

“Encourage One Another”

1 Thessalonians 4:18

Have you ever been insulted, discouraged, or maligned? It’s difficult being on the receiving end of dispiriting words. Those words can cut to the heart and be difficult to shake off. They can wound us temporarily or even give us a lifetime of pain—a witness to the power of our words! If this is true—and I believe it is—then the opposite must also be true; encouraging words can lift us up, heal us, and give us hope for the future!

Scripture tells us to *encourage* others daily so they are not hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. Encouragement is not flattery, sweet talk, or a superficial pat on the back. We are instructed to encourage or exhort others. This term comes from the same root word, *paráklētos*, that Jesus used when speaking of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, when praying for His followers in John, chapters 15 and 16. It calls to mind that of coming alongside, comforting, calling near, or praying.

So how *do* we do it? How can we be encouraged, and how do we become encouragers? True encouragement grows out of a deep faith-walk with God and one another. It requires our time and selfless devotion. It seeks to lift up and heal, helping others grow closer to God, so they can press on in their faith and be better suited for serving in God’s kingdom.

There are dozens of Bible verses that train us to be encouragers. May these sampling of Scriptures encourage you today!

- Jesus, our Hope, encourages us. (Heb. 6:18, 2 Thes. 2:17)
 - Salvation encourages us. (1 Thes. 5:8-11)
 - The Holy Spirit encourages us. (Acts 9:31)
 - The faith of others encourages us. (Acts 11:23, 28:15, Rom. 1:12, Phil. 1:14, 1 Thes. 3:7)
 - Fellowship with believers encourages us. (Phil. 2:1, Heb. 10:25)
 - The truth of Scripture encourages us. (1 Cor. 14:31, Phil. 1:4, 2 Tim. 4:2-5, Titus 1:9)
 - Serving God encourages us. (2 Chron. 35:2)
 - Anticipating the Lord’s coming encourages us. (1 Thes. 4:18)
- (I *encourage* you to look up the rest of them!)

Dear Jesus, during this season of Lent, help me to ‘give up’ discouraging words and seek to encourage others daily! Amen.

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