



Cape Coral Church of Christ

1010 S.W. 20th Avenue

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<http://www.thelordsway.com/capecoralfl>

Schedule of Services

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

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Dealing with Discouragement

On leaving office, in an address to members of his administration (Augusts 9, 1974), President Nixon gave the following advice, "Always give your best, never get discouraged, never be petty, always remember others may hate you. Those who hate you don't win unless you hate them. And then you destroy yourself." Pretty good advice, though I'm not sure he always followed it.

From time to time, we all fight a battle with discouragement. Some of God's most effective warriors faced discouragement. Elijah felt alone and hopeless. He fled to a cave in Mount Horeb where, in a moment of despair, he cried out, "I, even I only, am left: and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kings 19:10). Jeremiah, another of God's prophets, became so discouraged he resolved not to mention God, or speak in his name (Jeremiah 20:9). He discovered that an impossible task.

At the heart of discouragement is a failure to trust God. We tend to think that so much depends on us, when in fact, we simply need to acknowledge the sovereignty of God. If anyone had reasons for bouts of discouragement, it would have been the apostle Paul. Yet, here is what he wrote from a Roman prison cell to the church at

Philippi, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:10-13).

The devil will do everything in his power to discourage us, but he will not succeed unless we surrender to him. May that never happen! John Bunyan wrote, "Who would true valor see, let him come hither; one here will content be, come wind, come weather. There's no discouragement shall make him once relent his first avow'd intent to be a pilgrim" (*The Pilgrim's Progress*).

Don't let discouragement get the upper hand. God will keep His promises. Through Jesus Christ we shall overcome!

"No Payments Until Later"

"Time is passing, but it's not too late. You can still enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season at the regular price. Bring your family, they will never forget what you did for them."

The devil doesn't publish such crass sales pitches. But sin's advertising industry is expert in exploiting human nature, and in taking a weakness and exploding it into a fatal habit. Satan doesn't mention that sin's season of pleasure never measures up to its promise.

At best, one might live to be one hundred years old. If the time involved in sleeping, eating, working, and other duties is subtracted, it leaves pitiful little time for just having a good time. And yet, if one could live a thousand times longer, the time is insignificant, only an instant, compared with eternity. On the other hand, hell lasts just as long as heaven does. Jesus said, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46).

Perhaps people delay or refuse to obey God because they perceive life as a story. Someone says of a movie, "I hope it has a happy ending." With books and movies, the story is fixed and the result already determined. Nothing the audience does will change what happens. Life is not a book or a movie. Sitting passively or indulging

in sin while hoping for a happy ending is utter foolishness. Every day you write a chapter in the book of your life. Your children, unsure of what to write, look over your shoulder for ideas. Every day draws you closer to the conclusion: The End. There is a "lived happily ever after," but it is for those who obey God and let Him be the author of their story.

While the devil appeals to the lusts of your flesh, God appeals to your higher nature. Man is made in God's image. You have the power to weigh the consequences and to decide your eternal destiny. Why trade your priceless soul for the temporary gratification of the flesh? There are only two choices: obey God and enjoy eternal life, or buy into Satan's business and reap his reward: eternal punishment.

The way of eternal life is clear: faith in Jesus Christ, repentance of sin, acknowledge your faith, be baptized that the blood of Christ may wash away your sins, and then remain a faithful Christian all your life. Don't be fooled by Satan's soft-sell. Wake up to the reality of God, realize that this very hour, this minute, He is expecting your obedience to his will. Remember, eternal life is a limited-time offer.

It Is the Lord's

There is a sense in which every material thing belongs to the Lord. "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof" (Psalm 24:1). In the New Testament era, there are some specific matters that are designated as "the Lord's." Let us take a brief look at five of them.

The Lord's Day - The sole use of this term is found in Revelation 1:10, where it is written, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet." Inasmuch as Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week (Mark 16:9) and the early church met to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), then "the Lord's day" points to the first day of the week or Sunday.

The Lord's Supper - This expression is also used only one time in the New Testament. "When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat" (1 Corinthians 11:20 ESV). The immediate context points to eating the bread and drinking the cup, so, the Lord's Supper" refers to the "the communion" (1 Corinthians 10:16) or "breaking bread" (Acts 20:7), which is done in memory of the death of Jesus.

The Lord's Church - Jesus promised to build His church, referring to it as "my church" (Matthew 16:18). He bought it with His

own blood, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). In this passage, the reading of the ASV is "the church of the Lord." The church is His, not man's.

The word of the Lord - "But the word of the Lord endureth forever" (1 Peter 1:25). This is the same as "the word of God" (1:23) and "the gospel" (1:25). It is the Lord's word, not man's.

The day of the Lord - "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise ..." (2 Peter 3:10). Please note that "the day of the Lord" is not the same as "the Lord's day" about which we learned earlier in Revelation 1:10. In the context of 2 Peter 3, "the day of the Lord" is the same as "the day of God" (3:12) and "the day of judgment" (3:7). It refers to the time of the second coming of our Lord Jesus.

The only way to be prepared for the coming day of the Lord is to receive the word of the Lord, become a member of the church of the Lord, and properly worship on the Lord's day, including partaking of the Lord's Supper. Thanks be to God for our great Lord!

Flee! Follow! Fight!

A Christian lives in an evil environment. Because this is true, he is admonished to be alert, to be active. In 1 Timothy 6:6-12, this activity is expressed in three words: "flee," "follow," "fight."

● **Flee:** Our most dangerous enemy is sin. The surest safety is flight. We should flee from it as a venomous snake, or a wild boar (1 Timothy 6:9-10).

● **Follow:** Eagerness of desire is on the one hand if fear is on the other. We are to eagerly pursue the good things of life. Life's best prizes come as a result of earnest efforts. We are to follow after righteousness (Proverbs 14:34), godliness (Psalm 111:9), love (Galatians 5:6), patience (Hebrews 12:1), and meekness (Proverbs 24:19).

● **Fight:** The figure changes from a runner to a boxer. There are times when we have to face our foes. Our enemy is threefold: external (the world - 1 John 2:15, 16), internal (the flesh - Romans 7:21), and infernal (the devil - Genesis 3:1).

We should always flee from the presence of evil and follow after that which is good. However, if we cannot flee, we have to fight. Sometimes it is best to fight. Fight for what is right!