

Seeking The Heart Of Barnabas #2b

(The Anatomy Of An Encourager - Part 2)

Text : **James 3: 1-12**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Thus far in our search for the heart of Barnabas we have seen :

1. Christianity is a religion of the heart.
 - a. It is not rooted in rules-keeping.
 - b. It is not centered around performing rituals. (**Rituals are “acts of worship.”**)
 - c. When God has one’s heart, He has his whole life. (**God won’t accept less.**)
2. Christianity is a relationship religion.
 - a. It enables man to establish a relationship with God.
 - b. A relationship with God, changes one’s relationship with the world.
 - c. When God controls one’s heart, even his relationship to himself changes.
3. Satan constantly seeks to destroy man’s relationship with God.
 - a. He tries to turn the Christian’s eye away from God and back toward himself.
 - b. Consequently, every Christian struggles to keep his eyes focused on God.
 - c. At times, we all need assistance in our struggle.
4. To counter Satan opposition, God requires that every Christian be an encourager.
 - a. Both you and every other Christian has the ability to become an encourager.
 - b. One must decide to become an encourager and commit to it. (**It won’t just happen.**)
 - c. Becoming an encourager requires sustained effort ... a lifestyle change.

B. In our previous lesson we began to observe what we could learn from the anatomy of an encourager.

1. We saw that the heart of the encourager :
 - a. He thinks in terms encouraging others.
 - b. She values other people so she seeks their best interest about her own.
2. The eyes of the encourager are alert for opportunities to encourage.
 - a. She looks outward at others, .. not inward toward self.
 - b. He sees needs others miss.
3. The ears of the encourager are attuned to the silent cries for encouragement.
 - a. He has sufficient self-confidence to listen more than talk.
 - b. He applies himself to develop listening skills.

TRANSITION :

With this lesson we will look at only one small part of the anatomy of an encourager, the lips.

I. The church is a haven of encouragement to a disheartened world.

A. Good communications is vital to any healthy relationship, especially a **CHURCH.**

B. In the church members energize each other through fellowship.

1. Fellowship does not just occur at organized gatherings. (**Ax 2** , **Heb. 3** .. **daily**)
2. Fellowship is not just for entertainment; it's a ministering experience.
3. We fellowship with each other to build and to maintain strong relationships.

C. We must understand the church to be more than just an organization.

1. The church is an organization and must function as one.
 - a. God Himself ordained the organizational structure of His church .. **elders, deacons,..**
 - b. The church is the organization which God uses to accomplish His work on earth.
 - 1) Evangelizing the lost
 - 2) Maturing the saved
 - 3) Keeping His flock from straying
2. BUT .. the church is more than JUST an organization.
 - a. The church is about relationship with God.
 - b. It is also about relationship within the family of God.
 - * c. One's relationships in the church are his **ONLY** eternal relationships.
3. Only in the context of the church can one develop a deeper relationship with Christ.

D. When the church comes together, relationship building must occur.

1. **Heb. 10: 23-25** **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to motivate one another to love and good deeds, 25 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.**
 2. **I Pet. 1:22-** **Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,**
 3. Thus, true Christian worship includes relationship building.
- * As one builds closer relationships with the brothers of Christ he grows ever closer to the Christ Himself.**

II. Communication are essential to relationships. (companies spend billions to improve)

A. As relationship is at the heart of Christianity, words are at the heart of relationship.

1. The free flow of encouraging words is essential to good relationships.
2. Words are essential to communications.
 - a. No one can read the heart of another. (**Can't assume someone knows ...**)
 - b. The only way people know how you feel about them is for you to tell them.

B. Words have great power. ("*Loose lips sink ships.*")

1. Power to harm :
 - a. **Text .. James 3: 5-8** ... Sets fires, defiles body, restless evil, full of poison,
 - b. Words inflict wounds that never heal. (cf- *Komodo dragon bites never heal.*)

*** No one has the right to knowingly hurt another person .. for ANY reason.**
2. Power for good :
 - a. **Prov. 12: 25-** Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down,
But a good word makes it glad.
 - b. **Prov. 15: 4-** A soothing tongue is a tree of life, (*You can be a tree of life.*)
But perversion in it crushes the spirit.
 - c. **Prov. 16: 24-** Pleasant words are a honeycomb,
Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.
 - d. **Prov. 18: 21-** Death and life are in the power of the tongue, (*You can also kill.*)
And those who love it will eat its fruit.
 - e. **Prov. 25: 11-** Like apples of gold in settings of silver
Is a word spoken in right circumstances.

C. Our text explains that words can have a big effects.

1. Political carriers have been destroyed by a slip of the tongue.
ILL- The "macaca" comment made by Virginia senator George Allen
2. Long standing relationships have been ended by one angry outburst.
3. Souls have been lost because of unkind or thoughtless words.
 - a. James cautions us to be "**slow to speak.**" (**James 1:19**)

*** Take time to put your brain in gear before your tongue takes off.**

 - b. Jesus warns : "**Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.**"
(**Matt. 18:6**) ("**every careless word**" **Matt. 12: 36**)

D. Christians encourage each other by being generous with praise.

1. Flattery is never acceptable. ... **Compliments must always be sincere.**
2. No one is perfect so don't wait for perfection ... compliment the good.
 - a. Failure to point out defects is NOT to approve of bad behavior.
 - * **People often do negative things to get attention.** (*get loud when they feel ..*)
 - b. Reinforce the behavior you want repeated. (**Eph. 6 ... Father do not provoke ...**)
 - c. **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, so that it will give grace to those who hear.** (*grace = umerited*)
3. There is some good in even the worst of people ... **praise the good.**

ILL- Paul praised the religious nature of ungodly idolaters. (**Acts 17: 22**)
4. Many good things are thought, but not spoken ... express your positive thoughts.
 - * **Water left in the can doesn't make the flowers bloom.**

III. Choose and use your words carefully.

A. Take time to think carefully before speaking.

1. The typical negative person spews forth his first impulse.{ *speak my mind = sin freely* }
2. It's important to "think twice" before speaking because it takes time to put one's mind in gear.
3. It takes a concerted effort to change negative habits ... but it can be done.

B. Consider how your words will be perceived.

1. Words are not always understood as intended.
2. Perception is what was actually communicated .. NOT intentions.

C. Praise creatively. (*Craft your message.*)

1. Think about the words you will use to accomplish the desired result.
2. Compliments do not have to be momentous, **but** they must be sincere.
3. Do not praise ONLY accomplishment or complete success.
 - a. Praise effort.
 - b. Praise progress.

D. Be specific in your encouragement. (*Praise with precision.*)

1. "You look nice." doesn't mean as much as "You look nice in that red dress, it ..."

2. Which is better ? “*Good job leading singing this morning.*” -or-
“*Good job leading singing this morning, the songs went along with the message.*”

E. Written words can inspire indelibly

1. Notes can be very encouraging. (**Hand written**)
 - a. They show forethought and caring.
 - b. They need not be long or profound. (**1 or 2 short sentences**)
2. Cards are very encouraging especially for shut-ins.
 - a. They can be displayed for visual reminders.
 - b. Many save them for a long time. (**pulled out when encouragement is needed**)
3. Email can be a modern way of instant encouragement.

CONCLUSION :

A. Anyone can become an encourager at any time they desire to do so.

1. The only essential ingredient is the desire to encourage others.
2. LOVE gives one that desire. { **An elderly shut-in did a telephone ministry.** }

B. All Christians have the responsibility to develop that desire.

1. **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, so that it will give grace to those who hear.
*** Remember :** **Grace is not deserved.**
32- Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
2. Christians must be as encouraging to outsiders as to their brethren.
Col. 4: 5-6 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. **6** Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

C. Every Christian experiences spiritual fatigue from time to time.

1. **The church is God's support groups for recovering sinners.**
2. We are the cheer leaders for each other in the battle against sin & discouragement.
3. **Apply ... Hebrews 12: 1 -cf- 3: 13** We are in a stadium filled with fans.

INVITATION :