

christian

WORKER



"We are workers together with Him..." (2 Cor. 6:1)

Volume 106, Number 3

8900 Menchaca Road, Austin, TX 78748

March 2020

OVERCOMING DISCOURAGEMENT

Ronnie Scherffius

There has never been a time more difficult than today. There has never been a society where men were more sinful and given to wickedness than our own. There has never been occasions where there was more reason for discouragement among God's people than there is today. This may be the attitude of some—but it is wholly without merit (cf. Gen. 6; Acts 8). Though we may be disposed to believe that discouragement is unique to our time and perhaps even to our lives, a quick glance through the Scriptures clearly demonstrate that even the most admired men and women of the Bible endured very discouraging times. Consider that Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers (Gen. 37); Moses endured the murmuring of God's people (Ex. 15, 16, 17, et al); Naomi lost both husband and sons (Ruth 1); Elijah was convinced he was the only one left faithfully serving God (1 Kings 19); Jeremiah became so discouraged that he decided to quit preaching (Jer. 20); Paul stood before the Ro-man Emperor defending the gospel—alone (2 Tim. 4:16).

From the youngest to the oldest—all experience discouragement. Discouragement can lead to anxiety and even depression. According the ADA (Anxiety and Depression Association of America) in 2016, 18% of the population of the U.S. age 18 and older were affected by anxiety (40 million adults!). One-third of the monies spent to treat mental health was used to treat anxiety (\$42 billion). It is common for people struggling with anxiety also to suffer from depression. Depression, if left unchecked, can lead to alcohol/drug

abuse, chronic aches, phobias, loss of production at school/work, family/relationship problems, social isolation, eating disorders, self-mutilation, and even suicide. There is no medical cure for anxiety only medicines for treatment, and in 2016, 10.7% of Americans were prescribed antidepressants—up from 1.8% in 1988! While there may be no prescriptive cure, there is a scriptural cure! Consider the following treatments for *Overcoming Discouragement*.

Look up rather than down. After settling the dispute between herdsmen and separating from his family, Abraham was told by God, "Lift up now thine eyes"

continued on page 7

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overcoming Discouragement <i>Ronnie Scherffius</i>	1
Respecting the Authority of Christ <i>Cody Westbrook</i>	2
Overcoming Discouragement (Part 2) <i>Ronnie Scherffius</i>	3
Great is God's Glory! <i>Johnny Ramsey</i>	4
We Can Never Leave the Fundamentals <i>Wendell Winkler</i>	5
Full Atonement - Can it Be? <i>Kevin W. Rhodes</i>	6



"We are workers together with Him..." (2 Cor. 6:1)

RESPECTING THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

Cody Westbrook

At a time in which everyone does what is right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6), the challenge to respect the authority of Christ is great. This present age is very much like those described in the pages of history. Consider Israel, in 1 Samuel 8, who demanded a king to rule over them like the surrounding nations. The problem was that they already had a King, Jehovah, but they rejected Him (1 Sam. 8:6-9). In his pride, man seeks to become his own authority. He desires to establish his own rules, judgements, and consequences. He follows his own way! But "the way of a fool is right in his own eyes..." (Pro. 12:15), and "there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Pro. 14:12). True wisdom is found in fearing the Lord and respecting His authority (Pro. 1:7). Therefore, it is imperative that we rise to the challenge and respect the authority of the Son of God.

The Father has placed all authority into the hands of Jesus, and we are commanded to respect it. Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). John said, "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand" (John 3:36). To a crowd of unbelieving Jews, Jesus said,

For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man (John 5:26-27).

Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father

far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come (Eph. 1:21).

He is "the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10), His name is above every name (Phil. 2:9), and "angels and authorities, and powers" are subject to Him (1 Pet. 3:22). The New Testament proclaims the authority of Jesus the Christ loudly throughout its pages and commands all people to recognize it. Jesus said, "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him (John 5:23). Paul said, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (Col. 3:17). Every knee must bow, and every tongue confess the Lordship and authority of Jesus Christ, either in this life or in the judgment to come.

The authority of Christ is seen in His word. Jesus said,

He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak (John 12:48-50).

Jesus promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would teach and bring to their remembrance all things that He had taught them (John 14:26). He further said,

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come (John 16:12-13).

The Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to preach and write the words of Christ. Therefore, when we read the pages of New Testament scripture, we read words that carry the full weight of divine authority. All scripture is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and written down by men who were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Respecting the authority of Christ means respecting His word. John warned that those who transgress and go beyond the doctrine of Christ "have not God" (2 John 9-11). Paul proclaimed those who preach "any other gospel" to be accursed

(Gal. 1:6-11). Opinions, traditions, and false doctrines of every sort are an affront to the authority of Christ. We must respect, preach, and apply His word, not ours. For, only then, will we truly respect the authority of Christ.

The authority of Christ is also seen in the fact that He is head over His church. Jesus proclaimed "...on this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). The church belongs to Christ. He purchased her with His blood (Acts 20:28). She is His body (Eph. 1:22-23) and His bride (Eph. 5:23), and therefore it should not surprise us to learn that He alone possesses the right to reign as King and Ruler over her. Colossians 1:18 says,

and He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

He is "head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23).

As head, Jesus is the one who determines doctrine and direction. No man has the right to dictate what the church teaches, how it worships, or how its members live daily. We owe honor and allegiance to Christ, and no man. All men stand on equal ground at the foot of the cross. Even elders serve under the chief shepherd (1 Pet. 5). To exalt a man or a man's doctrine to the level of Christ and His doctrine is to violate God's law and disrespect the authority of Jesus.

Until the day that He gives the kingdom over to the Father and lays down His authority (1 Cor. 15:20-28), Jesus has all authority. It can be challenging to respect that authority, especially when the cry of our world is "to each his own!" but we must rise and meet that challenge!

CW



SW church of Christ
Podcast

Follow us on your favorite podcast app to automatically download sermons each week.

- iTunes: <https://apple.co/33PWqyl>
- Spotify: <https://spoti.fi/371ndcO>
- Google Play: <http://bit.ly/2QuG8a5>

OVERCOMING DISCOURAGEMENT

(PART 2)

Ronnie Scherffius

One of the greatest and often kept hidden challenges that we have in this life is discouragement. Everyone faces discouraging circumstances in their lives. These circumstances vary from bad grades on a test, not making the team, or a relationship breakup for a youth to job loss, lengthy illness, or loss of a spouse for an adult. Among all of humanity and at every age everyone suffers from discouragement. This being the case we should direct our attention to the Scriptures that we may learn just how we can both endure and overcome such trying times.

In a previous article we noted two particular scriptural treatments for overcoming discouragement: 1) look up rather than down and 2) count your blessings not your problems. Let's continue these thoughts noting three more treatments which, if properly applied, will help us in those times when we find ourselves struggling with discouragement.

Look outward rather than inward. Paul instructed the Galatians, "Bear ye one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2), and "As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all" (Gal. 6:10). It is impossible to adhere to these admonitions when we continually dwell on our own problems to the exclusion of the trials and difficulties of others. Hanging on the cross Jesus uttered two amazing statements: "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), and "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). While we often consider the spiritual significance of these statements we fail to consider that even in the most trying time of His life, Jesus was looking outward to the needs and state of others rather than His own difficulty. If we were truly to stop and think about it, on our worst day we could find someone engaged in a far greater battle than ourselves. When we look to others who are discouraged, and try to encourage them, we will ourselves be encouraged. Thus another treatment to help us overcome discouragement is to look outward rather than inward — be an encourager!

Read the end of the book—We Win! We've all had days that start out bad and seem to get worse as the day progresses. If we know nothing of what lies beyond this

life we might easily give up. But the end of all things for the Christian is victory in Jesus Christ! We have a mansion prepared for us (John 14:1-3); this body in which our spirit dwells will one day give way to that “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5:1)! Paul encouraged the Corinthians saying,

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

The earth and all contained within it, including the trials and difficulties of life, will one day pass away! In that dwelling place which is to come there will be no sadness, sorrow, tears, death, parting, separation, fears, worldly labors, or temptations — ONLY VICTORY! Read the end of the book (Rev. 1-21). We Win!

A final treatment suggestion to help us overcome discouragement is: **look at the difficulties of this world as a way to make you stronger and lift you up.** We often read the instruction of James when considering this thought:

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:2-4).

But consider also the significance of Paul’s words,

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you (Phil. 1:23-24).

In essence Paul could say: “I may not know the plan but I know God, and I will trust Him to see me through.” Paul allowed the difficulties of this world to draw him closer to his Savior to such a degree that he would say,

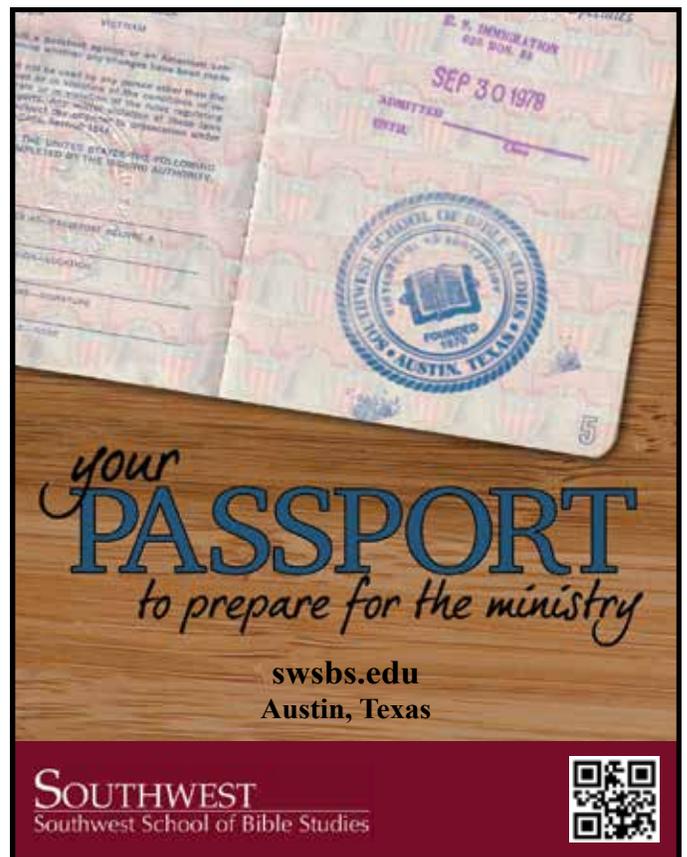
for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (2 Tim. 1:12).

The trials and tribulations of this life, if we will let them, can lift us up closer to God than we have ever been.

God told Abraham “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art” — then God showed

Abraham what He was going to give him. Similarly God has told us to lift up our eyes and look to Him and His Word and He will help us to overcome! Are you discouraged? Focus your eyes on heaven and count your blessings. Look around—if you find one in a worse condition than you—help them. Remember, as Christians faithful to God—We Win! Let the difficulties of this world lift you up, in doing this we can overcome discouragement!

CW



GREAT IS GOD’S GLORY!
(PSALM 138)
Johnny Ramsey

Truly, the Bible often puts the spotlight on the praise and adoration we ought to manifest toward our Maker. In Psalm 138, we have a noble example of this marvelous expression of loyalty toward Jehovah:

*Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord:
for great is the glory of the Lord. (Ps. 138:1)*

Ten sections later, in Psalm 148, we have the basis for the famous hymn we have known since childhood:

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven. (Ps. 148:13)

We should exalt Deity with our whole heart and not with timidity or hesitation (Jer. 29:13). With rich exuberance and not halting apology, our sincere gratitude must flow from grateful spirits. Today we ardently sing:

To God be the glory,
Great things He hath done;
So loved He the world that
He gave us His Son. . .

What a debt we owe to such noble and generous giving toward mankind! Where would we be were it not for such beneficent grace? An old hymn reminds us:

Again the Lord of light and life
Awakes the kindling ray,
Unseals the eyelids of the morn,
And pours increasing day.
Let gladness dwell in every heart,
And praise, on every tongue. . .

Psalm 138:6 enriches our concepts of what genuine concern by the Creator is all about:

*Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect
unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth
afar off.*

God is not impressed with arrogance and earthly fame. Truth, humility and sincerity are richly blessed by our Father above. In this beautiful and encouraging Psalm 138, we are told that our sorrow and trouble reaches heaven and touches the heart of Deity. He does indeed see our tears and hear our prayers (Isa. 38:5). W. H. Clark wrote memorable words in song:

All praise to Him who reigns above
In majesty supreme;
Who gave His Son for man to die
That He might man redeem.

In the very last verse of this brief psalm, we learn anew that the mercy of the Lord endureth forever. We dare not live in such a manner that we miss such comfort! May we be sustained by the presence of God in our daily walk and loyally pursue the sunlight of divine love. How

can we give glory to the Lord?

1. Live in such a way as to draw men to Him.
2. Learn the Bible so thoroughly we can teach it.
3. Sing praises to Him fervently and joyously.
4. Strengthen new Christians by noble examples.
5. Pray in deeper and richer words of meaning.
6. Bring wayward members back to God.
7. Convert our neighbors to Jesus!

Such spiritual endeavors will cause rejoicing in heaven (Luke 15:10). L. O. Sanderson challenged us:

Bring Christ your broken life,
So marred by sin,
He will create anew,
Make whole again. . .

To God be the glory!

CW

WE CAN NEVER LEAVE THE FUNDAMENTALS

Wendell Winkler

A builder will lay a good foundation, and then build his superstructure. However, when the building is completed, he does not remove the foundation. If anything, he will strengthen it.

In like manner, in the field of mathematics, the student may study algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus; but he never forsakes the fundamentals of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

Similarly, in studying our Bibles, we must “go on unto perfection” (Heb. 6:1). But, we must never forsake or depreciate the basic fundamentals of the doctrine of Christ. Rather, we must reemphasize and re-emphasize them. If we do not know what the Bible teaches on basic Bible themes, we need to learn such. If we have studied them extensively, we will still need to have our minds stirred up by way of remembrance (2 Pet. 1:12-15). After years of thorough and extensive study of the sacred text, a student found David Lipscomb studying the subject of baptism. Upon expressing surprise that he would be studying such a fundamental theme, brother Lipscomb replied to the

young man, “I’m afraid there is still something about the subject I do not know.” We can never leave the fundamentals. Then let us never forget that each new generation must be taught anew the fundamentals. Only herein does our safety lie! Seriously, may we remain cognizant that we are only one generation from apostasy.

December 1999

CW

FULL ATONEMENT - CAN IT BE?

Kevin W. Rhodes

The Jews journeyed to Jerusalem for several feasts every year—each having a special significance. As they traveled and approached the city and especially the temple, their purpose in drawing near grew clearer and clearer. This developed not only from their proximity to their ancient capital but also due to their practice of singing psalms as they approached, songs designed to remind them of their identity, of their need, and of their purpose in coming to worship in the temple on that occasion. While obedience to the Law—especially following their captivity in Babylon—motivated and directed them, the focus and content of the psalms shows that other concerns also drove them. The third feast commanded, the Feast of Ingathering, began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Ex. 23:16); however, the LORD designated a solemn Sabbath just five days before this on the tenth (Lev. 16:29-33), Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Reflection on this day and its meaning permeates Psalm 130 thereby giving it a deeper meaning and tone.

Depression and despair, regular themes in the psalms, take on greater gravity when placed in a spiritual context. Guilt—properly felt due to sin—is serious cause indeed. And experienced fully, it produces a separation and loneliness like no other (Isa. 59:1-2), making the opening cry of the psalm even more forlorn: “Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD” (Psa. 130:1). Sinful man needs a holy God—desperately. It is essential that man knows it, realizes it, feels it. Sadly, many feel their guilt and ignore it, feel their guilt and dismiss it, or feel their guilt and misinterpret it. But those who recognize it

as the offspring of sin, turn to the LORD as He desires and seek pardon for it (Psa. 130:2). The Lord knows our sins—every one. But He is also longsuffering and does not act on them immediately due to His loving forbearance (Psa. 130:3). The LORD wants to forgive; He longs to forgive. Therefore, He has created a plan to forgive. And this should produce a deep reverence in all who realize the extent to which He is willing to go to have a relationship with us (Psa. 130:4). He does not need us as slaves or anything else, but He still wants us as His children. What a marvelous thought!

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father (Rom. 8:15).

The relationship God desires is personal, spiritual, and character driven. He has given His Word and offered promises to create hope in those who read and gain faith with the design that the message within will create a spiritual longing for the LORD in return (Psa. 130:5). However, spiritual longing for the LORD should surpass some casual interest but turn into a grand expectation rooted in the full consideration of His character and thus building a confident expectation that assures all of the certainty of the fulfillment of every promise (Psa. 130:6). Having then gained full assurance of the great extent of the LORD’s desire to forgive, the psalmist called on all of Israel to adopt the same confidence. The answer to all matters of guilt and the sin that created it depend on an understanding and expectation of the depth of mercy bestowed upon man by the Yahweh (Psa. 130:7). Because He has reached out His hand in mercy rather than striking out in anger, He has placed His character and love on display, supplying the purchase price necessary to provide redemption in the face of despair. In doing so, He does not address a fraction of trespasses practiced or remove a portion of sins committed but the whole, addressing and redeeming Israel from “all his iniquities” (Psa. 130:8).

Spiritually-minded people seeking God’s forgiveness today should marvel still at His longsuffering (2 Pet. 3:9) and be drawn to turn their hearts back to God in faith (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6). However, God’s plan today, rooted in the atonement made possible through the sacrifice of His Son (1 Jn. 2:1-2; Heb. 7:26-27), demands more than simple prayer but rather convicted repentance (Acts 17:30), confessed allegiance (Matt. 10:32-33), and committed obedience (Acts 22:16;

Heb. 5:8- 9), thus calling on the name of the LORD (Acts 2:16-38). We must never take forgiveness lightly, for what it cost God or what it requires of us. But once received, we should sing about it often, with words similar to the psalmist's.

CW



The Gospel Radio Network launched in January 2014 as a 24/7 internet radio station broadcasting sound gospel preaching throughout the world. This work is overseen by the elders of the Mount Vernon church of Christ in Mount Vernon, TX.

For a schedule of programs visit them at www.thegospelradionetwork.org

continued from page 1

(Gen. 13:14). Have you ever considered that when we lift up our eyes our focus changes from worldly to heavenly? Life is meaningless without a heavenly hope. Some place their hope in worldly possessions but earthly treasures are temporary. Jesus instructed,

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal (Matt 6:19-20).

You will never see a U-haul following a hearse and there are no pockets in a shroud! Search the ancient tombs and one will discover the treasures of the Pharaohs remain. When man's hope and focus is on this world disappointment and discouragement are a certain consequence, but our hope is in heaven and heaven should be our focus.

Paul wrote,

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2).

The Hebrews writer posited that Jesus is our “hope” and “anchor of the soul” (Heb. 6:18-20) and Paul admonished Titus that we should be “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13). To the Romans, Paul would write “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). When we lift up our eyes and focus on things above we will soon realize that any loss, disappointment, difficulty, or discouragement is easily overcome by a heavenly hope!

Count your blessings not your problems. Everyone has problems. Focusing on problems produces an attitude of self-pity. A short phrase in the most well known of all the psalms reads “my cup runneth over” (Psalm 23:5). Why do we always seem to focus on the problem cup rather than the blessing cup?! Here is a novel idea, when struggling with discouragement we should sit down and make two lists — one list is our problems the other our blessings. Which list is longer? Which list is more positive? Which list draws us closer to God? Which list inspires us to help others? Which list helps us appreciate God's blessings?

Consider the abundant physical blessings we enjoy daily: life and good health; access to good medicines; access to food; liberty and prosperity; freedom to worship God without fear; love of family and friends. And these pale in comparison to the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ: redemption and forgiveness of sins; fellowship with God; assurance of acceptable worship; knowing that God hears and regards our prayers. We often sing,

When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed;

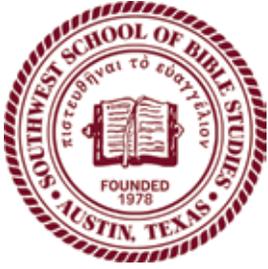
When you are discouraged thinking all is lost;

Count your many blessings name them one by one;

And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

By counting our blessings rather than our problems we **can** overcome discouragement.

CW



SOUTHWEST

Southwest School of Bible Studies

FACULTY

Steven Lloyd *director*

Clay Bond *associate
director*

Matt Gibson

Wayne Jones

Carl McCann

Ronnie Scherffius

Logan Summers

Cody Westbrook

Southwest graduates serve as preachers, authors, campus directors, missionaries, and school leaders on five continents. Whatever your passion, with strong academics and hands-on training, our collegiate program will empower you to serve Christ and His church.

- **Two year full-time program for men and women**
- **Well-respected Bible faculty**
- **Verse-by-verse study of the entire Bible**
- **Training in expository preaching**
- **No tuition**
- **Living expense assistance available**
- **Studies in Biblical languages**



swsbs.edu

*“To know Jesus and...
make Him known”*

Southwest church of Christ
Christian Worker
8900 Menchaca Road
Austin, TX 78748

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Menchaca, Texas
Permit No. 85