

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Encourage Yourself

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One of the most debilitating forces we all face is discouragement. Most have started out with much zeal and hope of accomplishing great goals.

Those that just were saved are excited and zealous about doing something for God; however, they are often halted from doing what they planned. The goal or dream they wanted to obtain required more effort to achieve than they had expected, or perhaps someone's "help" discouraged them from even trying. Maybe an unkind word or even another's disapproving look took the air out of their sails, and they drifted off course, never to accomplish what they had set out to do. Sometimes it is intentional verbal reprimands that discourage one permanently from ever trying again.

Encouragement may be needed more often when one is younger. One that has just been saved may require more encouragement, than one that has been saved for a while. However, one should never use lack of encouragement or support as an excuse not to do what is right.

Talk is cheap, but no matter the age, all get discouraged from time-to-time. What do we do when we are slowed or halted when the disenchantment is overwhelming? Too many get discouraged and go no further, until they are encouraged. This is never a solution to the problem.

You will find that God has provided wisdom for Christians to deal with discouragement. The first step should be to get your mind off yourself, and put God first in your life (Galatians 2:20, Gal. 5:24-25, II Corinthians 5:15, Romans 14:7). If we find ourselves discouraged, it is usually because our emphasis is not on Him, but on ourselves. “Gulp! So it may be my fault I want to quit, not others”. If I am part of the problem, then I can be part of the solution.

There is much in the Bible, however, that is said about our encouraging others. The Bible instructs us to stop worrying about ourselves. Some of our happiest, most encouraging memories are those of when we put our energies into making another person feel good. A self-centered person is often unhappy and discouraged. God knows that if we encourage those around us, when we are in need of uplifting, there will be one to meet our needs in that area. Those that criticize and wound those around them with their cruel tongue and attitude should not be surprised that there is no one around to help them in a time of need.

Moses, who experienced discouragement many times, knew what an encouraging word could do. When turning his responsibility of leadership over to Joshua, Moses told the people that they needed to encourage their new leader (Deuteronomy 1:28, 3:28). He also reminded them how critical talk had disheartened them in the past.

Hezekiah, when trying to get Israel to once again serve the Lord, instructed the people to obey the law of God and give to the servants of God like they were supposed to; so they would be encouraged (II Chronicles 31:4). Josiah also knew the priests would be encouraged when others obeyed God's command and served God properly (II Chron. 35:1-2).

There certainly will be times when no support comes from anyone around. What does one do then? Most of the time, the only one that can really encourage us, is ourselves. When the people of Israel were commanded to battle an opponent they did not want to fight, no cheerleaders ran to the center of the battlefield and urged them on. They had to encourage themselves.

“And the people the men of Israel encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day.” Judges 20:22

David faced many disappointments and was often discouraged. The king knew people would let him down quite often; so he encouraged himself that God would help him as He had done in the past.

“And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.” I Samuel 30:6

How did David encourage himself in the Lord? He did it by remembering all the hard times and difficulties that God had helped him with in the past. If God had helped him in the past, he knew that He would help him again! This faith gave him the assurance that no matter where he was or what he was facing, God would help him (Psalm 42:6).

Has God helped you in the past? If He has, and there is no sin between you and Him, why would He not do it again? That is encouraging.

Now I know all this but the other day, I hate to admit, I was a little disenchanted myself. I could not pull out of it by even encouraging myself, until I walked into the nursing home where I preach each week. Almost immediately a woman wheeled over to me in her wheelchair and started boasting about God. Soon we were both bragging on Him. That encouraged me! Next, we started singing the old hymns about Him and His goodness. That encouraged me! Remembering also how good God is uplifted me. So, that is what encouraging oneself “in the Lord” also means!

We are often unhappy when we do not get encouraged by others. Yet, how often do we encourage others? Sometimes it is we that do the discouraging, intentionally or not. Although there are times for correction

and rebuke, too often it does too much damage. We bring defeat to others by voicing our “opinion”, rebuking them, or even by our body language.

Our lack of work and participation can also discourage others. Moses knew this when he rebuked the people that would not join in on a battle. Their “letting the other guy do it” was a discouragement to those that were participating in the battle.

“... Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them? Thus did your fathers ...” Numbers 32:6-8

Often our not helping in a situation makes the task harder for others to accomplish. Many soul-winners, who wanted to do the right thing and witness to others on church-wide visitation, quit because no one else went. Preachers have looked for another ministry, because all the ideas they had were shot down by members or deacons. Sunday school teachers have gone by the wayside because of little concern and participation by their students. Mothers may have lost the enthusiasm to cook a meal after hearing only complaints. Children gave up their dreams because of constant correction. So, if you are on the sidelines because “no one cares” or “appreciates you”, consider the discouragement to others you may have caused.

God knows it is so essential that we uplift each other, that not only are we all capable of encouraging each other, but He also gives some the spiritual gift of

exhorting(encouraging)others. Encouragement is necessary for believers also.

“Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.” Romans 12:8

Sitting around discouraged will never help anyone! The only way out of a disenchanted mind-set is to change something. Instead of waiting to be “fixed”, be a fixer! Break the sad cycle of discouragement and be an encourager. We all could use your inspiring words. One day, when you need it the most, there will be one nearby to lift you up with their encouraging words or actions.

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Galatians 6:9

"Hold the Fort, For I Am Coming.

D. L. Moody

I am told that when General Sherman went through Atlanta towards the sea, through the Southern States, he left in the fort in the Kennesaw Mountains a little handful of men to guard some rations that he brought there.

General Hood got into the outer rear and attacked the fort, driving the men in from the outer works into the inner works, and for a long time, the battle raged fearfully. Half of the men were either killed or wounded. The general who was in command was wounded seven different times; and when they were about ready to run up the white flag and surrender the fort, Sherman got within fifteen miles.

Through the flag signal corps on a mountain, he sent the message "Hold the fort; I am coming. — W. T. Sherman."

That message fired up their hearts, and they held the fort until reinforcements came. The fort did not go into the hands of their enemies.

I hope there will be a thousand young converts coming into our ranks to help hold the fort. Our Saviour is in command, and He is coming. Let us sing the famous hymn Mr. Bliss has written; a hymn entitled "Hold the Fort".

*"Ho! My comrades, see the signal
Waving in the sky!
Reinforcements now appearing.
Victory is nigh!"*

Chorus:

*" Hold the fort, for I am coming,"
Jesus signals still,
Wave the answer back to heaven,
"By Thy grace we will."*

Be encouraged! If you are a Christian, you are on the winning side!

Always Happy

D. L. Moody

There was a man converted some years ago, and he was just full of praise. He was living in the light all the time. We

might be in the darkness, but he was always in the light. He used to preface everything he said in the meeting with "praise God." One night he came to the meeting with his finger all bound up. He had cut it, and cut it badly. Well, I wondered how he would praise God for this; but he got up and said, "I have cut my finger, but, praise God, I didn't cut it off." So, if things go against you; just think, they might be a good deal worse.

Three Cheers

Author Unknown

Once, when a great fire broke out at midnight and people thought that all those that lived in the apartment had died, way up in the fifth story, was seen a little child, crying for help. Up went a ladder, and soon a fireman was seen ascending to the spot. As he neared the second story the flames burst in fury from the windows, and the multitude almost despaired of the rescue of the child.

The brave man faltered, and a comrade at the bottom cried out, "Cheer him!" and cheer upon cheer arose from the crowd. Up the ladder he went and saved the child, because they cheered, him. If you cannot go into the heat of the battle yourself, if you cannot go into the harvest field and work day after day, you can cheer those that are working for the Master. I see many old people in their old days getting crusty and sour, and they discourage every one they meet by their fault finding. That is not what we want. If we make a mistake, come and tell us of it, and we

will thank you. You do not know how much you may do by just speaking kindly to those that are willing to work.

“It takes little skill, intelligence, or character to discourage anyone. It does take those three virtues to encourage others. Maybe that is why encouragement is so lacking today!”