

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, September 19, 2012 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

STRENGTHENING YOUR GRIP “Strengthening Your Grip on Encouragement” *Hebrews 10:19-25*

Encouragement can be defined as “putting courage into someone, inspiring him with spirit, courage, or hope.” Do you know people from Scripture who could genuinely be called “encouragers”? Do you recall some “discouragers” in Scripture as well? Take a look at the follow chart. As the character and story from Scripture is identified circle whether you feel that character is an “encourager” or a “discouragers” and then tell why?

BIBLICAL ENCOURAGERS / DISCOURAGERS

NAME	TEXT	SYNOPSIS	PICK ONE <i>(circle one)</i>
Sarah	Gen.18:1-15	Sarah laughs at God’s promise	Encourager <input checked="" type="radio"/> Discourager
WHY?: Sarah’s laughing at God’s promise to Abraham was discouraging to Abraham, who had faith in God but was indeed, like Sarah, past the years of being able to father a child.			
PRINCIPLE: We often turn in to “discouragers” when the impossible looms before us, but remember that with God nothing is impossible and He is always faithful to His promises.			
Joseph	Gen.45:1-28	Joseph reveals himself to family	Encourager <input checked="" type="radio"/> Discourager
WHY?: Because Joseph saw God’s bigger picture and past the negative things that happen in life, he was able to forgive those who wronged him and encourage them toward God’s purposes and God’s best.			
PRINCIPLE: Encouragers focus on God and His purposes and others rather than themselves.			
10 Spies	Num.13:1-33	The report of the Promised Land	Encourager <input type="radio"/> Discourager <input checked="" type="radio"/>
WHY?: Fear and doubt discouraged their own hearts and their discouragement was contagious... they discouraged others, the whole nation of Israel.			
PRINCIPLE: It is hard to encourage others when we have not dealt with our own discouragements, perhaps created by our own fears and doubts.			
Judas	Jn. 12:1-7	The woman with expensive perfume	Encourager <input type="radio"/> Discourager <input checked="" type="radio"/>
WHY?: Judas was looking at the woman’s act through selfish (greedy) fleshly eyes, rather than spiritual eyes. He miss the incredible act of worship toward Jesus on the part of the woman.			
PRINCIPLE: In order to be an true encourager we must see others and circumstances as Jesus see them... from a spiritual perspective.			
Barnabas	Acts 15:36-41	Barnabas and Paul split up	Encourager <input checked="" type="radio"/> Discourager
WHY?: Barnabas refused to give up on John Mark, just because he failed once. He stood up for him.			
PRINCIPLE: Encouragers never give up on others who Christ died for but continue to encourage them toward Christ even when some can’t see it or don’t understand.			

Harassed by the world, bruised by worry and anxiety, broken by failure, disappointed by defeat, bleeding because of sin – we all need encouragement at one time or another; some of us more often than others. In a day when we are beset on every side by circumstances, and oppositions we must strengthen our grip on God’s call to Christians to the art of encouragement.

I. ENCOURAGEMENT... A NECESSARY INGREDIENT OF OUR WORSHIP

As a little background to the book of Hebrews, Hebrews was a letter written by an unknown author to first-century Jews who were bruised by adversity and facing persecution – even death – for their faith in Christ. Weary, many had begun to drift from that faith. The letter of Hebrews was written as a reminder to them that Christ was superior to all things, even their situation. It is within this framework that the following considerations were made. The counsel given to those in the book of Hebrews is still relevant and good for us today (READ: Hebrews 10:19-25)

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

1. **What it means... definition** – To “encourage” means “to put courage into someone; to inspire him with spirit, courage, or hope.”

What is
worship?

***Perspective:** Our concept of worship normally includes only the activities of meeting with God, hearing His Word declared, and offering Him our praise. However, the other half of our worship takes place in acting on what happens in the worship of hearing and meeting with other... how it plays out in our lives, how it changes us. Our worship is not complete with the completion of a “worship service.” The other half of our worship takes place in the participation in mutual encouragement – with one another and others.*

2. **What we have... possessions (vv.19-21)** – ¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God.”

2 Things Christians Have:

- (1) **Confidence to approach God (vv.19-20)** – Verses 19-20 says, ¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body...” Was this always the case? Was this the case in the mindset of a Jew (the Hebrews)? No not at all! They still have the traditional mindset of Jewish

practice as described in our Old Testament or Mosaic Law. No one approached God except a Priest and then only at certain times and in certain ways, and even then it could lead to death. Is God approachable today? Look at **Mark 15:33-39**, and notice what takes place there at this crucial moment in history, ³³ *At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour.* ³⁴ *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?'—which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'* ³⁵ *When some of those standing near heard this, they said, 'Listen, he's calling Elijah.'* ³⁶ *One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 'Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down,' he said.* ³⁷ *With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.* ³⁸ *The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.* ³⁹ *And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'"* Let me ask you what was the significance of that curtain of the temple being torn in two from top to bottom?

- (2) **A Priest who give us access to God (v.21)** – Verse 21 of our passage says, ²¹ *And since we have a great priest over the house of God.* What is that talking about, “a great priest...”? Back on up in the book of Hebrews to **Hebrews 4:14-16**, ¹⁴ *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.* ¹⁵ *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.* ¹⁶ *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”* Listen to the Apostle Paul in **Romans 5:1-2**, *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”* What do you think he has in mind with that idea of “...access by faith into this grace in which we now stand...”? No longer a need for human priests, we have a “great” high priest who has opened a way for us to God so that we have endless access to Him.

3. **What we are to do... commands (vv.22-25)** – ²² *Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.* ²³ *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.* ²⁴ *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,* ²⁵ *not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

3 Things Christians are To Do:

- (1) **Draw near (v.22)** – Verse 22 says, *“Let us draw near...”* We are to come up close – into an intimacy with God; this speaks of God’s presence.

- (2) **Hold fast (v.23)** – Verse 23 says, *“Let us hold unswervingly (or fast, tightly)...”* We are to hold tightly onto God’s truths with unswerving faith, considering God’s promises. In other words, “Get or strengthen our grip!”
- (3) **Consider how to stimulate (vv.24-25)** – Verses 24-25, say, *“²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* We are to encourage one another; this refers to God’s people.

II. ENCOURAGEMENT... UNDER A MAGNIFYING GLASS (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Now, a closer look at verses 24-25 of our passage in Hebrews 10... here is what it says, *“²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

1. **What is the idea? (v.24)** - *“²⁴ And let us consider...”* suggest the idea of fixing one’s eyes or mind on a particular thing; being attentive to, or having a continuous care for, something. In the text we are commanded to show continuous care in stimulating (encouraging) one another in two things:

2 Aims of our Encouragement:

- (1) **To excel in love** -
 (2) **To excel in good deeds** -
 Two good objectives for us!

2. **How can it be implemented? (v.25)** – According to verse 25 it is implemented both negatively and positively.

2 Biblical Ways to Implement Encouragement:

- (1) **Negatively... by not being absent** - By not being absent when the assembly meets. The writer reminds us that we cannot encourage at arm’s length... you can’t encourage if you are not there so he tells us to, *“...not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing...”*
- (2) **Positively... by just doing it** – Verse 25 says, *“...but encouraging one another...”* The principles of Hebrews 10:24-25 are implemented by encouraging one another. The act of encouraging is that of calling others alongside of us. Think about it... isn’t this the same ministry that the Holy Spirit has in relation to us? God, through the Holy Spirit is our comforter, encourager... coming alongside us to push us toward Him! He is our Helper!

Observation: *The closest we can get to the work of the Holy Spirit is encouraging one another... become “people helpers.” Remember the Holy Spirit is called the “Helper” in Scripture (see John 14:16, 26, John 15:26, John 16:7)*

III. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Let’s clear up some common misunderstanding about encouragement...

3 Simple Questions to Clarify?

Question #1: Does this happen just on Sunday... just one a week?

Answer: NO! Hebrews 3:13 says, *“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”* Why do you think the writer of Hebrews tells us to encourage one another daily?

Question #2: Do I wait for hints that encouragement is needed?

Answer: NO! Romans 14:19 says, *“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification (encouragement).”* What do you think Paul means by “let us make every effort...”? We are not supposed to wait for hints, we are to encourage constantly even before it is needed. Common sense!

Question #3: Is it necessary for me to do something extensive?

Answer: NO! Proverbs 15:23 says, *“A man finds joy in giving an apt reply – and how good is a timely word!”* Do you get it? What do you think is the idea behind that simple proverb? Just a simple “timely word” of encouragement, a simple act of giving a pat on the back, a smile, a hug, etc.... a simple gift given can do a world of good for another.

IV. SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING HEBREWS 10:25

Forming habits such as encouraging others is a slow process. But in order for you to begin being an “encourager,” you need to start doing one or two things daily. Why not write a list of a few people who you know who are in need, and ask God to give you specific ideas of action you can take to “inspire them with spirit, courage, or hope?” Here are about five suggestions that can help you get started.

5 Practical Suggestions for Implementing Encouragement:

- 1. Observe and mention admirable qualities you observe in someone else** – Sometimes we see things in other people that we really appreciate or that really touch us, but we keep it to ourselves and never express it to that one. Take the time to tell that one what you appreciate about them. It may be the one thing that person needs to really push them to the next level in their commitment, or to encourage them to keep going and not give up.
- 2. Share correspondence or small gifts with a note attached** – This may seem like a small and inconsequential thing... a short note or small token gift of appreciation, but that note or token may be something that is treasured and placed in a prominent place, and returned to often to find a source of encouragement and strength when it is lacking.
- 3. Make a phone call which is brief and to the point, expressing your appreciation** – A simple message from someone taking the time to say “thank you,” or “I appreciate you,” or “I’m thinking of you,” could be huge in a person’s life.
- 4. Cultivate a positive and reassuring attitude** – Encouragement cannot thrive in a negative environment. Just a smile on your face, a pat on the back, a hug can minister encouragement to a heart that is hurting or discouraged in a way that words may not.
- 5. Practice random acts of kindness** - Pick up the tab in a restaurant, send flowers, give a gift of money. Random acts of kindness can really bless and encourage another person. Here is one to try: pay for the car behind you in a drive-thru line such as McDonalds or Jack in the Box. Be sure to bless the cashier also by telling them, “God

has been so good to me that I want to bless the person behind me in line by paying for their order.” This may be such an encouragement to the person taking the money that the seeds of God’s grace may be planted in that heart.