

Studies in Christianity Christian Lifestyle #11

S#1.

Compulsively Encouraging

S#2.

Text : **I Thes. 5: 1-18**

A. Did you ever have a day when you could look up and see the whale's belly as it swam high above your head ?.

S#3.

1. You have had times when you felt lower than a whale's belly.
2. We have all had times when we needed an emotional boost.

B. Some years back I was running a lot of errands while working on the lawn and the garden noticed I needed gas but I was going to Rural King so I would have to go through a small town about 10 miles where the gas was \$.05 a gallon cheaper so I decided wait and buy gas there. I made it 7 miles before I ran out of gas. Thank God I ran out in front of a farmer's house and he sold me enough to make to the gas station.

S#4.

1. Sometime we need a little emotional fuel to make it down the road of life.
2. Satan takes advantage of such down times to tempt us.
 - a. Drugs and alcohol
 - b. Immoral people seek to seduce those who don't have their guard up.
3. Down times are a normal part of life ... even those who are emotionally strong.
 - a. People who are normally healthy make poor patients. (*Same emotionally*)
 - b. It was a problem during the earliest of times.
Job 5: 7 – For man is born for trouble, As sparks fly upward.

*** 4. People great and small need encouragement ... need positive reinforcement.**

- a. None so clearly stated it as the little boy who asked his father to play darts.
“Daddy let's play darts. I'll throw and you say, ‘wonderful.’”
- b. Abraham Lincoln is reported to have carried a newspaper article in his pocket in which he was described as a great leader.

C. In the next few minutes we will observe that :

S#5.

1. Encouragement is scripturally mandated
2. Encouragement flows from the heart
3. Encouragement is learned behavior

I. Encouragement is a scriptural mandate.**S#6.****A. It is mentioned twice in our text :****S#7.**

1. **I Thess. 5: 11** – Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.
2. **I Thess. 5: 14** – We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

B. The weekly assembly of the church is designed for edification.

1. Every activity in the assembly has an element of encouragement in it.
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#8.**
 - a. Edification (oikodomē) Translated as actual buildings Matt. 24: 1 and as building up one another.
 - b. **Rom. 14: 19** – So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
2. Every aspect of the service must consider the affect it will have on the attenders.
 - a. The song selection is not just what we enjoy; it must build up.
 - b. Entertainment is totally out of place in the assembly.

C. The time of corporate worship is required to provide encouragement.

1. **Heb. 10: 23** – Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, 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 encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. **S#9.**
 - a. Stimulate (*paroxusmos*) incite, stimulate, provoke
 - b. Compare : **Acts 15: 39** – there occurred such a sharp disagreement (*paroxusmos*) that they separated from one another,
 - c. THUS, the Christian comes into the assembly to assertively advocate for the practice of love and good works by each other.
2. We are to think about ways to motivate each other. (*It is important.*)
3. We are commanded to encourage one another to be in the assembly.

D. Each of us needs regular encouragement so we will stay in the faith.**S#10.**

1. **Heb. 3: 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.

2. Each of us has both a need for daily encouragement to stay faithful.
 - a. We live in a fallen world so we are tempted daily.
 - b. Encouragement can be as simple as a call or an email.
3. All Christians have a need and every Christian has a responsibility to encourage. S#11.

C. God used the practice of the Apostles to teach the need to encourage each other.

1. **Col. 4: 8** – For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;
2. Though travel was difficult and dangerous, the Apostle sent messengers to encourage
3. This inspired action demonstrates God's attitude toward encouragement.

II. Encouragement flows freely from a loving heart. S#12.

A. The identifying mark of a true Christian is love for the brethren. S#13.

1. **John 13: 34** – A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **35** By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.
2. They won't know your love by what you say, but by what you do.
3. *If a man punches his wife in the eye, will anyone believe he loves her ?*

B. The inspired word urges us to practice love in real actions. S#14.

1. **I John 3: 18** – A Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.
2. One of the deeds that demonstrates love is encouragement.

C. Being united in love is a source of encouragement.

1. **Col. 2: 1** – For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, **2** that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, ... S#15.
2. Love is like being swaddled; the tighter it is wrapped the more securing.

D. Love will not permit one to stand idly by while a loved one is in need.

1. There are needs one has which are more important than the physical.
2. We're wrong when we try to keep our brethren from "getting all up in my business."
 - a. **Heb. 3: 13** ... We are each one our brother's keeper to guard them from sin.

- b. **Gal. 6: 1** – 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#16
- c. I either need restoring or I have the responsibility to be restoring.
- 3. Our bond of love is strengthened by each interaction.

III. Encouragement is a learned behavior.

S#17.

A. It is part of the Christian lifestyle that one learns along the way.

S#18.

- 1. It is much easier for those who have been taught encouragement by their parents.
- 2. Even without parental guidance, encouragement is best taught by a mentor.
- 3. If you want to be an encouraging person, associate with encouraging people.

B. Teaching encouragement should be a priority of church leaders.

- 1. Church leaders should assign mentors to people who need teaching.
- 2. Those who tend to discourage others should be isolated and instructed.
- 3. As in **Matt. 18** ... the habitual discourager should be privately approached.

C. We need to be more open in our discussion of how we treat each other.

- 1. Those who do good should be praised openly.
- 2. That which we reward we multiply.

ILL. – In 1994 Reader's Digest a comical piece appeared which read :

One morning I opened the door to get the newspaper and was surprised to see a strange little dog with our newspaper in his mouth. Delighted with this unexpected "delivery service," I fed him some treats. The following morning I was horrified to see the same little dog sitting in front of our door, wagging his tail, surrounded by eight newspapers. I spent the rest of the morning returning newspapers to the neighbors.

- * 3. We **all** need to be reminded that encouragement is part of our individual ministries.

- a. Every Christians has the responsibility to encourage every other Christian. S#19.

- b. **Heb. 3: 12** – 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.

- c. REMEMBER .. **Ezek. 3: 18** – When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' S#20.
and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. **19** "Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself."

D. There are things we can do to help us develop an encouraging lifestyle.

1. Be generous with praise ...
 - a. *When you see something good, acknowledge it.*
 - b. **Prov. 3: 27** – Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, **S#21.**
When it is in your power to do it.
2. Follow through on impulses to encourage. *“I ought to pop him a text or email.”*
3. Don’t wait for a grand gesture; frequent little things can accomplish more than a big
4. Encouragement is a two way street. Practice **“Golden Rule”** thinking.
 - a. **Matt. 7: 12** – In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.
 - b. Remember **Matt. 22** ... **“the Law and the Prophets”** was summed up by love.
5. Stay busy and encourage others to stay busy in God’s service.
 - a. Nothing destroys morale faster than inactivity.
 - b. Even when there was no battle, Rome kept its soldiers busy with something.
Gen. Hadrian required his soldiers to build a wall all the way across England.
6. Congregations that stay busy stay at peace and prosper. **Activities include :**

a. Evangelism	e. Prayer breakfast / fellowship
b. Benevolence	f. Special projects ... a parade float or a booth
c. Work days	g. Work at fair booth
d. Special classes	h. Anti-abortion demonstrations ... (<i>Make posters</i>)

CONCLUSION :

- A. As Christians we must develop an eye for encouragement. **S#22.**
 1. Some can be with a person who needs encouragement and never notice.
 2. **Rom. 12: 15** – Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. **S#23.**
- B. We are a loving congregation, but we need to learn to be more expressive.
 1. We feel for each other and sometimes send cards, but we need to express it.
 2. **I Cor. 12: 26** – And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it;
if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.
- C. You can be the catalyst to help us develop this aspect of the Christian lifestyle.
Gal. 5:9 – A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.

INVITATION :**S#24.** ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**I Thessalonians 5: 1-18**

1 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. **2** For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. **3** While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. **4** But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; **5** for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; **6** so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. **7** For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. **8** But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. **9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. **11** Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, **13** and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. **14** We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. **15** See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. **16** Rejoice always; **17** pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.