

Christian Nonprofit CFO Podcast

EPISODE #37 TRANSCRIPT

Dealing with Discouragement

www.christiannonprofitcfo.com/37-dealing-with-discouragement

David Beroth

My, oh my, what a year 2020 has been! If you're like me, there have been opportunities both for encouragement, but unfortunately, there have been the challenges and possibilities for discouragement as well in this year. Whether it be dealing with the coronavirus or just the societal or political challenges we face this year, or maybe contributions have been down your organization, you've had to deal with how to give appropriate financial oversight in your particular ministry. We're going to deal with the topic today of dealing with discouragement.

Intro

*Welcome to another episode of **The Christian Nonprofit CFO Podcast**. This is the place to enhance your insight as a CFO in order to expand your influence and optimize your ministries impact content on this show is to inform, instruct and encourage your strategic development. It is not to render specific financial or legal advice for your organization. Now here's your host, David Beroth.*

David Beroth

Hello, my friends, and welcome to the December episode of **The Christian Nonprofit CFO Podcast**. As I was thinking about what content would be most appropriate as we end up the year 2020, I was thinking about this theme of discouragement, because in many ways it has been a challenging year. It's been tough to wrestle with some of the challenges that the Lord has allowed to come into our lives and in our society over the course of this year. So I want to share with you a devotional which I presented to an organization about a month and a half ago around this topic of dealing with discouragement. I thought it might be helpful to you as you finish up your year and you reflect back as to what God accomplished in this year in your life. And maybe as we look at the scripture, you could have a few little gems of truth of how to appropriately deal with discouragement in a way that's edifying to you and honoring to the Lord, and hopefully encouraging to others with whom you work.

So we're going to talk about that topic today. Before I share with you that that devotional, which was previously recorded, want to just just share with you a couple of thoughts as we look at the year 2021 for this podcast. One item I want to mention to you, if you have not heard already, Mr. Dick Capen, the co-founder of Cape and Cross Accounting Firm passed away on November 25th of this year at the age of 96. He was just a dear beloved man. And I had the

privilege of having an office right next to him over the past four years, since I've served as the CFO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. But he had a rough year, of course, with the difficulties of coronavirus this year and he passed away. But I want to share with you for the January episode, an interview I had with him last year when he had turned 95, and it was just a sweet, precious time. Last year, when I sat down with him and I had some discussion of what God had done in his life over the many years—he has a fascinating history as a World War II veteran—as one who was very instrumental in giving leadership to the ECFA for many years. So I'm going to share with you that interview in our January episode.

I also just want to share some of the topics that I've been thinking about and, Lord willing, maybe I can do some episodes on these topics in 2021. So some of the things I've been pondering right now... One is the value of rumination, that, if you want to succeed as a financial leader, you need to really ponder and meditate upon what God has for you in certain areas, if you want to be able to present effectively and communicate well in various organizations or in various parts of the organization. Also, I might do an episode sometime on the transcendent versus the transactional, how we differentiate those two. And just some thoughts about how we have to deal effectively and appropriately with the transactions, but never lose focus on the transcendent.

Another topic is how to have impactful performance reviews. If you are like me, this is the season to be working on performance reviews and maybe look at some ideas around how to have impactful ones. Another topic I've been pondering is how to effectively write emails to accomplish what you need to do in your emails, how to make them be emails that people actually wouldn't mind reading and how to get the answers you need from the questions that you're asking in your emails and the items you are presenting. Another topic I've been thinking some about is I might do an episode sometime on "the Friday dash," and this would be looking at the three things you need to really have accomplished before you leave the office for the weekend.

Also, I've got some interviews that I would love to have in 2021. The past president of three of the largest and most influential organizations in Bible translation and Bible engagement has been agreeable to have an interview next year. So hopefully that will work out. Also the president of leading legal ministry, supporting Christian organizations and their religious freedom, also has been agreeable to have an interview with me for this podcast. So hopefully we can have those come together well, and I'd love for you to hear some insights from them in 2021. But for now, for this December episode, we're going to listen to a devotional that I shared around this topic of dealing with discouragement. And I pray this is a blessing to you as I was looking at the scripture. And I hope that the rest of the year 2020 goes well, and that you're able to end the year well, your organization, and really bring value as a financial leader for your ministry. So with no further ado, here is a previously recorded a devotional on dealing with discouragement

So the question I'd like to consider with you today is this, how do you deal with discouragement? We all have times and seasons where we are discouraged about things. Things just don't seem to quite be going our way. How do we deal with discouragement in a way that is pleasing to the Lord? That is a biblically appropriate? That is ultimately edifying for ourselves? I remember a time a couple of years ago, I was really discouraged with none other than McDonald's. Now I don't know if you've ever been discouraged with McDonald's. Maybe they're cold French fries or looking at another one of those unhealthy big Macs. You're about ready to consume. You're wondering, why am I doing this? But this discouragement was much deeper than that.

See, a couple of years ago, we had one of those weeks where it was just day after day of cold dreary, rainy weather. Now my wife and I have been blessed with five children. But when you have five children and you have day after day of cold rainy dreary weather, that does not bode well for your sanity. So one night—I think it was a Thursday evening—I came home and I was like, Okay, enough of this tired of the kids bouncing off the walls, honey. I've seen this McDonald's— kind of the other direction from where we live, from where we normally travel. And I said, I think they have a nice big indoor playground. Why don't you take the kids? And we can go to the playground. So I took them that Thursday evening. It was marvelous. I gave them their French fries and their hamburgers. And then I just set them loose in the playground and say, Go get 'em, boys and girl. And so the five kids went and they just played, had a ball.

It was just wonderful that evening. Now this is one of those old school McDonald's, you know, the kind of actually has a big playground that's inside. Not one of these, you know, Chick-fil-A small little playgrounds you can barely fit into. So they just went and played for an hour. And it was fantastic. I remember going home that evening, I told my wife, I have found the place when we get those cold dreary, rainy day. I can take the kids and we can escape to the McDonald's playground. This is fantastic. So you can imagine my dismay when a couple of months later, I drove by what had been the McDonald's and that McDonald's was gone. The bulldozers were out, the backhoes were out, and they had just leveled that McDonald's, and I couldn't believe it. I thought, What happened to my place of escape? What am I going to do now? Can you believe I actually went home and I looked up on Google, like what's happening to my McDonald's? I was discouraged.

We certainly have faced greater times and seasons of discouragement in the McDonald's, but that is a reality. We all face those times of discouragement. How do we deal with discouragement? When the situations in life just don't seem to go our way, when the relationships that we value seem to be going south on us. When it seems that maybe you've gotten one of those doctor's reports, you rather would not have received. Maybe when you have a financial challenge that just has you discouraged. And the unfortunate reality is one week from today, about half of America is going to be discouraged with the elections, whatever the results turn out to be. How do we deal with discouragement? I'd like to share a couple thoughts from Psalm 42, as the Psalmist here looks at the reality of life, as the Psalmist looks at the challenges that we face, and in Psalm 42, verse five, this is what the Psalmist says.

The Psalmist says, *“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.”* And if it wasn’t worth saying that whole truth once, basically the same verses repeated again in Psalm 42, 11, and yet again in Psalm 43, verse five. But doesn’t that reflect the challenges that we face in life? When the Psalmist says, Why are you cast down on my soul?— When we go through those seasons of life, or maybe we’re having really a good day and something just happens, a conversation that turns south on us, some of that just doesn’t seem to quite fit right for this situation, and we feel just a bit cast down in our soul. And we feel just that disquieted element in our own life. That is what takes place in life.

And I think that this verse is an accurate reflection of what happens in our lives on a not too infrequent basis. So what does the Psalmist say? The Psalmist says, *“Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.”* I’d like to share just a couple reflections on those three words: Hope in God. Now that’s obviously not a new concept. We are to set our hope in God. I’m going to share a few thoughts as I reflected on this passage with you here today.

The first element of hoping in God, I believe when we have that time in life, where we are feeling disquieted, we need to come to a place of rest in our own lives, where we know that the future might not ever again be like the past. However, we can know that the Lord is always with us. It’s one thing to have a trivial discouragement about a McDonald’s. It’s another thing when that relationship that you’ve worked so hard on doesn’t seem to be working out well. When you’ve gotten that dismal medical report that’s really discouraged you. I believe we can set our hope in God. When we know, God, I really would like the future to be like the past, but if You choose for the future not to be like the past, I’m going to be okay with that because You are going to be with me and whatever You have for me in the future.

Look one verse prior to Psalm 42, five and verse four there. This is a New King James Version. The Psalmist says, *“For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God.”* I was meditating upon that phrase: I used to go. How often in life do we have this idea: Well, it used to be this way. I’m getting older in life. And as you get older, you start to reflect about, well, it used to be that way. When I was younger, it used to be that way. And I really liked it that way, but we cannot forever live in the used to be or used to go that way mentality. We can’t live in that mode because the future will not be like the past. An author I’ve read over the past number of years, his name is Dr. Henry Cloud. One of his books—a great book called Integrity—Dr. Cloud says this quote. One of my favorite sayings is, *“Reality is always your friend.”* He went on to say elsewhere: *“We must be in touch with what is, not what we wish things were, or think things should be, or led by others to believe they are. The only thing that is going to be real in the end is what is.”*

I thought about that in life. Reality... let reality be my friend. Sometimes I pray, God change my reality. Please change the circumstance, because I don’t care for it. But if God chooses not to

change a circumstance, which perhaps discourages or disappoints me— Lord, let that reality be my friend. Let me see You and meet with You wherever You have me in life, because that is the blessing You have for me. When my McDonald's got knocked down, I could wish for a long time that they would rebuild that McDonald's just the way they had the old one. But the reality was they were not going to do that. They were not going to do that big, massive playground again. And my desire for that change would not make that change occur.

Okay. I also like in verse four, Psalm 42, at the end of that verse, Solomon says they went *“with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.”* How often do we think, Oh, back in the old days, they used to have that voice of joy back in the old days, we had that time of praise. And maybe I don't like my current reality. As I reflected on that verse, I thought this, just because the circumstances of life, which had previously brought joy have changed, this does not mean that the Joy Giver has changed. Circumstances change, but the Joy Giver does not change. So my encouragement to you this morning is this thing: Things might not ever be the same in your life and whatever situation or circumstance in which you find yourselves, but know that the Lord will truly be with you in whatever season of life he has for you.

Number two, when we go through those times where our souls are disquieted, I think it's an opportunity for us to renew our focus on the eternal versus the temporal. Now this happens somewhat inadvertently. You know, you're thinking, Oh, my hope is in the Lord. But then I get so excited about what's going on in life, that when things start to go south for you in life, is it not an opportunity to say, Oh yeah, Lord, I'm sorry. I unfortunately started to make this situation a bit idolatrous. I began to find a little bit too much hope, too much joy, too much excitement. And what was going on around me, Lord, I'm discouraged right now. I'm disquieted. Oh yes, Lord. I'm sorry. I got too focused on this. Let me go back to the eternal. Let me get off the temporal and refocus on the eternal.

Okay. Paul says in 2nd Corinthians chapter four, verses 17 and 18, *“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”* I don't know about you, but I find probably too much joy in that which is temporal, too much joy in that which is not going to last. And when those things are taken away from me, I say, Oh yes, Lord, help me again to focus on that which will not be taken from me. And even when things that seem to be the eternal things disappoint and discourage, I say, Lord, take those things and if I can truly internalize that Romans 8:28 reality, that God, You're going to take whatever You allow to come into my life. And it's going to be a blessing because this is going to change me. Transform me more and more into Your image. That is a gift from You.

I heard a preacher use a phrase many years ago, and it's resonated with me. The preacher said this, “Hold all things loosely.” Hold all things loosely. And I believe, as I've found in my life, if I

truly can hold all things loosely, even the things which are enjoyable, even the things which are rightfully a good thing, if I hold them loosely, if God chooses to take those things and extract them from my life, I don't have to be so disquieted. Because I can say, Lord, thank You for what You allowed to come into my life. And I'm going to thank You if You choose to take that out of my life, because I'm going to hold that thing loosely.

Then finally this morning, I would encourage you in this: Lift up your praise to God for the many blessings which He has provided did. If you look in Psalm 42, verse eight, the Psalmist says, "The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song shall be with me— a prayer to the God of my life." When we go through those valleys of the shadow of death, go through those seasons and times where our souls are disquieted, there is an element to say, Lord, I'm going to praise you in the midst of that. I'm going to praise you. I'm to lift up my voice and song to you in spite of being discouraged. In spite of being disappointed. In spite of the heartache, I feel I'm going to still choose to lift my song to you in the night. There are so many blessings that we have. And when we go through those times where we feel things are not working out well, we can still look around us and know there are so many blessings for which we can be grateful. I think of the old hymn "Count Your Many Blessings." I just want to read the first verse and chorus. It says:

"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 has done."

"Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God has done!
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your many blessings, see what God has done."

And I think we will find in those times of discouragement, we look around, we look upwards and we say, Lord, You may have chosen to remove something from my life, which I preferred You would not have removed, but I still have so much to be grateful for so much to thank You for. And so, like you, I've had my share of heartaches. I've had my share of disappointments in life, had my seasons of discouragement. I've had the challenges in life, but I trust, like you, and work on keeping my gaze upon the Lord, setting my hope in Him and knowing that truly when I feel disquieted, He is there to meet me in that season, and to uphold me with His right hand.

So my McDonald's was leveled, was gone. I am glad to report to you they have rebuilt a new McDonald's. Not quite the same size of playground, but at least I can still take my kids there on those rainy days, very cold days. But they can still play, and they can still have a good time. So God will continue to work in your life to accomplish His will and His way and will bring you, I'm confident, bring you delight and joy and seasons of life that He has for you in the future.

Let's pray. Lord, I am grateful that the Scriptures allow us to internalize the reality of what we struggle with. When we read the Psalmist who says, why are we cast down? Why are we disquieted? That is not something that we should ignore or just suppress. We should face it head on, knowing that You do allow that in our lives at times. But I pray that during those times where we are disquieted, that we would set our hope in You, afresh and anew, that we would realize our hope is not in the temporal, but our hope is in the eternal. And then we could set our gaze upon You. We could lift up our voice and song to You, and praise You for Your many blessings, praise You for how You care for us, praise You that if You know what happens to the birds of the air, that You can care for us. And for that, we are so grateful. In Christ's name. Amen.

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