

The plans of the enemy

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Although God is able to take the plans of the enemy and use them for our good, we must also see these as the spiritual attacks that they are. Therefore, we must keep our mind and heart in gear, ready to stand against our adversary and receive the promises of God.

I want to share a few thoughts on things that have helped me in times of struggle and discouragement. God has given us focus in the battle and weapons to fight with.

First, no matter the reason for the discouragement, think about the Lord. Hebrews 12:1-3 says, Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

It is when we look horizontally that we get discouraged. When we let what people say or think and the expectations people have of us to influence us, then discouragement sets in. When we look to men (horizontal) rather than to God (vertical), we easily become weary.

These verses say, "Look unto Jesus" and "consider Him." It is in bringing our lives before the Lord that we find encouragement. All our troubles and all our reasons for discouragement fade away when we look up and see Him.

When we do this, we realize that the difficulties we face are just another way for us to identify with His sufferings (see Philippians 3:10). He is able to turn them around into a means through which we become more Christlike. Discouragement simply becomes a way for His treasure to shine out through the broken clay vessels that we are (see 2 Corinthians 4:7). In our weakness, He is made strong. "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Corinthians 12:9, NIV).