhelmed

“Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; Defend me from those who rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, And save me from bloodthirsty men. For look, they lie in wait for my life; The mighty gather against me, Not for my transgression nor for my sin, O LORD. They run and prepare themselves through no fault of mine. Awake to help me, and behold!”

“But You, O LORD, shall laugh at them; You shall have all the nations in derision. I will wait for You, O You his Strength; For God is my defense. My God of mercy shall come to meet me; God shall let me see my desire on my enemies.”

(Psalm 59:1-4, 8–10, NKJV)

Remember that David was part of Saul's government

- He had been taken into Saul's house after he killed Goliath

However, the king became angry after the people began singing that Saul had killed his thousands, but David had killed tens of thousands

- Filled with demonic rage and jealousy Saul focused on one thing
- Killing David

When David penned **Psalm 59** his house was surrounded by king Saul's trained killers, watching for an opportunity to strike

David's Godward mindset allowed him to focus on God in the worst of circumstances

- He refused to let the devil take his mind off of God
- David reminded himself...
- God is bigger than my giants
- He is bigger than my mountains
- He is bigger than my enemies
- He is bigger than my problems

The absolute worst thing we can do is forget that God is with us

- When we forget that God is with us, the battle is over

What happens when you keep your mind on God?

You have instant encouragement and a new perspective

- When you see God in everything God gets bigger and your problems get smaller

You develop increased faith and decreased worries and fears

“You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.” (Isaiah 26:3, NKJV)

You find a new way of speaking and acting

- Having a Godward mindset causes us to speak and act by faith
- This allows God to intervene and change our circumstances

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6, NKJV)

- You have got to believe that God has your best interest in mind
- Don't allow yourself to think and speak doom and gloom

I'm not suggesting that we deny the problems we are going through, but when God is with us it is always a good day

- Make a choice!

“This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalm 118:24, NKJV)

You Become an encourager to other people

- David was the most inspirational king of Israel
- He inspired many men to follow him

Even when their wives and children were taken captive, and the city burned to the ground he rose up and encouraged those around him

By the way, three chapters later Saul dies and David becomes king, surrounded by the men he encouraged at Ziklag

Share a story about the move from TC to Ionia

- All hope seemed gone
- Trish's nervous breakdown
- I was extremely discouraged
- We chose to encourage ourselves in the Lord
- We were able to encourage Pastor John and Lisa to not quit
- They have built a church that has touched thousands of people over the years
- In a building right downtown Ionia

Everyone needs encouragement

Don't let the devil use you to spread discouragement with your mouth and discourage yourself and others around you

- Just a few words, can make a difference in someone's life
- What decision will you make?
- Will you share a bad report or a good report?

Regardless of your circumstances don't let your word overwhelm or discourage anyone!

You destroy the power of the Devil to oppress you in any way

“Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples; To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute on them the written judgment— This honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD!” (Psalm 149:5–9, NKJV)

- God’s word is a two-edged sword – **Hebrews 4:12**
- With it, we fight against the devil
- Praise is one of the most powerful weapons against discouragement

David did not let circumstances keep him from praising God

- He chose praise in the middle of his problems
- That was his secret to encouraging himself in the Lord

“To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” (Isaiah 61:3, NKJV)

- Zion – the place where God’s people dwell
- Your life may have been devastated to the point of ashes
- Mourn – a deep spirit of heaviness
- God gives us the garment of praise for heaviness
- Like any garment, you need to put it on

Perspectives to Keep in Mind to Overcome Discouragement

Expect Difficulty, Then Victory

“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.” (Romans 5:3–4, NKJV)

- There are going to be problems
- There are going to be bad times
- However, God is working for our good
- Victory is assured
- Yes, there will be a fight
- And yes, we will win!

Life is Tough, But You Will Win

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.” (1 Peter 4:12–13, NKJV)

- Are you going through trouble?
- Join the club
- Trials are common but you will win
- Fight for your promised land

If you weren’t heading in the right direction the enemy would have no reason to fight you!

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

(Matthew 16:18–19, NKJV)

- Remember that Peter was the one who denied Jesus three times
- If Jesus told this to Peter knowing full well He would turn away from Him God can use any one of us

Notice the gates of hell are being charged not the other way around

- Many people are just holding on protecting the gates from the enemy
- We must be on the offensive
- Change our perspective!
- We have authority!

“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” **(Luke 10:19, NKJV)**

- Jesus promises that nothing will harm you if you fight!
- He gives us authority over all the power of the enemy
- If we do not fight we will be overwhelmed
- If we fight we are more than conquerors! – **Romans 8:37**

You Must Live in the Grace of God

David had a lot of problems, but he knew that he was only qualified by the grace of God

- In Ziklag, David never made it about himself
- That's how you know if you're walking in grace or not
- Grace is all about God and His goodness

Performance is all about us – how qualified we are and how well we are doing in life

“If I do enough good, then I deserve good. If I do something bad, then I deserve bad.”

- Always trying to pedal harder or run faster
- Always feeling that if we stop performing everything will fall apart
- When David was at Ziklag he didn't try to perform, he stopped and asked God what they were supposed to do

“My God of mercy shall come to meet me; God shall let me see my desire on my enemies.” (Psalm 59:10, NKJV)

- *“My God of mercy”* – I do not deserve to be rescued by God
- I do not deserve to be used by God
- Everything I have is a gift of His grace
- The only thing I can do is praise Him and obey Him
- I do not have to try harder, and I do not need to deserve it
- When I know I am weak, He is strong!