

BCC Bible Study Notes
"The Power of Encouragement"
May 31, 2020

1. What is encouragement? Encouragement is the kind of expression that helps someone keep trying to do what pleases God even when life is hard.

2. Why do we need it?

- Encouragement keeps us from developing a hard heart. (Hebrews 3:12-13)
- Encouragement stimulates the hope that solutions exist for the problems we face today. (1 Thessalonians 3:2-3)
- Encouragement enables us to accomplish what God has called us to do. (Deuteronomy 3:28)
- Encouragement helps us change. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)

3. How does it work?

- Words that encourage are prompted by love. (Philemon 1:7)
- Words that encourage are directed toward fear. (Isaiah 43:1-2a)

One person I will encourage today is _____.

BCC Verse of the Week: "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV

BBCC Devotional Guide for May 31 to June 6, 2020

Sunday: *“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV)* George Adams said, “Encouragement is oxygen to the soul.” The Bible reminds us that the ministry of encouragement is the privilege and responsibility of every believer. Encouragement is the kind of expression that helps someone keep trying to do what pleases God even when life is hard. Who are the people in your life who encourage you? Who do you need to encourage today?

Monday: *“See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.” (Hebrews 3:12-13 NIV)* One of the benefits of encouragement is that it keeps us from developing a hard heart. People develop hard hearts because the world is a hard place. We also have an “enemy” who wants to deceive us into believing that God is unconcerned about our struggles and unable to intervene. Satan wants us to believe that our significance is based on our performance and the approval of people rather than on God’s unconditional love. What “lies” are discouraging you today?

Tuesday: *“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” (Romans 15:4 NIV)* Encouragement stimulates the hope that solutions exist for the problems we face today. The stories in the Bible were written to give us encouragement and the endurance to keep on going when life is hard. The Scriptures remind us that God is in control and that He cares about every detail of our lives. God has given us His Word so that we might be encouraged and He wants us to use His Word to encourage others. Who can you encourage with God’s truth today?

Wednesday: *“But commission Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, for he will lead this people across and will cause them to inherit the land that you will see.” (Deuteronomy 3:28 NIV)* Encouragement enables us to accomplish what God has called us to do. God knew that Joshua would need encouragement in order to lead the people of Israel. He would face many obstacles and would need God’s guidance, protection and provision. Whatever God’s calling on your life may be, you can rely on Him to provide what you need to fulfill that calling.

Thursday: *“Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.” (Philemon 1:7 NIV)* The biblical motivation for reaching out to others with encouragement is love. Words that encourage are prompted by love, but love can be “risky business”. We may hold back from loving involvement in people’s lives because of the risk of rejection, the risk of not knowing what to say, or the risk of losing the relationship. In order to be an instrument of God’s blessing in another’s life we have to take the risk. The rewards are worth it.

Friday: *“But now, O Israel, the LORD who created you says, ‘Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name, you are mine. When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown!’” (Isaiah 43:1-2a NIV)* Words that encourage are directed toward fear. In these verses, God expresses his love to His people and reminds them of the reasons they should not be afraid. What do you fear? Rejection by other people? Loneliness? Illness? Financial loss? Your kids being harmed or making bad choices? God seeks to encourage us by directing His words to alleviate our fears. As you seek to encourage others, you need to understand their anxieties

and fears too. Speak words that reassure people of God's promise to give us wisdom, strength and unfailing love.

Saturday: *“So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.”* (2 Thessalonians 2:15-17 NIV) Encouragement is the impetus for change as we pursue Christ-like character. The key to encouragement is to find the kind of expression through words and deeds that help someone want to be a better “Christ follower”. God wants His church to be a place where people receive and give encouragement. Pray that BBCC will always be a place where people are deeply encouraged to pursue a life-changing relationship with Christ.