

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

I. Encourage One Another!

Encourage - (Greek *ἑνθαρρύνω* - *κλέτο*) - To call to one's side to aid, appeal to, motivate, counsel, and comfort. The same Greek word in noun form refers to the Holy Spirit! Thus, to encourage is to allow the Holy Spirit to flow through your words and actions to comfort, support, counsel, give hope, and give confidence to others to build them up.

- **The _____ of encouragement** – We live in a discouraging world filled with negativism, judgmentalism, and criticism. No matter how hard a person tries, the negative is magnified and the positive minimized. Often criticism is used to instill fear and insecurity in a person in order to manipulate them to do what the critic wants (ex. critical boss at work). In such a discouraging world, God wants us to be the encouraging that reflects His love. Imagine the power of the Holy Spirit encouragement to attract the world, heal, and build up people.
- **Why don't we encourage _____?**
 - 1) Neglect – We don't realize how much others need it. We don't realize how stressful and beaten down fellow Christians are. Often they put on a Christian joy mask at church to hide their weariness and hurt, so they won't be judged. Many feel unappreciated for what they do for God and others.
 - 2) Reject – We're sometimes no different from the rest of the world being negative, critical, and judgmental in order to "punish" others or manipulate them. It's a rejection of others as brothers/sisters in Christ.
- **Jesus is our _____ of encouragement** – After Jesus saved the adulterous woman (John 8:1-11). He said "... Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin." This was encouragement through "no condemnation" and a "second chance."

II. So, Why Do We Encourage?

- **It's commanded by _____!** We naturally don't do it, so God commands us to do so.
- **Encouragement reflects God's _____** – The Holy Spirit encourages us (comforts, consoles, supports, and motivates us to be like Jesus) because of His love, so we show our love through encouraging others. Love is encouragement and shows we are of God (1 John 4:7-8)
- **It is a positive Christian _____ to the world** – An encouraging Christian (and Church) is beacon of God's light in a dark discouraging world. Encouragement shows God is here. It proves we are His disciples (John 13:34-35)
- **It is a powerful weapon of spiritual warfare against _____ attack of discouragement.** We are in a spiritual war against Satan's forces of evil and discouragement through accusations, criticism, slander that discourage and defeat are a primary preferred weapon. Encouragement defeats discouragement.

III. How To Encourage

- ***Barnabas, the ultimate*** _____ – Joseph, an early disciple was such an encourager that he was renamed Barnabas. The name Barnabas actually means “son of prophecy,” but in Acts (4:36) Barnabas was given a new meaning; “son of encouragement.” Could it be that we are most prophetic (giving an urgent God message to today’s world) when we love through encouragement?

How did Barnabas encourage?

- ***Barnabas encouraged through*** _____ – Barnabas befriended and supported the new believer Saul (soon to become the apostle Paul). When the church leaders didn’t trust Saul, Barnabas spoke up for Saul in encouragement and he was accepted by the other disciples (Acts 9:26-28). Barnabas’ encouragement was key to Paul becoming an accepted super-apostle.
- ***Barnabas encouraged through*** _____ – The young disciple John Mark had failed Paul and Barnabas by temporarily abandoning them during their missionary work. Paul no longer wanted to use John Mark, but Barnabas saw his potential and defended him. The “disagreement” caused Paul and Barnabas to go their separate ways with Barnabas taking John Mark with him for further missionary work (Acts 15:36-37). How encouraging to John Mark for Barnabas not to abandon him. Encouragers see the potential in imperfect people and build them up for future spiritual success. Was John Mark worth it? John Mark became such a key co-worker to Peter that Peter called him his “son” (I Peter 5:13). Even Paul changed his mind about John Mark. In Paul’s last days, he asks Timothy to bring Mark to him because he had become “helpful to me in service” (II Timothy 4:11)!!! Most importantly, it was John Mark who wrote “The Gospel of Mark”! John Mark went from failure to spiritual success because of the encouraging actions of Barnabas.

Are you an Encourager or a Discourager?

Who does God want you to encourage today through words and action?

Answers: I. Importance; more; example. II. God; love; witness; Satan’s. III. Encourager; words; actions.