



Practical Christian Living

The Importance of Encouragement

Icebreaker: *Who was the last person to offer you some encouragement? What did they say?*

Many times Bible lessons talk about things not to do. It is also important to have lessons on what we should do as Christians. One of the things we are encouraged to do as Christians is to be an encourager. The Bible is full of encouragers and spiritual cheerleaders. The one that stands out most is probably Barnabas. Even his name means “son of encouragement.” Maybe that means his father was a great encourager but either way he had the gift of encouragement. He mentored Paul when others would have nothing to do with him. He even accepted John Mark when Paul wanted to part ways with him. Moses had his Aaron. David had his Jonathan. The list goes on.

Who has been your biggest cheerleader in life?

Do you think our world is full of more encouragers or discouragers? Why?

Scripture talks about several things that should encourage us but notice each time we do not keep that encouragement to ourselves. Encouragement is to be passed on and when it is will spread like wildfire.

The Church as a Source of Encouragement

Hebrews 3:13

What does he say encouragement will prevent?

- Being hardened by sin’s deceitfulness

How does encouragement from other Christians help us avoid sin?

What is the danger of going it alone and doing without the church?

- We much more easily fall into sin and lack encouragement

Hebrews 10:25

Notice he says that understanding the world will end and the day of judgment come should encourage us to continue meeting together. This is talking about the Christian worship assembly.

How is the church a source of encouragement?

- When we meet with like-minded people who love God and Jesus we will be encouraged by our time together.

How can you be a greater encouragement to fellow Christians?

What creative ways have you found to offer encouragement in unexpected ways?

Heaven as a Source of Encouragement

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

He says we are to encourage each other with these words—*what words is he talking about?*

- The thought of the second coming of Christ to redeem us!
- It sounds like we are supposed to share that encouragement with other Christians

How does remembering Jesus will return give us hope?

How should that hope and encouragement impact the way we live today?

Hebrews 12:1

When runners run a race it is encouraging to have fans cheering for you. Hebrews 12:1 talks about a great cloud of witnesses almost like they are cheering us on as we live our lives (the race).

How encouraging is it to know many have already run the race and gone on to victory?

This life is very short in the whole scheme of things and after that we will be with God forever. So take heart and find ways to encourage other Christians along the way.

How could being an encourager actually be an effective tool for evangelism?

Application:

When was a time you received encouragement and how did that moment teach you the importance of passing it on to others?

Sometimes evangelism focuses on the negative—sin, death, judgment. But there is also a positive, encouraging side to it. *Which parts of the Gospel are positive and encouraging? **How could you share the Gospel with someone in a positive and uplifting way?***

Activity:

Go around the room and have each person say something encouraging about the person to their right.