ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER
PART 1

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Some Christians feel as individual believers that they do not need other Christians in their lives in order to grow.
   1. This feeling often stems from an overreaction to an overreaction whereby some Christians have developed an over dependence on other Christians rather than on Jesus Christ.
   2. But the facts are that great portions of the New Testament clearly emphasize that Christians do need one another in order to grow spiritually.
   3. We actually need the ministry of others in our lives.

B. Encouragement is important business:
   1. This is true not only because the Scripture tells us to think about it, but also because it represents the unique value of Christian fellowship.
   2. The Christian has the unique distinction of knowing that when he spends time with another Christian, they can have an eternally significant impact on one another.
   3. We are reminded that difficulties along the path of obedience can weaken our determination to follow Christ-and therefore we should encourage one another. Heb 3:12-14
      Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;
   4. We are to give serious thought as to how we can encourage one another. Heb 10:19-25
      Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 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.

C. Encouragement is the kind of expression that helps someone want to be a better Christian, even when life is rough.
II. WE MUST MEET TOGETHER

A. There are many words used in the New Testament to describe functioning Body of Christ and what Believers are to do for another, but no word is used more frequently than PARAKALEO meaning to "call alongside."
   1. The most comprehensive instruction the New Testament regarding encouraging one another appears in Hebrews 10:19-25
   2. This passage will help us to understand what it means to "encourage one another."
   3. It includes the setting, the objectives and the primary means for this mutual process.

B. Encouraging one another-the setting.
   1. The author of this letter states, "not forsaking our own assembling together."
   2. The ever present theme of the New Testament is the importance of the functioning Body of Christ. Eph 4:16
      from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.
   3. So the "setting" of encouragement is meeting together which we are not to forsake "as is the habit of some."

C. Encouraging one another-the objectives.
   1. We should grow in our Faith. Heb 10:22
      a. Faith is an essential ingredient in our relationship with God.
      b. Faith is described in Heb 11:1.
         Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval.
      c. A growing and deepening faith reflects that God is not merely an academic idea.
      d. Though He is an invisible Spirit, He is a real person to whom we can communicate and relate with feeling and warmth.
      e. Hence, when we come together regularly, we are to encourage one another to approach God in this way-to trust Him for every detail of our lives. As we do we will grow together in faith.
   2. We should grow in our Hope. Heb 10:23
      a. Our Faith is affected by mutual encouragement and so is Hope.
      b. Whereas Faith relates more to the present, Hope has more of relationship to the future.
      c. Though one is built on the other, it is possible to be strong in Faith and weak in Hope. 1 Thes 1:3 cf 2 Thes 1:3
3. We should grow in our Love. Heb 10:24
   a. More than any other quality, mutual encouragement among members of the Body of Christ should "stimulate one another to love and good deeds."
   b. Paul underscored this truth to the Corinthians. 1 Cor 13:13
   c. Love however, is not automatic. cf Heb 10:24; 1 Cor 14:1; 1 Pet 4:8; 1 John 3:11,23; 4:7,11; 2 John 5
   d. Love must be nurtured and developed among Christians just as it is in marriage.
   e. We must give careful thought as to how we can motivate each other to practice this virtue.

D. Encouraging one another-the elements. (The setting for encouraging one another is that we meet together; the objectives are to develop Faith, Hope and Love and the means are spelled out as well)
   1. Sincerely Draw Near to God because the problems of the Sin Nature and Personal Sins have been taken care of. Heb 10:22
   2. Tenaciously hang on to Hope because God is consistently faithful to us. Heb 10:23
   3. Consider how to stimulate one another to living the Christian life. Heb 10:24

E. We need to encourage one another to approach God.
   1. Like David, we should seek God’s presence in our lives. Ps 69:18
   Oh draw near to my soul {and} redeem it; ransom me because of my enemies!
   2. We are to draw near to God to listen to Him. Eccl 5:1
   Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.
   3. The hypocrisy needs to be removed from our souls. Isa 29:13
   Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from me, and their reverence for me consists of tradition learned {by rote,}"
   4. We are to draw near to God to minister to Him. Ezek 43:19
   ‘And you shall give to the Levitical priests who are from the offspring of Zadok, who draw near to Me to minister to Me,’ declares the Lord GOD, ‘a young bull for a sin offering.
   5. Failure to draw near to God is a sign of arrogance. Zeph 3:2
   She heeded no voice; she accepted no instruction. She did not trust in the LORD; she did not draw near to her God.
   6. We draw near by going before His throne of grace. Heb 4:16
   Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.
   7. Those who draw near to Him will be "saved." Heb 7:25
   Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
   8. The Law is not the way to draw near to God. Heb 10:1
For the Law, since it has {only} a shadow of the good things to come {and} not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near.

9. **God promises that He will honor your desire to be in His presence.**
   
   James 4:8

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

F. **We need to encourage one another to hang on.**

1. **Hanging on to the "seed of the gospel" will let us bear fruit.**
   
   Luke 8:15

"And the {seed} in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

2. **We can hang on to our Hope because we are no longer held fast by the letter of the Law.**
   
   Rom 7:6

But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

3. **If we hang on to the gospel we know that we have the ultimate deliverance.**
   
   1 Cor 15:2

by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

4. **We can hold fast because we already possess all things that really matter.**
   
   2 Cor 6:10

as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

5. **To hold fast we need to hang on to the good.**
   
   1Thes 5:21

But examine everything {carefully}; hold fast to that which is good;

6. **We have to hang on to our confidence.**
   
   Heb 3:6

but Christ {was faithful} as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

7. **This is how we partake of Christ.**
   
   Heb 3:14

For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;

G. **We need to consider how to stimulate one another to Love.**

1. **To do this we must first consider the "log in our own eye."**
   
   Matt 7:3

"And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

2. **If we can even consider nature, we can see God's provision and therefore do not seek anything but the Kingdom of Heaven.**
   
   Luke 12:24-31

3. **We must consider God's promises, not our own human limitations.**
   
   Rom 4:19

And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;

4. **The first thing we had better do is consider Jesus.**
   
   Heb 3:1
Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.

5. **We need to not forget what we look like after we have looked in the mirror of the Word.** James 1:23-24

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

**ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER**

**PART 2**

**III. THE GREAT ENCOURAGER:**

A. The reason that it is possible for Christians to meet together for mutual encouragement is because we have Someone who will lead us in this endeavor.

B. But it actually goes beyond just that and is better understood in light of an important conversation Jesus had with the apostles shortly before His death as they were gathered in the Upper Room for the Passover.

C. Several things happened that evening that deeply disturbed and troubled them.
   1. Jesus insisted on washing their feet. John 13:1-17
   2. Christ had singled out Judas as His betrayer to John. John 13:18-26
   3. Jesus told His men He was going to leave them. John 13:33,36; 14:1-3

D. Jesus, knowing their feelings of uncertainty, spoke directly to their confused thoughts and emotions. John 14:1-3

E. Jesus' "lesson plan" for the last night was right on schedule. John 14:9-15

F. Though they would not yet grasp its total meaning, the apostles were now prepared by Jesus to hear about the next major truth-one so profound that it has made it possible for people everywhere to experience the dynamic power of Christianity. John 14:16-17

"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.

G. Another Counselor:
   1. Four times Jesus identified the Holy Spirit as a Counselor."
John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7

2. What had began in God’s Son was now focused in the Holy Spirit.
3. The Holy Spirit is "Another Counselor/Encourager" of the same kind as the Lord.

H. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth.
1. Three times Jesus referred to the One who was coming as the Spirit of Truth. John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13
2. Jesus described the Spirit’s primary functions as:
   a. Teaching. John 14:26
      "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.
   b. Recall. John 14:26
   c. Testifying about Jesus Christ. John 15:26
      "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me,
   d. Convicting. John 16:8 "
      And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment;
   e. Leading. John 16:13-14
      "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. "He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you.
3. Therefore, Encouraging One Another happens when we permit the Holy Spirit within each one of us to communicate. (He will do it for He is The Encourager and will function normally-i.e. like the above)

I. Encouraged by the Holy Spirit.
1. While waiting in Jerusalem as Jesus had told them, the Holy Spirit came just as Jesus had promised. Acts 2
2. And the promise that He would send them another Encourager was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came revealing truth. Acts 9:31
   So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.
   Acts 14:21-22 And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."
3. The means of encouragement was God’s message of the Person of Jesus Christ.
J. The Holy Spirit and the 20th-Century Christian:
   1. God's primary means of encouraging Christians everywhere is with the truth about Jesus Christ that is revealed by the Holy Spirit through His Word. Rom 15:4
   For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
   2. As Spirituality is by faith and surrender of our will to the Lord, so is our "ability" to encourage one another or even to be encouraged. Gal 3:1-5
   3. Realizing that the Holy Spirit is in the business of encouraging believers (and even unbelievers to accept the gospel) hopefully lets us be more open to Him working through us to accomplish this task.

ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER
PART 3
BARNABAS: THE SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

IV. THE FIRST EXAMPLE:

A. The historical setting for this first example is Jerusalem. Acts 1

B. The Holy Spirit has just been received. Acts 2

C. A tremendous persecution had begun. Acts 4:1-31

D. The Christians responded to the persecution by banding together in all ways. Acts 4:32-35

E. Barnabas was the example. Acts 4:36-37
   1. This is not saying that Christians are to live in a communal society or that spiritual unity depends upon economic equality.
   2. Without question though, the Holy Spirit wanted Barnabas to be a model for us.
   3. Christians who share their material resources with others in order to meet human needs have a ministry of encouragement.
   4. An encourager is a person of Faith, who has an eternal Hope and functions in love.
   5. The needs of others become more important than one's own personal needs. Php 2:3 cf Heb 10:25

F. Lessons for the Twentieth-Century Christian.
   1. From Barnabas we see that those who share themselves, including their material possessions, are encouragers. 1 John 3:16-17
   2. Encouragers encourage others to do the same. (Walk the walk as well as talk the talk)
3. An encourager understands the difference between stewardship and ownership.

4. For personal evaluation:
   a. As a Christian, am I characterized more by unselfishness or selfishness? 2 Cor 9:5-8
   b. Am I seeking first the Kingdom of God? Matt 6:33
   c. Do the needs of others concern me? Php 2:3-5

V. THE SECOND EXAMPLE:

A. In Jerusalem, orders were issued and carried by a man named Saul to bring back to Jerusalem all who had become Christians. Acts 9:1-3

B. On the road to Damascus, Saul was confronted by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Acts 9:4-9


D. This man then began to preach Christ and he himself came under persecution. Acts 9:21-25

E. No one in the Christian community believed that he had converted, except Barnabas, who stood up for him. Acts 9:26-31

F. Some observations:
   1. Barnabas received his name because of his activities of encouragement.
   2. Barnabas had a basic concern for people, especially when they were being rejected by others.
   3. He was willing to trust them when others would not.
   4. His actions were rooted in unselfishness and made him vulnerable to attack.

G. Lessons for Twentieth-Century Christians:
   1. An encourager exemplifies Jesus Christ by his willingness to believe in people and to act on that belief by helping them, even when there is a personal cost. Rom 5:8; 1 John 3:16
   2. Remember that someone experiencing the pain of rejection probably needs some encouragement.
   3. In spite of our hesitancy to trust others and defend them, we need to pray for a willingness to become involved in the lives of others. (not as a busybody who only wants to spread gossip)
   4. We must not let our own fears of rejection from those we love and trust hinder our encouragement of others.
   5. We may not trust people because we are unwilling to take a risk.
H. An Encourager is a person of Faith in the Lord who functions in the power of the Holy Spirit to give others the benefit of the doubt.

I. Barnabas eternally touched Paul's ministry with his words of grace according to the need of the moment. Eph 4:29

VI. THE THIRD EXAMPLE:

A. Setting the stage—an historical sketch. Rom 1 cf Gen 12:1-3


C. The Church in Antioch. Acts 11:19-21

D. Barnabas sent to Antioch. Acts 11:22-24

E. Some observations—why was Barnabas chosen?
   1. Barnabas had developed a reputation in the Christian world as an "Encourager," a man who was deeply concerned about people and who could get excited about the progress in others' lives.
   2. Another reason that they sent him was because of his spiritual qualifications. Acts 11:24
      he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.
   3. More than likely, he was also more free of prejudice than the others.

F. Lessons for Twentieth-Century Christians:
   1. Christians should encourage others by entering into their lives without being a busybody.
   2. Christians should also encourage others with their own Christlike lifestyles.
   3. Christians, of all people, should not be prejudiced.

G. For self evaluation:
   1. Am I able to get excited about the good things that happen to others?
   2. Am I able to tell them that I am glad?
   3. Can I enter into their joy?
   4. Am I living a committed Christian lifestyle?
   5. Am I able to accept other people for who they are?
   6. Do I look for the best in other people?
   7. Can I freely associate with people who are different than I?
   8. Am I willing to be a Barnabas?

H. An encourager is a person of Faith!
   1. Barnabas demonstrated his faith in the Lord toward the church, its leaders, with his money and time.
2. He also displayed his faith in the Lord toward other people in that they too could change.
3. Barnabas also had faith that others could minister, so he had no problem seeking help from others.
4. From landowner to donor, to helper, to leader, to pioneer missionary, Barnabas had quite a ministry!

**ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER**

**PART 4**

**VII. LIVING FOR CHRIST IN AN X-RATED WORLD.**

A. The social life in Antioch was debased, sensual and shocking.

   1. This was a predominately Gentile city and thus was involved in all the pagan practices.
   2. The encouragement that Barnabas offered was to "remain true to the Lord." Acts 11:23
   3. This would involve leaving the pagan practices.

C. The Church in Rome (Rome was also known for moral degradation).
   1. When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans he had not yet been there. Rom 1:10
   2. He had a strong desire to minister among them and be encouraged. Rom 1:11-15
   3. The first part of his letter is theological where he informs them about what God had done for them and for all of mankind in Jesus Christ.
   4. Beginning in Chapter 12, Paul outlines what a Christian's response should be to God's Grace and Mercy. Rom 12:1
   5. These verses in Romans 12 help us to understand more clearly how Barnabas might have encouraged new believers in Antioch to "remain true to the Lord with all their hearts," and what he and Saul taught them during the year that they ministered to them.

D. Ephesus was also a pagan city permeated with a Gentile lifestyle.
   1. After the church was founded in Ephesus, Paul stayed for two years and taught regularly in the School of Tyranus. Acts 19:8-10
   2. The first three chapters of Paul's letter to the Ephesians was similar to the first 11 chapters of Romans.
   3. It is in these chapters that Paul outlined many of the great theological truths of Christianity.
   4. When he began Chapter 4, he wrote, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called."
5. Again, believers are encouraged to "remain true to the Lord with all their hearts."

6. What is found in the second part of the Ephesian letter is in many aspects parallel with Romans 12:1-2.

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

7. **A comparison between Romans and Ephesians:**
   a. **God's Mercies Rom 1-11 cf A Christian's calling in Jesus Christ. Eph 1-3**

   compare Eph 4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

   c. **Rom 12:2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

   compare Eph 4:17-22 This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

   compare Eph 5:3-4 But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

   compare Eph 4:22-24 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

   compare Eph 5:15-17 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

8. **One great need for New Testament Christians, especially those who converted out of pagan lifestyles, was to develop a Christian lifestyle that reflected God's holiness, particularly in the area of moral purity.**

E. **The Twentieth-Century Christian and the X-rated world.**
1. There is a striking parallel between the first century and our own, with this exception—when Christianity was born, the entire world was basically immoral.

2. On the other hand, the American culture was brought into being by people who were at least outwardly committed to the values of Christianity, and they wrote these values into society's laws.

3. In recent years our sexual morality has rapidly declined and more and more our society is moving toward open and flagrant immorality.

F. The Visual Media:
1. We can ask the question, do books, movies, and television reflect or cause what is happening in our society? The answer is probably "both."

2. Just as in Antioch, Rome and Ephesus, the entertainment world both reflects and contributes to the moral decay that is taking place in our society.

G. Music:
1. Secular music also reflects the morals of the day and many popular songs flagrantly focus on immoral relationships and unlawful activities.

2. Some songs are more philosophical and reflect unadulterated selfishness.

3. As Christians we are not to allow ourselves to conform to the world system, for we must present our bodies to God, to honor Him and we must renew our minds daily.

4. Our eyes and ears are windows to the soul and there is no way we can continually feed our inner self with things that are opposed to God's will without being affected by them. cf Php 4:8

H. Observation vs. Participation.
1. A strange philosophy is spreading today that says to indulge in the sexual exploits of others vicariously via literature, movies or music is not actually indulging in sin.

2. Several verses explicitly challenge to what degree we indulge ourselves in these vicarious activities. 1 Cor 6:18; 2 Tim 2:22; Php 4:8

3. Remember that Paul was writing to people who were frequently spectators rather than participants in some activities.

4. No matter how strong a Christian you might be, if a little leaven spoils the lump, a lot will do it much quicker.

5. We have to be careful to not overreact to legalists who claim that there are certain activities one must stop in order to be saved.

6. But we must seek to obey the principles of God's Word in every area of our lives.

7. Can Philippians 4:8 be fulfilled?
I. Our example as parents.
1. Most Christian parents are concerned about the moral values of their own children, but what we are speaks so loud that they do not hear what we say.
2. All that you do should be designed to teach and all that you do does teach your children.
3. Children will develop standards of behavior and a moral sense as well whether or not you say anything to them.
4. So let our speech and behavior teach them in a positive way.

J. Peer Pressure:
1. This is an unfortunate phenomena which is taking place in our culture-for all ages.
2. Today, possibly more than any other time in history, we must encourage one another to "remain true to the Lord with all our hearts," as there are more distractions than at any other time.
3. One of the most basic kinds of encouragement therefore involves maintaining moral purity in all our behavior and relationships.

K. For Personal Evaluation:
1. Are we concentrating on "excellent" and "praiseworthy" things as revealed in God's Word?? Php 4:8
2. To what extent do we "renew our minds?" Rom 12:1
3. To what extent do we love the world and the things in the world? 1 John 2:15
4. To what extent are we seeking to "remain true to the Lord?" Acts 11:23

L. Do not confuse the encouragement to "change one's mind" with the Positive Mental Attitude thinking of today.
1. We are to change our mind to conform to God's will.
2. PMA thinking makes oneself the god of his own world, trying to create one's own reality.
3. The Christian "change of mind" is God-centered while PMA thinking is self-centered.

M. Part of your ministry of encouragement is urging people to view people and circumstances from God's perspective.

VIII. A MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

A. Under the leadership of Barnabas and Saul, the church at Antioch continued to grow and expand its influence, yet there came a time in their ministry when they were finished there. Acts 13:2-15
B. Paul's message of encouragement: Acts 13:16-41
   1. It is the message of the Resurrection.
   2. It is the message to be lived.

C. A Twentieth-Century witness:
   1. The message of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is still the message that changes lives.
   2. It is the only message of true encouragement to a lost and dying world without hope or to a "crooked and perverse" generation.
   3. In essence this was Paul's message of encouragement that day in Antioch and there were those who wanted them to stay so that they could hear more. Acts 13:42-4
   4. This message brings freedom! Acts 13:38-39

ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER
PART 7

XII. UNDERSTANDING ENCOURAGEMENT.

A. The power of a well-timed word.
   Prov 18:21
   Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.
   Prov 12:25
   Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.
   Prov 15:4
   A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but perversion in it crushes the spirit.
   Prov 16:24
   Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.
   Prov 25:11
   Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances.
   Prov 25:20
   Like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar on soda, is he who sings songs to a troubled heart.
   James 3:5-6
   So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.
   1. Words are important.
   2. We must understand that encouragement basically involves the careful selection of words that are intended to influence another person meaningfully toward increased godliness.
   3. Shallow words i.e. ones that lack concern or are not of truth, will not bring encouragement to those who hear.
4. Death words are words that destroy motivation toward godliness. Prov 18:21
5. Life words are those that are designed to build and maintain motivation toward godliness. 1 Cor 10:31
6. We are commanded to encourage one another. Heb 10:25
   a. Because words have the power to deeply affect people we must consider our speech.
   b. Words can encourage, discourage, or do nothing. Shallow words accomplish little, death words discourage, and life words encourage.
   c. Seek to speak honestly and compassionately so as to encourage other Christians to endure and/or adjust.

B. Surface Community is an obstacle to encouragement.
   1. Surface Community is easily achieved when the listener is not listening. James 1:19
      This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;
   2. The Core Emotion of Fear must be overcome to get past Surface Community. Gen 3:10
      And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."
   3. Your Core Motivation must be geared toward the Two Key Goals. Mark 12:29-31
      Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."
   4. Your Core Strategy must then become to learn how to meet them, and to pray that you can.
   5. When people try to communicate from behind their protective layers that are designed to hide their fears, the result is superficial and shallow communication.
   6. Pray that the Holy Spirit will make you attentive to others and that He will give you the wisdom and strength to become an encourager.

C. Total Openness may not be the right solution.
   1. We need to learn how to get through these layers.
   2. This involves a willingness to risk exposure.
   3. It is legitimate to desire a relationship in which we feel secure, but to share more and more of who we are in the hope that our Christian brothers and sisters will accept us has actually established invalid goals.
   4. This can lead to depending more on each other than on God for the acceptance we desire.
5. Sharing yourself should be done in the framework of commitment to God and to the welfare of another.
6. Total Openness can replace Surface Community with a Fractured Community that will end in No Community.
7. Being open with others does not mean to exhibit yourself seeking significance or security, but to demonstrate Christ to one another.
8. True Personal fulfillment is available only through the realization of the extent of God's Love for you.

D. Total Commitment is the right solution.
1. This begins with being able to treat people as people, specifically being willing to listen to one another.
2. And then to seek to offer words or actions that encourage.
3. Realize that Protective Layers can block out both words that encourage and words that hurt.
4. Paul instructs us to understand the fears, defenses and needs of other people and to become committed, not to sharing ourselves for personal glory, but to sharing the Lord by ministering to those needs. Eph 4:29

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.

5. This is consistent with Php 2:3-4.
6. But, we may ask the question, "Who will encourage us?" How are we to maintain the objective of ministering to someone else when we cry for satisfaction?
7. We need to learn the difference between an objective and a desire.
   a. An Objective is a purpose to which a person is committed.
   b. A Desire is something wanted that cannot be obtained without the cooperation of another person.
8. Generally speaking, objectives are something that we are to "work" toward while desires are things for which we pray.
9. It is legitimate to desire personal encouragement, but are objective should be to encourage others.
10. When our desire to be encouraged is not met, it is difficult to maintain our goal to minister to others, but it is possible.

E. The Character of an Encourager.
1. This involves learning to do what does not come naturally.
2. An Encourager's Motivation is pure. 1 Cor 4:5

Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.
3. If it becomes a goal to impress someone with your caring heart, then it is not the true function of an encourager, even though the person may not realize it and still be encouraged.
4. Ministry to others should become more important than whether or not our desires are met.
5. The natural tendency is to become dependent rather than dependable.
6. You will face times when there is seemingly no one to encourage you but God. Those are good times. Ps 142:1-7
   I cry aloud with my voice to the LORD; I make supplication with my voice to the LORD. I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare my trouble before Him. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, Thou didst know my path. In the way where I walk they have hidden a trap for me. Look to the right and see; for there is no one who regards me; there is no escape for me; no one cares for my soul. I cried out to Thee, O LORD; I said, "Thou art my refuge, My portion in the land of the living." Give heed to my cry, for I am brought very low; deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me. "Bring my soul out of prison, so that I may give thanks to Thy name; the righteous will surround me,
7. We need to maintain our commitment to minister to others even when others are severely failing in their ministry to us. (Thus you share...)

F. When do we tell someone else how we feel?
   1. When you decide to let the Holy Spirit use you to encourage others, and you begin to see Him at work in and through you, it will probably accentuate your yearnings to receive in kind.
   2. What should you do when the opportunity arise for you to encourage someone who irritates you?
   3. Realize first, that there are three basic strategies which are used for handling emotions:
      a. Repression which is pretending to be something we are not.
      b. Indiscriminate Expression which robs people of the opportunity to see Christ work through them.
      c. Acknowledgment with Purposeful Expression which first acknowledges our feelings to God, and then discern when it is permissible to express our feelings to others.
   4. We should express our acknowledged emotions only when such emotions will further God's purposes.
   5. It is legitimate to tell others of your needs and seek their encouragement and counsel. Gal 6:1-2
   6. By the same token, do not repress your feelings of wanting to give up, so that you do not seek help before it is too late.

G. Of utmost importance is surrender to the Holy Spirit in the area of encouraging one another. Don't wait until it “feels right,” or until you find "just the right moment."
ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER
PART 8

XIII. THE PROCESS OF ENCOURAGEMENT:

A. Recognize first that words that encourage are inspired by love and directed toward fear.
   1. Words that encourage are prompted by love, not by fear or duty; that is, the words spoken should not function as a "layer" for the speaker.
   2. Words that encourage are aimed not at another's "layers" with the intent of rearranging them, but rather at another's hidden fear with the desire to remove or reduce it.

B. Words that are prompted by love.
   1. Christianity is Involvement.
   2. Love is the only true Motivation that will stir us to reach into others' lives for the purpose of encouragement.
   3. It is not natural to react to other people's "layers" with loving concern. Mark 7:21-23
   4. Until we diagnose and deal with our own "layers", we will not fully develop a ministry of encouragement.
   5. We must overcome our fear of losing something we value and enjoy—our comfortable defensive "layers."
   6. Words motivated by fear have no power to encourage. Eph 4:29
   7. We have to overcome the fear of rejection to be willing to encourage. We must become willing to be hurt and to even suffer loss to become an Encourager.
   8. We must decide to obey God at any cost to be truly and completely free from fear.

C. Words that are directed toward fear:
   1. The "formula" is "my love to another's fear."
   2. Encouragement depends on loving motivation in the Encourager as well as wisdom to discern the needs of the other person accurately.
   3. Words aimed at fear do not necessarily speak openly about fear, but they are always spoken by someone who is conscious of the other's fear.
   4. The effect of encouragement is to stimulate the hope that solutions exist for every problem, and that seen from an eternal perspective, it does make sense.
   5. Encouragement is not really a technique to be mastered but rather it is a sensitivity to people and a confidence in God that must be nourished and used.
There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us.

   1. Change can take place most easily when truth (which is the person of Jesus Christ) is presented in relationship.
      a. Deep regard and empathetic concern is the context for change.
      b. It creates an atmosphere in which the truth of God can be heard non-defensively and thus penetrate more deeply.
      c. A focus on relationship without an equally consistent focus on truth results in Undirected Involvement.
      d. A focus on truth without a discerning awareness of people's hunger for relationship may only crowd people into a legalistic box.
      e. Behavior may change, but the inward reality will likely be a pressured conformity with no experience of liberty and the love of Christ.
      f. Relationship without truth leads to shallow sentimentality.
      g. Truth without relationship generates pressure, then friction, and eventually disillusionment or pride.
      h. Relationship cuts holes through defensive layers by reducing the core fear, thereby opening people up to truth.

   2. Truth to a congregation without Encouragement.
      a. When people listen from behind "layers" they will not be fully moved by truth.
      b. Layered people are predisposed to maintain some degree of personal comfort.
      c. When an unencouraged person listens to the truth of God, either the Biblical principles will not completely pierce his layers or they will strengthen his fears and thus thicken his layers.

   3. Truth to an Encouraged Congregation:
      a. An Encourager must recognize that his primary purpose is to reduce fear, not to change layers.
      b. We must learn to put into words the identification of fear to the fearful person.
      c. The words must also communicate genuine acceptance of the other person as valuable, even though sometimes wrong.
      d. There is exposure without rejection.

E. Opportunities for Encouragement:
   1. Meeting together with fellow Christians is intended to provide us with opportunities to meaningfully encourage one another. Heb 10:24-25
2. Opportunities for encouragement will go unrecognized unless we consciously choose to minister to people as we talk to them.
   a. We need to seek to replace selfish thoughts with selfless thoughts.
   b. We tend either to manipulation for our own self-enhancement, or ministry for the glory of God and the well-being of others.

3. Encouragement occurs most effectively when opportunities are seized rather than created.

4. We must seek to listen beneath the words, and recognize that not every sentence is communicating a disguised need.

5. A sensitive listener uses words that convey an interest in hearing more. This will open doors because it sends out a dual message:
   a. I am interested in whatever you have to say.
   b. I will accept you regardless of what you say.

6. Words that close doors convey a lack of sensitive interest, which also carry a hint of criticism that threatens rejection.

F. Responding to Opportunities:

1. Many times we fail to respond due to fear of not knowing what to say.

2. There is not a list of phrases to memorize. Encouragement is not a technique, but an attitude that views others as valuable with a commitment to treat them accordingly.

3. There are some principle to keep in mind:
   a. The central function of a "layer" is to protect. To come out from behind a layer means losing some manner of protection and exposing oneself to rejection.
   b. Indifference, criticism, irritation, impatience, sarcasm, withdrawal and disapproval are but a few ways to reject someone.
   c. Part of the strength of encouragement lies in its communication of acceptance.

4. Understanding is sometimes better than giving advice.
   a. When people make known to us a concern, most people immediately feel pressure to solve the other person's problems. Often that pressure is self-imposed.
   b. A person who shares a problem is not always looking for a solution. They simply want to know if someone cares.
   c. Lost people need direction. Blind people need enlightening. Stubborn people need prodding. Scared people need patient understanding.
   d. Advice without understanding is not usually helpful. Quick advice usually communicates disrespect and disinterest and may actually come from the advisor's "layers."
e. Quiet interest/listening, sensitive questions, clarifying inquiry and discerning restatement are a few ways to promote and convey understanding.

5. The more precise the understanding, the more encouraging can be the words.
   a. Encouragers must not only provide for exposure without rejection and seek to sensitively understand what a person is saying but they must also speak words that promote awareness of a person's value.
   b. The Bible teaches that people are unique in that we bear the Image of God, so we are capable of entering into relationships of Love and engaging in activities with meaning.
   c. People need relationship and meaning, love and purpose
   d. People need the security of enjoying a love that cannot be lost and the significance of pursuing activities with eternal consequence.
   e. The essential fears that are locked into the core of fallen mankind are the fears of Insecurity and Insignificance.
   f. Understanding these fears will help you penetrate the "layers" that others have built up.
   g. So part of encouragement is to let people know that they have made an impact in other people's lives.

G. "Techniques of Encouragement"
1. To be a truly encouraging person, we must overcome the tendency to manipulate and also our own "layers."
2. There is a fine line between concern and control and it is difficult to recognize. Manipulation can look like ministry.
3. Manipulation is a "layer" that tends to use either "blustering bravado" or "assertive avoidance."
4. The Mindset of an Encourager:
   a. Encouragement requires involvement in the lives of other people, a sacrificial giving that refuses to consider the cost of the gift.
   b. The Encourager must be "slow to speak." Prov 12:18; 13:3; 17:27-28; 18:13; 29:20; Js 1:19
   c. The Encourager must be sensitive to his speech.
   d. The Encourager must be gentle in his speech. Prov 15:1; 26:21
5. Responses that inhibit encouragement:
   a. Defensive or explanatory words.
   b. Quick apologies.
   c. Attacking and cutting remarks.
   d. Corrections.
   e. Quick advice.
6. Encouragement is not simply a matter of acquiring a new set of skills. It is the fruit of a self-examined heart and a compassionate,
discerning sensitivity to the needs of others. It does require the development of some communication skills, but most of all it involves the leading of the Holy Spirit.

7. People who encourage attend to their own nonverbal messages and they seek to make the necessary changes.
   a. Squarely face the person.
   b. Openly face the person.
   c. Lean forward.
   d. Eye contact.
   e. Relax.

8. Some verbal suggestions:
   a. Reflection looks back to the speaker seeking the real problem that requires attention.
   b. Clarification-checks out what the speaker meant.
   c. Exploring-seeks more information.
   d. Interaction.

9. Then we should offer Biblical remedies.

10. Notice that the Encourager is one who promotes Faith, Hope and Love.

**XIV. THE LOCAL CHURCH: A RESTORING COMMUNITY**

A. The joy of restoration lies less in the work of restoration than in the awareness of participation in the project.

B. God wants people who consider it their main privilege and responsibility to obey and worship Him. 1 Cor 10:31

C. The work of restoration is designed to help people who are basically self-centered, unbelieving and fearful to become thoroughly Christ-centered.

D. Churches must seek to develop a balance in the value and importance of worship, teaching, fellowship and evangelism.

E. Counseling is basically the application of Biblical Truth found in the person of Jesus Christ to individual lives.

F. Counseling should include: Encouragement, Exhortation and Enlightenment.