Disappointments are inevitable, discouragement is a choice.

Rev. Charles F. Stanley

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In this edition of our Reseda “Circuit Rider”, we will explore two related themes.

The first theme is Discouragement. The second theme is Hope.

Pastor Rick Warren of Saddleback Community Church wrote that discouragement is “a disease unique to human beings, and it’s universal.”

Take notice of that—everyone can become discouraged. It is universal. Young people and old. Residents of the San Fernando Valley. People living in countries around the world.

Discouragement applies to Christians just as much as it does non-Christians. Yet, the ONE thing that every believer in Christ possesses is HOPE in God.

Our hope in God is eternal, all-sufficient, unsurpassable, personal, dependable ...

What adjectives would you use?

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21 Ways to Overcome Personal Discouragement

1. Remember past victories
2. Keep an encouragement file
3. Get moving
4. Take a break
5. Grab a lunch with an encouraging person
6. Don’t spend too much time with discouragers
7. Work on something new
8. Clean up your workspace
9. Download some new apps
10. Confide in someone
11. Learn something new
12. Encourage someone else
13. Serve someone
14. Get some sleep
15. Accomplish a short term win
16. Get some time alone
17. Pray
18. Read the Bible
19. Listen to some great music
20. Watch a comedy
21. Get some help

(Source: http://careynieuwhof.com/21-ways-to-overcome-personal-discouragement)
Draw a line from each Bible text in the left column to the correct theme in the right column.

| Jeremiah 29:11 | Unfailing |
| Psalm 42:11 | Strength |
| Isaiah 40:31 | Downcast |
| Romans 15:13 | Faithful |
| Hebrews 11:1 | Glory |
| Hebrews 10:23 | Overflowing |
| Lamentations 3:24 | Assurance |
| Psalm 33:22 | Waiting |
| Colossians 1:27 | Future |

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.  
*1 Peter 3:15*

**Hope** is a message that every Christian needs to be prepared to give.

**Tips:**

1. Prepare ahead of time. Find a paper and pen and write out what you might tell someone who is discouraged. How has God cared for you when you faced discouragements?

2. Outline your ‘faith’ story in 3 parts—what your life was like before you trusted in Christ; how it was that you surrendered your life to Christ; and what it has been like since you trusted in Him.

3. Don’t preach at people, or look down at them. Tell your message of hope in such a way that you build people up in the Lord—*1 Thessalonians 5:11.*
St. Patrick’s Adventure

Usually when you think of an adventure, something positive. An adventure as an unusual and exciting experience, typically hazardous, but ultimately fulfilling. It makes for a good story.

Patrick’s father, Calpurnius and his grandfather, Potitus were both active in the church. On the other hand, Patrick at the age of 16 years was not a practicing Christian. Perhaps he stubborn and felt he didn’t need God as a young man.

Then—the adventure began. He was captured by Irish pirates and taken to Ireland, where for the next six years he was held in captivity. Without given choice, he was sold and tasked to be a shepherd. All contact with his family was severed. Six years is a long time to survive without any hope of rescue.

Yet— it was during that time that God drew near to Patrick. He repented of his sin. He dedicated his life anew to the Lord. The adventure for Patrick was to hit rock bottom in order that he could recognize God’s personal love for him. Ultimately, he would escape, be reunited with his family, and THEN return to Ireland as a Christian missionary.

All this occurred because Patrick dedicated the remaining days of his life to God. What about you? Have you learned from the adventures of life that the Lord has granted you?

A Story of Heartbreaking News

by Rev. Gordon Marchant

Last Saturday (Feb. 25th), Aleta and I were driving from our home when we noticed that a man and a woman had stopped on the sidewalk immediately in front of our Reseda church. They were stapling a flyer to the wooden telephone post next to Saticoy St. At the time, we thought that they were publicizing the loss of a beloved stray pet.

Tragically, I happened to take a closer look at the flyer a few days later and saw that what they had posted was a “Missing Person” poster. Just outside of our church was the photo of Elias Rodriguez, age 14.

I immediately recognized that in the news it had been announced that the body of Elias had been found. That same Saturday afternoon, someone in the Los Feliz area had found him. Apparently after leaving school to walk to his grandparents’ home in San Fernando, he had been swept into the raging waters of the Pacoima Wash.

We’ll likely never know the man and woman outside of our church’s entrance. Were they the parents of Elias? His uncle and aunt? Neighbors? However, it did confirm that God has placed everyone in our church to minister to those who are in need, including the heartbroken.