

Love Encourages

Text : **Romans 15: 1-7** and **Hebrews 3: 12-14**

A. Have you ever looked up and seen the whales swimming over your head ?

S#1.

S#2.

1. There are times we've all been lower than a whale's belly.
2. What did you do to escape the depths of despair ?

S#3.

B. When some people sink into the depths of discouragement they don't recover.

1. Locally, within the last month two young men have hung themselves.
 - a. They were so young they had their whole lives in front of them. (**H.S. & 22**)
 - b. Their despair prevented them from seeing the possibility for a positive future.
2. How could ones so young feel so hopeless they couldn't face life ?

C. They had no heart to heart relationships with which to be supported.

S#4.

1. Our culture discourages contact with other people so we are increasingly isolated.
 - a. People live by neighbors for years and don't get to know them.
 - b. Our houses are sealed units that encourage us to stay inside where it's comfortable.
 - c. We all have individual cars and garage door openers so we don't contact others.
 - d. We go through the drive through so we don't converse in line or order delivery.
 - e. Electronic devises further isolate us from other people.
2. Everyone needs a support system to reinforce them when times are tough.
3. Even Jesus needed a support system while in the garden of Gethsemane.
 - a. He reached out to His disciples, but they didn't understand His situation. S#5.

Matt. 26: 40 – And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour?"
 - b. The Father sent an angel from Heaven to minister to Him.

Luke 22: 43 – Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.
4. There will be times that you will need a support system.
 - a. Do you have one ? Or, are you relying on the angels ?
 - b. Is the one you have the one God assigned to you ?

Heb. 3: 12-13 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. **13** 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. **14** For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,

S#6.

D. The events of everyday life can cause discouragement.**S#7.**

1. **Fatigue** : Americans are physically and emotionally exhausted.
2. **Frustration** : Inability to accomplish what you need or want to get done.
Prov. 13: 12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life
3. **Failure** : Perceived failure generates disappointment and robs one of self-worth.
4. **Fear** : Fear of rejection or ridicule. Fear of being unable to measure up.
5. **Fraternizing** : Being in the company of negative people.
 - a. We live our whole lives among wicked people.
 - b. **I John 5: 19** – We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.
6. **Futility** : Feeling as one's negative situation will never improve.
7. **Faithlessness** : Failure to have confidence in the love and watch-care of God.

S#8.**E. If Satan only had one tool to use against Christians it would be to discourage.**

1. Webster defines discourage as :
to make someone less determined, hopeful, or confident
2. The construction of the word is all one needs to understand it.
 - a. **DIS – courage**, i.e., to take away one's courage
 - b. To cause one not to want to face any aspect of life or accomplishment.

With this lesson we will :**S#9.****Establish that we all have the responsibility to be encouragers.****Look at an encourager in the bible.****See some ways we can be encouragers****I. Everyone is either an encourager or a discourager.****S#10.****A. Qualities of encouragers****S#11.**

1. Their lies are positive and focused on achieving better things.
2. They look for opportunities to lift others up. It's part of their thought process.
3. They actively listen while others are talking being aware of implications.
4. They have a heart for others; **i.e.**, they care about other people and it shows.
5. They avoid clicks and try to speak to those who are outliers.
6. They steadfastly refuse to dwell on the negative. (*Even roses have thorns*)
7. Encouragers are grace minded people.

- a. They don't judge others because we are all sinners ... **grace** is our only hope.

I Tim. 1: 15 – **It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.** **S#12.**

- b. There is good in everyone and encouragers strive to bring it out of everyone.

B. Qualities of a discourager.

S#13.

1. Discouragers seldom acknowledge the worth of others or of their efforts.

ILL. : During an audit the chief accountant committed suicide at his desk. Everyone thought that he anticipated an irregularity would be found, but the books were in perfect order and no shortage was found. His suicide was a mystery until the new accountant cleaned his desk. A note was found which said : *“I’ve been stuck in this cubical doing this boring job for 30 years and in all that time I’ve never had one word of appreciation or encouragement and I can’t take it anymore.”*

2. Discouragers think they are right and everyone should agree with them.

ILL. – Mark 14: 3-11 ... Woman broke alabaster vial of nard to anoint Jesus. Some complained that it should have been sold. **Judas**

3. Discouragers tend to be hyper critical. **Perfectionists, doctrinal legalist.**

- a. They feel obligated to point out the flaws of others.

ILL. – Elder’s wife listed every mispronounced word in my sermons.

- b. No one is perfect so we should point out the good rather than the flaws.

- c. **ALL** criticism should be constructive ... lovingly given to help others.

ILL. – Elderly lady sometimes winked and slipped me notes with scriptures that I needed to add to my lesson or that disproved a point. She always had a friendly smile and fresh pie baked when I went over to discuss it.

4. Discouragers are often absent from the assembly in pursuit of personal interests.

C. Everyone chooses to be one or the other and develops that lifestyle.

S#14.

1. We choose, but encouragement comes more naturally to some than to others.

2. It's a responsibility of every Christian so we must all develop our ability to do it.

- a. **Heb. 3: 13** – **But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called #15 “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness.**

- b. **Gal. 6: 1-2** **Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. 2 Bear one another’s burdens.** **S#16.** and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

3. **When you became a Christian you became your brother’s keeper.** (Family of God)

II. The bible emphasizes encouragement and gives us examples of it.

S#17.

S#18.

A. Reading the N.T. book of Acts, do you remember a Christian named Joseph ?

1. Hints :

- a. He was a Levite.
- b. He was born in Cyprus.

2. **Acts 4: 36–37** Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (*which translated means Son of Encouragement*), **37** and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

S#19.

- a. “Bar-Nabas” was a nickname based on his conduct in the church.
- b. If **you or I** was given a nickname based on our conduct in the church, what would it be ?

B. Barnabas enabled Paul to be accepted by the church.

S#20.

- 1. **Acts 9 ...** Paul was rejected by Jews when he tried to preach in Damascus.
 - a. **Vs. 20 ...** He began proclaiming Christ in the Jewish synagogues.
 - b. **Vs. 23 ...** The Jews were plotting to kill Paul.
 - c. **Vs. 25 ...** Using a large basket, the brethren let him down outside wall.
- 2. Barnabas vouched for Paul when he tried to place membership in Jerusalem.
 - a. **Vs. 26 ...** The brethren in Jerusalem were afraid to accept Paul into fellowship.
 - b. **Vs. 27 ...** Barnabas took Paul to the Apostles, introduced him and vouched for.
 - c. **Vs. 30 ...** The brethren at Jerusalem had to help Paul escape to Tarsus. (**Mersin**)

C. **Acts 11: 19f ... Antioch became the second great church in the book of Acts.**

- 1. **Vs. 19 ...** Those scattered by the persecution started a church in Antioch.
- 2. **Vs. 20–21 ...** Large numbers of Greeks (gentiles) were converted.
- 3. **Vs. 22–23 ...** Joseph the encourager (*Barnabas*) was sent to minister to them.
- 4. **Vs. 24 ...** As Barnabas encouraged and taught them, the church grew rapidly.
- 5. **Vs. 25–26 ...** The church grew rapidly under their preaching. (**called Christians**)

* Notice the providence of God :

S#21.

A young zealot from Tarsus starts a persecution which drives people to Antioch. The zealot is converted to Christ and the persecution drives him back to Tarsus.

Persecuted people start a church in Antioch which grows very large.

S#22.

The large church in Antioch sends to Tarsus to bring the persecutor to preach.

D. Barnabas stood up for a young evangelist which needed a second chance. S#23.

1. **Acts 13: 5** ... John Mark went with Barnabas and Paul on the 1st mission journey.
2. **Acts 13: 13** ... John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem.
3. **Acts 15: 38** ... Paul refused to allow John Mark to accompany the on 2nd journey.
4. **Acts 15: 39** ... Barnabas took John Mark and went another way.
5. **II Tim. 4: 11** ... Mark became useful to Paul.

III. Observe some ways we can be an encouragement to each other. S#24.**A. One must have interaction to be encouraging. S#25.**

1. Interaction comes in many forms.
 - a. Just a smile and a friendly handshake is an interaction.
 - b. A phone call is an interaction. (*Cards and short letters*)
 - c. In today's world many interact electronically ... Email ... text , etc.
2. Eye to eye interaction is most effective.
 - a. Much of communication is non-verbal.
 - b. One's eyes often tell a different story from his words.

S#26.**B. One of the primary functions of the church is to be a supportive spiritual family.**

1. We've already seen from scripture that we are commanded to be supportive.
 - a. **Gal. 6: 1-2** Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. **2** Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. **S#27.**
 - b. We must know the brethren well enough to know if they are "caught up in sin."
 - c. We are to be supportive on an individual basis. "looking to yourself."
2. We've seen from scripture that we must be supportive every day .. not just Sunday.
 - a. **Heb. 3: 13** – But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called **#28** "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
 - b. In order to encourage daily one must have contact daily.
 - c. With how many brethren do you have daily contact ? *Who do you encourage ?*
3. Encouragement must be done proactively.
 - a. **Matt. 18: 15** – If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; **S#29.**
if he listens to you, you have won your brother.
 - b. People in sin seldom welcome someone confronting them about it.

C. The assemblies of the church function as a platform for encouragement. S#30.

1. Assemblies are not just something that happens on Sunday morning.
 - a. The church in the N.T. met more frequently than just on Sunday.
 - b. **Acts 2: 46** – Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, S#31.
 - c. **Acts 4: 31, 12: 12** ... They had prayer meetings when one was in trouble.
2. **Heb. 10: 23-27** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, S#32. for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but S#33. encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. ²⁶ For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.
 - a. Why assemble ? The context is “hold fast the confession.”
 - b. Who is to hold fast ? We are to focus on “stimulate one another.”
 - c. We are instructed to assemble to do this. “not forsaking our own assembling”
 - d. The provoking, stimulating, motivating consists of “encouraging one another.”
 - e. To choose not to do this is “go on sinning willfully.” (*forsaking the gatherings*)
 - f. Sins of rebellion are not automatically forgiven. “no longer remains a sacrifice”
 - g. If there is no repentance there is judgment. “terrifying expectation of judgment”
3. Everything in the assembly is to be motivated by a desire to edify.
 - a. **I Cor. 14: 12** – So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church. S#34.
 - b. **I Cor. 14: 26** – What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. S#35.

CONCLUSION :

- A. You can be an encourager if you try. (*I'm shy. Get over it ! repent !!*) S#36.
 1. Get to know the brethren and interact with them.
 2. **Rom. 15: 2** – Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. #37. S#38.
- B. The key is to love enough to be here and to try to encourage. **Who will YOU ..**

Lesson Text :**Romans 15: 1-7**

1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves.

2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. **3** For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on Me." **4** For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. **5** Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, **6** so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **7** Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

Hebrews 3: 12-14

12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. **13** 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. **14** For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,