

GROWING IN ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Hebrews 3:13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Ephesians 5:19 ...be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart....

Encouragement requires thinking about other people on your own time, praying for people when they are not around, and thinking about other people's situations and struggles on their behalf. It requires planning time to communicate it to others by making a phone call, sending an email, or writing a note.

Definition of encouragement:

1. to inspire with hope, courage, or confidence; hearten
2. to give support to; foster
3. to stimulate; spur

"encourage." *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004. 12 Sep. 2007.

"It points us to God and His grace; it strengthens us for the struggle; it warns about the danger; it promises joy." ~ Rebecca Holter

HOW TO ENCOURAGE

"The most direct way of encouraging someone is by pointing out evidences of grace you've seen in their life. Pick a fruit of the Spirit you see in their lives. Commend them on a way you see them quietly serving their kids, husband, or the church." ~ Kate Sasser

Pray for people regularly, and look into their struggles ahead with hope, searching for something in your own experience or in the word of God, which can equip them to have victory.

“Each person, at different times, needs a different approach. The Holy Spirit can give us the right approach, if we go to God in prayer. If we are looking with eyes full of gospel redemption at our sisters in Christ, and asking God in prayer for a word of encouragement for them, then God will give us a word of encouragement. Sometimes it will be weighted with affirmation, and other times it will be tinged with warning.” ~ *Rebecca Holter*

Pray that God would use your words, even if you don’t know what would be the most encouraging thing to say.

WHO TO ENCOURAGE

Pray that God would show you who is in need of encouragement.

Start with your friends, ladies in your home group, or people who are sick.

Follow up about a conversation you may have had with someone in home group or that you spoke to in church or at some other time or place.

WHAT TO SAY

Be yourself and be sincere! You don’t have to have the perfect thing to say, but it has to be from the heart. Often just the fact that someone cared enough to take the time to call or to sit down and write to you is so encouraging.

Ask about things that are going on in their lives.

Share a Bible verse, hymn, or quote that God has used to encourage you.

Create a “Scripture Encouragement” notebook, and be constantly adding new verses into different sections for different subjects.

Then when you want to encourage someone with Scripture, you have specific verses you can find quickly.

Helpful resources for quotes and Scriptures:

Online ESV Bible, searchable by subject or reference | www.gnpcb.org/esv

GirlTalk Blog, searchable by subject | www.girltalk.blogs.com

Gateway to Joy by Elisabeth Elliott, encouragement from A to Z | www.amazon.com

Beside Still Waters by Charles H. Spurgeon, daily meditations | www.amazon.com

HOW TO MAKE TIME

Schedule a specific amount of time each week, or pick a specific day of the week, to make phone calls or write notes.

Call or write a note to someone after you pray for her. Include this as part of your devotional time.

WRITING NOTES TO ENCOURAGE

Ask God to give you fresh motivation and to help you make time to write encouraging notes to other women.

Check the church bulletin each week for members' birthdays and anniversaries, and write a note to anyone you know.

Keep a ready supply of note cards, so that when you have a few minutes to write, you already have what you need. Set up a note-writing station with pens, stationary and stamps.

Include things that you already know that they have been struggling with or asked for prayer about. This shows you have been paying attention to their needs, concerns and struggles.

Keep some cards in your Bible, notebook, purse, or daytimer. When waiting in doctors' offices, in between classes, or while your children are in classes, etc., you can take a few minutes to write a note.

Use a small card and keep the note short. If the card is too big, it might be hard to think of enough to say, to fill up the card.

Where to find inexpensive stationary:

LifeWay Christian Stores (box of fifty stationary sheets/envelopes and twenty-five note cards/postcards for \$20; pack of eight 3x5" cards for \$1)

Michael's Arts and Crafts (pack of ten note cards or stationary for \$1)

If It's Paper (large assortment of stationary for reasonable prices)

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COLLECTION OF QUOTES AND VERSES FOR ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER

THE GOSPEL

Oh, teach me what it meaneth —
That cross uplifted high,
With One — the Man of Sorrows —
Condemned to bleed and die!

Oh, teach me what it cost Thee
To make a sinner whole;
And teach me, Savior, teach me,
The value of a soul!

Oh, teach me what it meaneth —
Thy love beyond compare,
The love that reacheth deeper
Than depths of self-despair!
Yes, teach me, till there glowest
In this cold heart of mine
Some feeble, pale reflection
Of that pure love of Thine.

~ *Lucy Bennett*

Holy God in love became
Perfect Man to bear my blame.
On the cross he took my sin
By his death I live again.
~ *"The Gospel Song" by Drew Jones*

O love of God O sin of man
In this dread act your strength is tried
And victory remains with love
Jesus our Lord is crucified.
~ *from Jars of Clay's "Redemption Songs"*

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Lord, I give up all my own plans and
purposes, all my own desires and hopes,
and accept Thy will for my life. I give
myself, my life, my all, utterly to Thee to
be Thine forever. Fill me and seal me
with Thy Holy Spirit. Use me as Thou
wilt, send me where Thou wilt, work out
Thy whole will in my life at any cost,
now *and forever*. ~ *Betty Scott Stam*

Whate'er my God ordains is right:
His holy will abideth;
I will be still whate'er He doth;
And follow where He guideth;
He is my God; though dark my road,
He holds me that I shall not fall:
Wherefore to Him I leave it all.

~ *Samuel Rodigast*

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea;
And rides upon the storm.
Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a growing providence
He hides a smiling face.
Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain:
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.
~ *William Cowper*

FAITH AND TRUST

The essence of true faith is taking God at His Word and relying on Him to do as He promised. ~ *Wayne Grudem*

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. ~ *Psalm 37.4-5 (KJV)*

SANCTIFICATION

...for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. ~ *Philippians 2.13*

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ~ *Hebrews 12.1-2*

ENDURANCE AND SUFFERING

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands. ~ *Psalm 138.8*

I'm standing, Lord:
There is a mist that blinds my sight.
Steep, jagged racks, front, left and right,
Lower, dim, gigantic, in the night.
Where is the way?

I'm standing, Lord:
The rock is hard beneath my feet;
I nearly slipped, Lord, on the sleet.
So weary, Lord! And where a seat?
Still must I stand?

He answered me, and on His face
A look ineffable of grace,
Of perfect understanding love,
Which all my murmuring did remove.

I'm standing, Lord:
Since Thou hast spoken, Lord I see
Thou hast beset -- these rocks are Thee!
And since Thy love encloses me,
I stand and sing.

~ *Betty Scott Stam, "Stand Still and See"*

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. ~ *Hebrews 13.20-21*

Teach me to feel that Thou art always nigh;
Teach me the struggles of the soul to
bear -- To check the rising doubt, the rebel
sigh;
Teach me the patience of unanswered
prayer. ~ *George Croly*

BIBLICAL ROLES FOR MEN AND WOMEN

In matters of the heart, it is right that men should lead and women welcome and guide that leadership. She is his helpmate (Gen. 2:18). Her goal is to give her man all the help he needs to lead well.... The guidance that she provides him comes mainly in two forms: in helping him *think clearly* and in encouraging him to *act confidently*. ~ *Doing Things Right in Matters of the Heart*, p. 97

SACRIFICE AND CONTENTMENT

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ~ *Philippians 1.21*

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ~ *Philippians 3.7*

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord,
to Thee;

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet, and let them be swift and
beautiful for Thee;

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King.

Take my silver and my gold, not a mite
would I withhold;

Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my will and make it Thine, it shall be
no longer mine;

Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

~ *Frances Ridley Havergal*

Thou has made us for Thyself, O Lord;
and our heart is restless until it rests in
Thee. ~ *Augustine of Hippo*

Lord, grant me the vision of a true lover as
I look at my husband. Help me to see him
through Your eyes, to read the thoughts
he does not put into words, to bear with
his human imperfections, remembering
that he bears with mine and that You are
at work in both of us. Thank You, Lord,
for this man, Your carefully chosen gift to
me, and for the high privilege of being
heirs together of the grace of life. Help me
to make it as easy and pleasant as I
possibly can for him to do Your will. ~
Elisabeth Elliot

Let me learn by paradox
that the way down is the way up,
that to be low is to be high,
that the broken heart is the healed heart,
that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing
spirit,
that the repenting soul is the victorious
soul,
that to have nothing is to possess all,
that to bear the cross is to wear the
crown,
that to give is to receive,
that the valley is the place of vision.

Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen
from deepest wells,
And the deeper the wells the brighter thy
stars shine.

Let me find thy light in my darkness,
thy life in my death,
thy joy in my sorrow,
thy grace in my sin,
thy riches in my poverty, and
thy glory in my valley.

~ *Valley of Vision*

THANKFULNESS

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

Serve the Lord with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

Know that the Lord, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

~ *Psalms 100*

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

If in true poverty of spirit we go every morning to our Lord, as knowing not how to guide ourselves for this day; our eye constantly looking upward for direction, the light will come down. He shall direct thy paths.... Let the will be kept in a quiet, subdued, cheerful, readiness, to move, stay, retreat, turn to the right hand or to the left, at the Lord's bidding; always remembering that is best which is least our own doing, and that a pliable spirit ever secures the needful guidance.... No step well prayed over will bring ultimate regret. ~ *from Charles Bridges' commentary on Proverbs 3.6*

O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice;
in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you
and watch. ~ *Psalms 5.3*

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple... ~ *Psalms 19.7*

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

~ *1 Peter 1.13*

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

~ *George Matheson*

Even on days when every cinder in our soul feels cold, if we crawl to the Word of God and cry out for ears to hear, the cold ashes will be lifted and the tiny spark of life will be fanned. For 'the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.'
~ *John Piper, Desiring God*

WORK

For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. ~
Colossians 1.29

She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens.
~ *Proverbs 31.15*

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might. ~ *Ecclesiastes 9.10*

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
~ *Ephesians 5.15-17*

Sometimes a task we have begun takes on seemingly crushing size, and we wonder what ever gave us the notion that we could accomplish it. There is no way out, no way around it, and yet we cannot contemplate actually carrying it through. The rearing of children or the writing of a book are illustrations that come to mind. Let us recall that the task is a divinely appointed one, and divine aid is therefore to be expected. Expect it! Ask for it, wait for it, believe that God gives it. Offer to Him the job itself, along with your fears and misgivings about it. He will not fail or be discouraged. Let His courage encourage you. The day will come when the task will be finished. Trust Him for it.
~ *Elisabeth Elliot, A Lamp for My Feet*