



PART 1: HOW TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS

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"One of the highest of human duties is the duty of encouragement...It is easy to laugh at men's ideals; it is easy to pour cold water on their enthusiasm; it is easy to discourage others. The world is full of discouragers. We have a Christian duty to *encourage* one another. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet. Blessed is the man who speaks such a word." (William Barclay, *The Letter to the Hebrews*)

"Encourage" means to come along side to comfort or inspire

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does 1 Kings 19:5-7 teach us about encouraging others who become physically and emotionally exhausted as a result of stress?

Answer: They often need food and rest.

2. What does 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3 teach us about encouraging someone who is spiritually young and perhaps confused about the Christian life?

Answer: Notice four aspects of Paul's encouragement to these young Christians in Thessalonica: 1) He told them he was praying for them, 2) he pointed out their work produced by faith, 3) their labor of love, and 4) their endurance which was based on their hope in Christ. He was affirming their spiritual growth.

3. The word for encourage in the Bible means to be "called alongside to help." Which people are the most capable of "coming alongside to help"? See 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Answer: 2 Cor. 1:3-4. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."

Answer: Those who have gone through similar experiences

4. Paul encouraged the Thessalonian Christians by complimenting their endurance which was inspired by their hope in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 1:3). What did Paul mean by their "hope in the Lord Jesus Christ"?

Answer: The hope that Jesus will someday return.

Words that encourage: "I have confidence in you...I'm grateful for you...I see God using you...I'm glad you're in my life...I appreciate you." What are some other words that can encourage another Christian believer?

List at least three people that can use some encouragement from you?

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❖ _____

❖ _____

FIVE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS

1. Provide food and rest for those who are physically and emotionally exhausted.
2. Confirm signs of growth to those who are spiritually young.
3. Use words that encourage
4. Share your painful experiences with those going through similar experiences.
5. Remind Christians of their hope in Christ, that life's difficulties are only temporary.



Encouragement makes it easier to live in a fallen world in a holy way. Encouragement makes it easier to love as Jesus loved (see John 13:34-35). Encouragement gives hope (Romans 15:4). Encouragement helps us through times of discipline and testing (Hebrews 12:5). Encouragement nurtures patience and kindness (see 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and Galatians 5:22-26). Encouragement makes it easier to sacrifice our own desires for the advancement of God's kingdom. In short, encouragement makes it easier to live the Christian life.

Encouragement from the Bible gives us the will to carry on. It is a glimpse of the bigger picture. It can prevent burn-out. It can save us from believing lies ("sin's deceitfulness"). Encouragement helps us experience abundant life (see John 10:10).

Without encouragement, life would soon feel pointless and burdensome. Empty. Without encouragement, we can be overwhelmed by the very real pains of our lives. Without encouragement, we feel unloved. Without encouragement, we begin to think that God is a liar or is unconcerned with our welfare. So, the Bible tells us to encourage one another, to remind each other of the truth that God loves us that God equips us, that we are treasured, that our struggles are worth it. __S. Michael Houdman