

In The Face of Discouragement (John 15:1-5; Ephesians 1:3-14)

All of us battle discouragement. What do you do when you feel like it's winning? Where do you go? When condemnation meets depression meets anxiety? When you're tempted to check out, write others off or believe lies? We've been given a place to find renewal and strength any time of the day or night and in a moment's notice. It's a place we were meant to go frequently. The question is will we go there? In the face of discouragement, will we run to this place of renewal and strength?

1. Go back to the start: Remember who you are IN Christ.

Ephesians 1:3-14. A Christian is someone who is in Christ. Every believer is UNITED to Christ.

This is a work of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus.

John 15:1-5; John 17:20-23

Romans 5:12-17 All people are either IN Adam or IN Christ.

Discouragement has a crippling effect.

Condemnation meets discouragement meets depression. The lies come fast: *"You're not loved, you're not good enough, you'll never measure up, you've failed too many times, your faith isn't real..."*

2. Go back to the start: Celebrate the benefits of being IN Christ.

Nothing is more important for a new follower of Jesus than to know who they are in Christ.

Colossians 3:1-4; 2:12

Ephesians 1:3-14 *"We have believed in Christ, been chosen V4, predestined V5, adopted V5, redeemed V7, reconciled V10, included V13, sealed V13."* We need well-worn paths to places like this.

"I'm Adopted...I'm accepted, loved, welcomed in. I have full access. God will not turn me away."

John 1:12; 1 John 3:1

In the face of condemnation, discouragement, temptation, depression, anxiety...

"I can come to you – you won't reject me. I can bring you my brokenness, confess my fear and anxiety, share my sadness and frustration. I'll find the strength to love, the power to fight temptation, the grace to hold on." 2 Corinthians 5:17

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. All of us battle discouragement. What do you do when it feels like it's winning? Where do you go? Are you ever tempted to check out, write others off or believe lies?
2. How does *"remembering who we are IN Christ and celebrating the benefits of being IN Christ"* bring strength and renewal? What does it mean to be "In Christ"? John 15:1-4; John 17:20-23
3. Read Colossians 3:1-4. According to these verses, if you are in Christ, what do you share in?
4. Read the *long* sentence found in Ephesians 1:3-14. What do we have *"in Him (Christ)"*? Why do you think Paul takes the time to address the Ephesians this way?
5. In the Bourne series, Jason Bourne was trying to figure out who he was and how he became who he was. Many Christians live unaware of who they've become in Christ. What lies do we refute when we celebrate who we are in Christ?
6. Why is it especially important for a new follower of Jesus to know who they are in Christ? The next time you're talking with a new follower of Jesus, which of these passages might you introduce them to and why?
7. What has kept you from running to these truths for renewal and strength in the past? Daryn talked about creating a "well-worn path" to certain passages for easy access? What will that involve?
8. It was said, *"When I look at my life on any given day I might see failure and sin, shame and disgrace but that's not the whole story! I'm united with Christ."* How else does a clear understanding that you are "united with Christ" comfort, renew and strengthen you?

Take some time to pray for those in your House Group facing discouragement, depression or anxiety. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring renewal and strength to their hearts. Lean on the what Jesus accomplished on the cross as the sure foundation of any requests you make for your friends.