

## QC0076 - 3 Small Changes That Will Raise Your Tolerance for Discouragement

Everybody has a different level of pain tolerance. Some have a high tolerance for pain. They have the ability to tolerate pain that others might find intolerable.

Still, other people have a very low tolerance for pain. Even a small pain feels big to them. They don't wait to see if the headache will get worse. They take something at the first sign of a headache to make it go away. The same can be said about discouragement.

Some people have a high tolerance for discouragement. These are the people who say things like, "Yeah, that thing we've been planning on for years fell through, but it's ok. I mean, we're disappointed, but it will be fine."

Others have a very low tolerance for discouragement. They say things like, "I can't believe this is happening to me!" "Why can't I get a break?" No matter what the size of the discouragement, it seems to devastate them and they rehearse the disappointment till it becomes larger than life.

Chances are you're somewhere in-between those two extremes. But no matter what your tolerance for discouragement might be, one thing is for sure... discouragement is unavoidable.

- The job you were pursuing doesn't come through.
- You needed a B on the exam to pass the class and you got a C.
- The person you like declines a second date.
- The child on which you set your hopes becomes a prodigal.
- You were just getting a little money saved up and then the air conditioning goes out.
- You're ready for a long awaited night on the town, and then your child gets sick.
- You expected to get a return on your taxes, but find out you're going to owe the IRS.
- The spouse you thought would stay and work things out, makes a last minute decision to leave.
- Your boss tells you the raise you were promised is not going to happen this year.
- You step on the scales expecting to have lost weight, and instead you find you've gained weight.
- The lady at the drive-up tells you they're out of Diet Coke.

Whatever it may be, you can't go through life without experiencing some discouragement. So what is the key to raising your discouragement tolerance? It starts with these 3 small changes to raise your discouragement tolerance:

- **Change Your Focus.** When something doesn't go the way we had hoped, we tend to focus on what we don't have rather than on what we do have. Think about it. If you go to the beach for vacation and it rains the whole time you're there, which will make the discouragement better... focusing on not getting to lay out in the sun or focusing on having the time off? If you go out to eat and the restaurant doesn't have what you wanted, which will make the discouragement better... focusing on not getting your favorite dish or focusing on not having to cook? Your focus will effect your feelings.
- **Change Your Comparisons.** Whether something is big or small depends on what you compare it to. When something goes wrong, we tend to compare it to when things were good. This is the wrong comparison. It makes the discouragement worse. Instead, compare it to how bad it could have been. A broken arm seems big until you compare it to an amputation. Having to replace an air conditioning unit seems big until you compare it to being homeless. That old saying, "It could be worse." might be cliché, but it's also true.
- **Change Your Frame.** When something doesn't go the way we had hoped, we tend to put a tight frame around that disappointment so that it fills up the entire picture. But if we put a larger frame on the picture, we will see there's a lot more going on than just the discouragement. Suppose a couple goes through the devastation of a miscarriage. That's an awful experience and nothing should minimize it, but if they change their frame and make it bigger than just the miscarriage they may see other things also. Friends and family who supported them. Groups of people who brought meals. New friendships and affinities with people who've been through the same experience. Changing the frame helps you see more than just the discouragement.

These 3 changes are simple, but they are not always easy. They take practice to implement. But making these 3 changes will change your perspective and raise your discouragement tolerance.

You see these 3 approaches in the ancient story of David and Goliath.

In the story, a young David comes to the battlefield to find a nine-foot, hulk of a warrior challenging the army of Israel to a one-on-one fight...winner takes all.

The Israelites were discouraged and huddled in fear at the sight and sound of Goliath. But rather than being discouraged, young David boldly steps up to the task and defeats Goliath. How did he do it? By making the same 3 changes we talked about.

- **David changed his focus.** Rather than focusing on the imminent threat before him, he focused on the victories God had given him in the past. (1 Sam. 17:34-36)
- **David changed his comparison.** Goliath focused on how small David was in comparison to himself. But David focused on how small Goliath was in comparison to God.(1 Sam. 17:42-45)
- **David changed his frame.** For David, fighting Goliath was not just about knocking down a person. It was about upholding a cause, a nation, and a God. His frames was a lot bigger than just Goliath. (1 Sam. 17:45-47)

So, where is it that you're discouraged today. It may seem big to you, but try applying these 3 changes. Change your focus, change your comparisons, and change the way you frame the problem. Chances are, if you do this, it will raise your tolerance for discouragement and then get you beyond it.