

# DEFEATING DISCOURAGEMENT

By R. Warren

Discouragement is a disease unique to human beings: It's *universal*. Everyone gets it. It's *reoccurring*. You can catch it more than once. It's *highly contagious*. Hang around discouraged people - you'll be infected.

## WHAT CAUSES DISCOURAGEMENT?

**#1 Cause: FATIGUE.** When you are physically or emotionally exhausted, you are a prime candidate to be infected with discouragement. Your defenses are lowered, and things can seem bleaker than they really are. This often occurs when you are halfway through a major project -you get tired.

**#2 Cause: FRUSTRATION.** When unfinished tasks pile up, it's natural to feel overwhelmed. And when trivial matters or the unexpected interrupt you and prevent you from accomplishing what you really *need* to do, your frustration can easily produce discouragement.

**#3 Cause: FAILURE.** Sometimes, your best-laid plans fall apart: the project collapses... the deal falls through ... the order is cancelled. How do you react? Do you give in to self-pity? Do you blame others? As one man said, "*Just when I think I can make ends meet- somebody moves the ends!*" That's discouraging!

**#4 Cause: FEAR.** Fear is behind more discouragement than we'd like to admit. The fear of criticism (*What will they think?*), the fear of responsibility (*What if I can't handle this?*) and the fear of failure (*What if I blow it?*) can cause a major onset of the blues.



## WHAT'S THE CURE?

There's a fascinating story in the Bible about how a guy named Nehemiah mobilized the residents of Jerusalem to build a wall around the entire city. Halfway through the project, the citizens became discouraged and wanted to give up - because of the 4 causes I've given. Here's what Nehemiah told them to do to defeat their discouragement: (Nehemiah 4)

- ◆ **REST YOUR BODY!** If you need a break - take one! You'll be more effective when you return to work. If you're burning the candle at both ends, you're not as bright as you think!
- ◆ **REORGANIZE YOUR LIFE!** Discouragement doesn't necessarily mean you are doing the wrong thing. It may just be that you are doing the right thing *in the wrong way*. Try a new approach. Shake things up a little.
- ◆ **REMEMBER GOD WILL HELP YOU!** Just ask Him. He can give you new energy. There is incredible motivating power in faith.
- ◆ **RESIST THE DISCOURAGEMENT!** Fight back. Discouragement is *a choice*. If you feel discouraged it is because you have *chosen* to feel that way. No one is forcing you to feel bad. Hang on! Do what's right in spite of your feelings. No feeling lasts forever.

