

Why Some Mice Swim Longer

Written by Bill Perkins

Nobody, and I mean nobody, makes it through life without encountering discouragement. And how we handle discouragement will dictate not only our emotional and mental health, but our ability to bring a vision into reality. So how do we get past discouragement to the prize on the other side?

A Massive Constrictor

When Jesus announced his impending death to his disciples I'm sure discouragement wrapped itself around their soul and squeezed--like a massive constrictor. Jesus certainly saw the lifeless look in their eyes. And he knew he had to say something that would buoy their spirits.

A Better Tomorrow

In the face of his departure, Jesus made a single promise that offered more hope than a sunrise. He told them his death wasn't a final farewell. Like a trailblazer, he was going ahead of them to the Father's house so he could prepare a place for them (John 14:1-2). Jesus told them that they could look forward to a better tomorrow.

The Mice

Several years ago I read about an experiment in which researchers placed a dozen laboratory mice in a vat of water. As the mice swam in small circles the researchers would periodically lift out of the water several they had identified with a mark on their head. These mice would then be placed back in the water. As the researchers expected, those mice that were lifted out of the water swam far longer than the rest.

In a Word: Hope

The question this reality surfaced was: Why? The researchers didn't think it was the rest the mice received since they were only out of the water for a second or so. It wasn't because they were stronger since they had been randomly selected. In a word, the researchers said they believed the mice swam longer because they possessed HOPE. The mice hoped that if they could swim just a little longer, they would be delivered.

At times we may feel like our efforts are as useless as those of a mouse swimming around in a vat of water. What we need at such times is hope. It is the powerful force that can enable us to keep swimming when our muscles ache and our arms are tired. That's probably why Jesus said, "I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:3).

While it's crucial to study an obstacle so you can figure out how to get past it, avoid fixating on it. Instead, focus on the vision that will become a reality after you navigate past the obstacle. Such a mental and spiritual focus will buoy your spirit and those you lead.