

MONDAY MANNA

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OVERCOMING OUR SEASONS OF DISCONTENT TOGETHER

By Jim Langley

Perhaps you can relate to what I call our “seasons of discontent.” Much of life is not the proverbial bed of roses we wish it could be. Everyone has times when we wish life were less stressful and more comfortable, when our primary emotion is discontent. Many people act as if everything is wonderful, when in reality their circumstances are anything but that.

These individuals typically put on a front, not telling even those closest to them the extent of their problems and concerns. They act as if hiding their troubles will make them disappear. Have you ever experienced this? I have been fortunate to have close friends in whom I can confide, no matter what life throws my way. Many of my business dealings these days create a lot of stress, so it is good to have a few close Christian businessmen I can count on, both to listen and to offer sage advice.

My involvement in CBMC has been a wonderful resource over these past 33 years. It has been good to be around others who can identify with the common trials and challenges in life. Being around such like-minded men has given me the strength to not surrender to the enemy, and instead to persevere through the fiery trials of entrepreneurship.

One of my favourite verses in the Bible is Ecclesiastes 4:12, which reads *“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”* Life works best when it is played as a team sport! I have been involved in team sports most of my life. When a team plays together, without concern for individual performance and glory, a synergistic phenomenon often takes place. There is a unique sense of satisfaction associated with team victories – and even defeats – in sports and in life.

Teamwork in business can have similar results. And when shared with fellow believers in Jesus Christ, we can experience even sweeter victory. We can celebrate not only personal accomplishments, but also the joy of teaming together, sharing our different skills and talents, to achieve a common goal or mission.

I am reminded of a passage, Luke 24:31-32, which describes two disciples walking and talking with Jesus – following His death, burial and resurrection – on the road to Emmaus, not realising it was their Lord. At the end of this scene, Jesus breaks bread with them and then vanishes. It says, *“Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’”*

With the Holy Spirit living inside all who follow Christ, we too can have that burning in our hearts and minds as we endure life’s trials here on earth together. The apostle Paul certainly experienced his own share of seasons of discontent following his conversion from a persecutor of Christians to a zealous ambassador for Christ. Throughout his letters to the churches in Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae and Thessalonica he tells of the struggles he faced for the cause of Christ.

Through them all, he remained strong and unwavering in His immense love and devotion for his Lord and Saviour. I can only imagine there were times when Paul overcame despair by receiving comfort from close brothers and sisters in Christ who encouraged him in the great work our Lord had given him to do.

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As followers of Jesus Christ, we all have the opportunity to weather seasons of suffering and challenges as we gradually learn to place Him first in all things. By working together in teams, sharing a common passion for serving the Lord, we can shorten our seasons of discontent, replacing them with joy.

© 2020, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing "Fourth Quarter Strategies" in 2014.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

Have you heard the term "seasons of discontent" before? What does that mean to you? Have you experienced them yourself – perhaps even right now? If so, what has that been like?

Why do you think teaming up with others, or benefiting from the friendship and support of others, can help us in overcoming these times of being discontented – with our work, our present circumstances, or life in general?

In what specific ways does working in concert with others prove to be superior to trying to handle life – and overcome its challenges – on our own?

Do you ever think it is unfair to be striving to serve Jesus Christ, not only through your personal life but also through your work, and then encountering struggles and opposition? What can you gain from sharing your discontent – your frustrations – with others?

NOTE: For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:

Acts 9:15-17

2 Corinthians 1:5-7

Philippians 1:29

Hebrews 2:17-18

1 Peter 2:21-25