

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

“Now it happened after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, ‘Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.’ So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria. Ahab called Obadiah who was over the household. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly.)”
1 Kings 18:1-3

I Beseech You

Encourage One Another – 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Have you ever beseeched someone?

It is an odd word that you probably do not find too many people using unless you are watching a Shakespearean play. It has to do with calling out or encouraging.

When was the last time you were encouraged? What happened?

Why was it an encouragement to you?

The power of encouragement can reach into the saddest heart and lighten it. I have heard stories upon stories of children of God reaching out to others in seemingly insignificant ways, but because they reached out, people were encouraged and strengthened.

Satan has a tendency to attack our hearts in the hopes of discouraging us. Discouragement can cripple us in many ways. It can cause us to be unproductive, unresponsive, depressed, and in some extreme cases may cause someone to consider taking their own life. Some may never come to that end, but others see it as the only option out of the depression and heartache that they have. Discouragement can drain our energy and destroy our motivation. It can cause sleepless nights and restless days. Satan would love to discourage us.

Let's look at the story of Elijah the prophet.

In chapter eighteen of 1 Kings, Elijah faces off with 450 prophets of Baal. As you read through the chapter, it is easy to picture Elijah bigger than life. He stands tall in the face of Ahab and his prophets. God breaths down fire and consumes the entire altar. Elijah then kills all 450 prophets. The chapter ends with much needed rain.

How would you have felt if you were in Elijah's shoes and saw the fire come down and the rain come?

That must have been something to have seen not only the fire, but the faces of the prophets as God revealed Himself as the One true God. You would think the story would continue with something like Elijah leading a multitude of people in revolt against the wicked king and his iniquitous wife. Read the first three verses.

How does Elijah's response make you feel?

*"But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."
Hebrews 3:13*

I could not believe that Elijah would be scared of a woman's threat after defeating and killing 450 prophets. He had just seen God breath fire out of heaven, but he still got scared and ran. The rest of the chapter works through how God lifted him up in his time of discouragement, but one thing we can learn from this is that anyone could become discouraged. Discouragement is a part of life and may be just around the corner for some of us.

We all need encouragement, hence, the reason why Paul calls us to encourage one another.

I want to take us back to the word encouragement. There is some good meaning packed into this word. The Greek word is παρακαλέω (parakaleo). It is formed by two words, παρά and κελέω. The first word is normally a preposition which means near, from beside, at, in the vicinity, or proximity. The second word means to call, to bid, to name. Now we put the two together and what would you suggest they might connote together?

Think about when you were encouraged. For most of us, it is those that are close to us that encourage us the most. It is not necessarily what they did as much as it was who they are. This word carries with it the idea of being called by someone close.

When people are discouraged, things around them seem dark. Remember back to your childhood when the lights went out during a storm. Things would be dark, but everything would be okay when we would hear a parent's voice. We may not need to see them, but when they call out we were encouraged. When we are discouraged, we need people that are close to us to call out to us.

Paul encourages the believers to encourage one another. In order to accomplish this, we need to get close. It is so easy for people to distance themselves from the world around them. We want to protect ourselves from being hurt, but in the process we hurt ourselves. It is hard to encourage one another if we do not know one another.

When was the last time you had a good conversation with another believer?

When was the last time you spent time with another believer (one-on-one)?

When was the last time you prayed with another believer (one-on-one)?

For some of us, it is hard to open up. It is hard to develop close relationships with people because this world is so fast-paced and busy, but the busier it gets the more encouragement we will need from each other to carry on.

Who would you consider to be in your close circle of friends?

“...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”
Hebrews 10:24-25

Now here is a revealing question. When those people that you just listed encourage you, does it lift you up? Does their encouragement work well? If not, then you need to work a little more in becoming close.

We need to get close to encourage. Here's the clincher. I could give a list of how we encourage, but that list is different for each person. A kind word may encourage one person, but it is an act of service which may encourage another. How we encourage one another is based on that person and we cannot possibly know how to encourage until we know the person we want to encourage. It all comes back to that little preposition.

In order to encourage one another, we have to get up close and personal.

Let's find someone to put our arm around and encourage.

Romans 14:19
1 Thessalonians 4:18
Hebrews 3:13
Hebrews 10:24-25

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?

