

DISCOURAGED RIGHT AT THE START OF THE YEAR?

Waking up without motivation. Feeling your body heavy, as if the battery never fully charges. Wanting to sleep at unusual times. Sitting down to do a simple task and realizing your mind “won’t lock in,” your concentration slips away, and what used to be natural now requires enormous effort. Many people describe this as laziness, weakness, or lack of discipline. But in practice, these signs often function like a **car’s dashboard lights** turning on: something is going on beneath the surface, and it is worth investigating seriously and without guilt.

When the body cries out and the soul feels it

The Bible does not romanticize discouragement. Men and women of God experienced dismay, fatigue, and exhaustion. David asked, “*Why are you cast down, O my soul?*” (Ps 42:5). Elijah, after a great victory, asked to die, such was his exhaustion (1 Kgs 19:4). These texts do not justify passivity, but they show that discouragement can have real physical, emotional, and spiritual causes, and that God leads us toward care and restoration.

The best path is not guilt, but discernment: what has changed in me, in my rhythm and in my life, that I am like this? (cf. 2 Cor 13:5).

1) The body is also spiritual: sleep, nutrition, and limits

Scripture treats the human being as a whole. The body is not “a detail;” it is part of Christian stewardship. Paul reminds us that the body matters and must be cared for responsibly (1 Cor 6:19–20). In many cases, discouragement begins with a lack of recovery.

In Elijah’s case, God did not begin with a sermon, but with provision and rest: he slept, received food and water, and only then was guided (1 Kgs 19:5–8). There is a practical lesson here: sometimes faith needs rest, routine, and replenishment.

Biblical wisdom also highlights limits: “*Better is a handful of rest than two hands full of toil and striving after wind*” (Eccl 4:6). And Jesus, amid the intense demands of ministry, said to the disciples, “*Come away by yourselves... and rest a while*” (Mk 6:31).

2) Stress and anxiety: when the “weight of the day” suffocates the heart

Prolonged anxiety has real effects on the body and the mind. The Bible describes this impact with precision: “*Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs him down*” (Prov 12:25). It is not merely an emotional theme; it is a weight that knocks us down, confuses us, and steals focus.

For that reason, biblical guidance is not to deny the problem, but to surrender and reorganize: “*Casting all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you*” (1 Pet 5:7). And also: “*Do not be anxious about anything... and the peace of God... will guard your hearts and your minds*” (Phil 4:6–7). Notice that the text speaks of a guarded “*minds*”: peace is also mental health.

3) Exhaustion and burnout: when the soul loses the joy of the calling

There is a kind of tiredness that is not only physical; it is the weariness of living under continuous pressure, little rest, little control, and little hope. The Bible draws attention to destructive rhythms: “*In vain you rise up early... for he gives to his beloved sleep*” (Ps 127:2). This is not an invitation to laziness, but a warning against the illusion that everything depends on us.

Jesus also gives us a principle of relief: “*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest... for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light*” (Mt 11:28–30). In practical terms: there are burdens you were not called to carry alone.

4) Persistent sadness: when low motivation becomes a symptom

Not every sadness is depression, but every sadness deserves attention. The Bible recognizes weeping and grief as part of the human journey (Jn 11:35; Ps 56:8). It also recognizes that there is “*godly sorrow*,” which produces transformation, and a destructive sorrow that corrodes (2 Cor 7:10).

When discouragement drags on and becomes paralyzing, wisdom is to seek support: “*Two are better than one... For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow*” (Eccl 4:9–10). And: “*Bear one another’s burdens*” (Gal 6:2). Isolation almost always makes the situation worse.

5) Lack of concentration: a saturated mind, a divided heart

Difficulty focusing can be connected to poor sleep, stress, anxiety, overload, or a heart divided among many demands. The Bible speaks about a “double-minded” heart and instability: “*A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways*” (Jas 1:8). This is not condemnation, but diagnosis: when everything is a priority, nothing is done with peace.

The guidance of Proverbs is direct: “*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it*” (Prov 4:23). Guarding the heart includes filtering excess, setting limits, and returning to priorities.

6) The medical dimension: God also uses means

Biblical faith is not the enemy of evaluation and practical care. Paul advised Timothy to use a resource for his health (1 Tim 5:23), showing that physical care and faith can walk together. If fatigue persists, it makes sense to investigate causes such as anemia, thyroid issues, sleep apnea, and nutritional deficiencies. Seeking help is not a lack of spirituality; it may be obedience to the stewardship of the body.

A practical path toward restoration

- 1. Reorganize your rhythm and rest:** “*Come away... and rest a while*” (Mk 6:31).
- 2. Surrender anxiety and simplify priorities:** (Phil 4:6–7; Eccl 4:6).
- 3. Seek support and walk with someone:** (Eccl 4:9–10; Gal 6:2).
- 4. Return to the secret place with God:** honest prayer, the Word, and silence (Ps 46:10; Ps 119:105).
- 5. Pursue needed evaluations when the situation persists:** responsible care (1 Cor 6:19–20).

Warning signs: When should we seek urgent help?

If there is intense hopelessness, thoughts of self-harm, inability to carry out basic tasks for days, or significant physical symptoms, seek professional help immediately. God can restore, and He often restores through people, resources, and appropriate follow-up care.

Conclusion

Behind the lack of motivation, physical fatigue, the desire to sleep, and the lack of concentration, there is usually a message: something needs to be adjusted, in the body, in the mind, in your rhythm, and often in the heart. The Bible does not ignore discouragement; it recognizes it, treats it with truth, and points toward restoration.

“Those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength” (Isa 40:31). Renewal is not magic; it is a process. One step at a time, with faith, rest, truth, and holistic care.

Questions for reflection:

1. What specific burden has been draining your energy the most today?
2. What can you surrender to God and reorganize in a practical way this week?

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