

"I Love My Church"

Learning to Care for One Another!

Part 7

"The Support

—Encourage One Another"

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."
Love God. Love One Another
1 Thessalonians 5:11

A. Encourage one another...

"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."
Hebrews 3:13

1. Is defined (in a biblical context): *"To give courage to; to give or increase confidence of success; to inspire with courage, spirit, or strength of mind; to embolden; to animate; to incite; to inspirit. A calling to one's aid."* To put courage into!(The definition of the work of the Holy Spirit) Paraclete is the Greek word meaning "to lay alongside."
2. Is putting courage in the heart of one when life is rough.

"And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone." *1 Thessalonians 5:11*

3. Is focused more on affirmation than appreciation. Appreciation is more performance-based but affirmation is deeper.

"Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith." *1 Thessalonians 3:7*

4. Is a spiritual gift, but, it is also commanded for all of us to follow.

"if it is to encourage, then give encouragement..." *Romans 12:8*
"Therefore encourage one another with these words." *1 Thessalonians 4:18*

B. Discouragement...

"We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith," *1 Thessalonians 3:2*

1. Is the enemy's way to attack our faith!
2. Happens when there is a loss of initial excitement.
3. Happens when there are delays.
4. Happens with criticism.
5. Comes with opposition.
6. Can be found with pessimism, comparisons, and faulty expectations.
7. Can be experienced by a wrong view of success.

"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope," *2 Thessalonians 2:16*

C. So, let's practice encouragement...

1. Because this is what Jesus commands us to do.

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." *1 Thessalonians 5:11*

2. Because it gives spiritual strength to one another.

"Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers." *Acts 15:32*

3. Because it helps create a spiritual family.

"After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left." *Acts 16:40*

4. Because failing to do so results in discouragement!

"My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ," *Colossians 2:2*

D. Who will you encourage today?

"not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." *Hebrews 10:25*

1. Give encouragement through words to someone who has invested in your life. _____
2. Give spiritual strength and courage to someone through affirmation. _____
3. Give sincere and truthful encouragement through actions. _____
4. Give encouragement to someone who is going through hardship or struggles by prayer and a tangible act. _____
5. Give consistent encouragement on a regular basis.

"After preaching the Good News... Paul and Barnabas returned to... where they strengthened the believers. They encouraged them to continue in the faith, reminding them that we must suffer many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God."

Acts 14:21-22

10 Encouraging Words for the Discouraged

by Mary Fairchild

"God's sovereignty is first painful, then slowly powerful, and over much time seen to be profitable. It is to be studied with great sensitivity for the experiences of others and deep reverence for the One who controls the outcomes of every matter in the universe." —James MacDonald

God is in control. He is sovereign ... even in our pain, even in our troubles. Through it all, His love is transforming us, perfecting us, completing us.

James 1:2-4 *“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.”*

“There is no such thing as instant spiritual transformation. It is an ongoing process of ever-increasing glory. Our character is transformed little by little, a bit at a time.”—Dave Earley

There is a process at work in the life of every believer. We are being changed into His likeness, but it cannot happen overnight. Give God time to produce His ever-increasing glory in you.

2 Corinthians 3:18 *“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”*

“Was God able to supply food for that vast number whose exodus out of Egypt cast them utterly upon Him as their Source? We look back and marvel at God’s daily provision of manna and water for them. What a table He provided for forty years. But we often forget! The same God is just as eager to provide spiritual manna today for those who look to Him. Actually, it is not so much a question of ‘can God furnish,’ as it is, ‘will we trust Him to provide!’”—DeVern Fromke

Do you feel forsaken? Perhaps you've just forgotten: God is able. Just as He supplied manna each morning for the Israelites in the desert, He will supply for you. Seek Him daily and trust Him to provide everything you need.

Psalms 9:10 *“Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.”*

“A ship in harbor is safe but that is not what ships are built for.”—John A. Shedd

We are called to go—go into the world. God tells us to be courageous as we face the dangers and the battles of life. We may not always travel in safe territory, but we'll never be alone. Jehovah, our Salvation, is with us.

Joshua 1:9 *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

“There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.”—Francis Bacon

Too often we feel awkward and unlovely, but in God's eyes, He is making us beautiful.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 *“He has made everything beautiful in its time.”*

“Talent develops in quiet; Character in the torrent of the world.”

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

“Character is what a man is in the dark.”—Dwight L. Moody

Just as a hammer and high heat are used to forge instruments of iron, God uses trials to develop genuine faith and strength of character in us.

1 Peter 1:6-7 *“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”*

“Nothing happens to any man which he is not formed by nature to bear.”—Marcus Aurelius

God is faithful. He always provides a way of escape. When tempted, your job is not to bear up under the weight of temptation, but rather, to look for the escape route God has already provided.

1 Corinthians 10:13 *“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”*

“Down in their hearts, wise men know this truth: the only way to help yourself is to help others.”—Elbert Hubbard

The happiest Christians are those who have found the joy of serving others. The quickest way to end a pity party is to find someone who needs your help.

Mark 8:34-35

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.”

“The most wasted day of all is that in which we have not laughed.”—Sabastien-Roch Nicolas Chamfort

If today you can't find a reason to smile, take some time to focus on the lighter side of life, enjoy your friends, watch a comedy, read the funnies, or spend time with children. Look for ways to include laughter in each day.

Proverbs 17:22 *“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person’s strength.”*

“But God, in His infinite skill, blends all things in our lives and cooks them in the oven of adversity. One day we shall be able to see them full transformed. Then we can taste that they are good. For now, we must believe it.”—Greg Laurie

Although you may be suffering right now, it's only temporary. God, who is infinitely wise and skilled, knows just how to care for you. Trust that He is shaping you into someone beautiful, honorable, and good—able to reflect His glory.

Romans 8:18 *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”*

What Are Some Practical Ways We Can Encourage One Another?

Kind Words—affirmation, sincere praise, apology, empathetic, active listening and constructive feedback. **Body language**—cheerful look, smile, laughter **Godly example**—the most powerful source. **Physical touch**—when appropriate **Providing hope**—seeing a brighter future. **Providing personal help** and practical assistance **Assuring others of your prayers** for them. **Personal Challenge** to grow. **Spur one another** to love and good deeds. **Inspiring** stories/examples. **Remembering** events. **Giving to others**—adding value to their lives. **Sharing** appropriate Scripture with others. **Expressing** appreciation. **Rewarding** accomplishments. **Spreading** good gossip. **Caring**, thoughtful, considerate actions. **God’s Word**—especially His promises. Our position in Christ. **Unselfishly** meeting needs. **Empathizing** with the hurting. **Rejoicing** with those who rejoice. **Persuading** others to trust/follow Christ. **Exhort** to persevere—to continue in the faith. **Cheer** up the faint-hearted. **Invitation** to respond to the Gospel. **Providing** solace and consolation. **Comfort** and relieve those in distress. **Urge** on toward holiness.