



## Encouragement, Personal Examples

### Philemon

Philemon had a reputation of comforting other believers and consoling them in their times of trial and difficulty. He encouraged them and challenged them. He even corrected and rebuked them when they were out of line. This was all done with a spirit of unconditional love. He had a reputation for that and was a genuine source of refreshment to those believers around him. It was always refreshing, encouraging and stimulating to be in the presence of this mature believer. For that to be a reality in your life, you need to understand and apply the doctrine of encouragement.

### Barnabas

Barnabas was also a positive example for everyone around him. He did not sit around and contemplate infinity. He did not try to get into an altered mental state. He did not possibilitize positive events or any other apostasy or heresy which is sweeping our nation today. He did not look at crystal power, but looked at the omnipotence of God to empower him through the Holy Spirit.

Satan really enjoys getting believers involved in these apostasies and evil pseudo-spiritual concepts. These are sorcery and mind-over-matter techniques to manipulate or change reality. They are evil concepts and contrary to the Word of God.

Acts 4:36 and Hebrews 13:17 provide good illustrations of Barnabas. A believer becomes an encouragement to other people when they see a lifestyle not wrapped up in the details of life. They see a lifestyle that truly demonstrates spiritual growth and resultant concern for other people. They see a willingness to become involved in others' lives and to be a source of encouragement to them.

*"Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement)," (Acts 4:36, NASB)*

*"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17, NASB)*

Barnabas was the kind of man who was positive to Bible doctrine and, as a mature believer, got excited when other Christians made spiritual progress. We should be excited when people become motivated by spiritual advance to want to evangelize. We should be excited about reaching out to unbelievers with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not the primary responsibility of the pastor-teacher to evangelize. His primary responsibility is to equip spiritually the believers in his local church. Eph. 4:11-14.

*"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;" (Ephesians 4:11-14, NASB)*

The positive and maturing believer becomes motivated by *epignosis* Bible doctrine in their soul and becomes willing to reach out to others around them. That is very encouraging to other believers. This was what Barnabas was doing when others around him progressed spiritually. It is great to see people



getting excited when Christians are making spiritual progress and are really entering into their ambassadorship.

### **The Apostle Paul's Exhortation to the Corinthian Church**

Paul exhorted the Corinthian church regarding Timothy. 1 Cor. 16:10-11.

*"Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am. So let no one despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren." (1 Corinthians 16:10-11, NASB)*

The Corinthian church was commended for responding to the ministry of Titus. 2 Cor. 7:6-7; 2 Cor. 13 through 2 Cor. 14.

*"But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more." (2 Corinthians 7:6-7, NASB)*

The Corinthian church was admonished by Paul to receive Titus and others ministering. Paul warns the Corinthian church concerning reversionism. His warning was based on his desire for their edification. Paul's warning had a real potential of happening. 1 Corinthians bears out that they certainly were capable of it. 2 Cor. 8:16-24; 2 Cor. 12:19-21.

*"All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. Actually, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved. For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances; I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced." (2 Corinthians 12:19-21, NASB)*

Edification is the preventative factor of reversionism. Eph. 4:11-16.

*"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:11-16, NASB)*

The contents of reversionism can be found in 2 Corinthians 12:20. "Strife" is ἐρις (eris) and also means debates, contention, and wrangling. "Jealousy" is ζήλος (zēlos) and means envying, jealous rivalry, outbursts and manifestations. "Angry tempers" is θυμός (thumos) and means wraths, impulses and outbursts of anger, boiling up, and soon subsiding, only to boil up again. "Disputes" is ἐριθεία (eritheia) and means strife, and a desire to put one's self forward. "Slanders" is καταλαλία (katalalia) and means backbiting, and defaming someone verbally and openly. "Gossip" is ψιθυρισμός (psithurismos) and means whispering, secret slander, a detractor. "Arrogance" is φυσίωσις (phusiōsis) and means swelling pride, a swelling up in the soul. "Disturbances" is ἀκαταστασία (akatastasia) and means tumults, instability, a state of disorder, dissensions, disorders.



*“For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances;” (2 Corinthians 12:20, NASB)*

Paul exhorted the Corinthians to “reaffirm your love for him in 2 Corinthians 2:7-8.

*“so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.” (2 Corinthians 2:7-8, NASB)*

Paul exhorted the Corinthians to “not to receive the grace of God in vain” in 2 Corinthians 6:1.

*“And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—” (2 Corinthians 6:1, NASB)*

Paul exhorted the Corinthians as to the “hazards” of the believer. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, the hazard was negative volition, anything challenging the Word of God, and doctrinal incorrectness or non-doctrinal priorities.

*“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5, NASB)*

In 2 Corinthians 10:7, the hazard was judging others on outward appearance.

*“You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.” (2 Corinthians 10:7, NASB)*

In 2 Corinthians 10:10-11, the hazard was a warning as to their attitude toward his authority in his absence.

*“For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible.” Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present.” (2 Corinthians 10:10-11, NASB)*

In 2 Corinthians 10:12, the hazard was a warning of the practice of comparative ministry.

*“For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.” (2 Corinthians 10:12, NASB)*

In 2 Corinthians 10:14-15, the hazard was a warning of the wrong attitude toward the scope of the ministry.

*“For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ; not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you,” (2 Corinthians 10:14-15, NASB)*

In 2 Corinthians 10:18, the hazard was a warning of self-commendation.

*“For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.” (2 Corinthians 10:18, NASB)*



In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, the hazard was a warning against false teachers.

*“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15, NASB)*

In 2 Corinthians 12:19-21, the hazard was a warning against reversionism.

*“All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. Actually, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved. For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances; I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.” (2 Corinthians 12:19-21, NASB)*

In 2 Corinthians 8, the hazard was that New Testament giving was no magic formula for solving the needs of those giving. The Macedonians gave in their poverty but there is no indication that they immediately prospered. Proverbs 10:4 tells us that prosperity is associated with spiritual maturity.

*“Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.” (Proverbs 10:4, NASB)*

### **The Apostle Paul’s Exhortation to the Philippian Church**

The Apostle Paul’s exhortation to the Philippian Church was based on his desire for their obedience to the Word of God, their resultant spiritual maturity, and the outworking of God’s plan in their lives. Obedience is not to be carried out just methodically, but in the proper way, free from murmuring obedience with a cheerful and willing mind, and to be free also from disputes. In Philippians 2:14, “disputing” is διαλογισμός (dialogismos) and is a hesitating deliberation about what should be done, a questioning. This is the “well now” concept. Phil. 2:12-14.

*“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing;” (Philippians 2:12-14, NASB)*

The Philippian church was exhorted to receive gladly the ministries of Timothy and Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:29-30.

*“Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.” (Philippians 2:29-30, NASB)*

The contents of Paul’s exhortation to obedience and maturity can be found in Philippians 2:15-16. “Blameless” is ἄμεμπτος (amemptos) and means deserving no censure, free from fault or defect. “Innocent” is ἀκέραιος (akeraios) and means harmless in the mind, free from guile or admixture from evil. “Children of God” is τέκνον θεός (teknon theos) and refers to all who are animated by the Spirit of God with emphasis on personal relationship, not just the animation. “Above reproach” is ἄμωμος (amōmos) and means without rebuke, ethically faultless, unblameable.

*“so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the*



*midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.” (Philippians 2:15-16, NASB)*

“Crooked” is σκολιός (skolios) and means wicked. “Perverse” is διαστρέφω (diastrephō) and means perverse, corrupt and wicked. “Generation” is γενεά (genea) and refers to the whole multitude of people living at the same time. “Appear” is the present middle indicative of φαίνω (phainō) and means to be bright, resplendent.

“Lights” is φωστήρ (phōstēr) and refers to that which gives light, what the light produces. This is production toward man and God. “World” is κόσμος (kosmos) and refers to the world emphasizing production in this life. “Holding fast” is the present active participle, anarthrous construction of ἐπέχω (epechō) and emphasizes the temporal idea and also principle of life.

“Word of life” is the accusative masculine singular of λόγος ζωή (logos zōē) and means the Word, only holding the word, the process of life, the principle of life. “Run in vain” is the second aorist of τρέχω κενός (trechō kenos) and means to run, to rapid propagation of doctrine in vain or to no purpose. “Toil in vain” is the aorist of κοπιάω κενός (kopiaō kenos) and means to labor with wearisome effort, to toil in vain or to no purpose.

### **The Apostle Paul’s Exhortation to the Galatian Churches**

Paul’s encouragement or exhortation was for the believers in the Galatian churches to take the grace way versus the legalism way. The basis for the encouragement to obedience is the danger of legalism. The method of the encouragement to obedience uses a background illustration. Gal. 4:19-31.

*“but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you. Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?” (Galatians 4:20-21, NASB)*

*“But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.” (Galatians 4:29, NASB)*

### **The Apostle Paul’s Exhortation to the Thessalonian Church**

Paul’s encouragement to the Thessalonian church can be found in 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13. The basis of the encouragement is the presence of great persecution. The source of the encouragement is past doctrine learned and the arrival of Timothy.

*“and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,” (1 Thessalonians 3:2, NASB)*

*“But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you, for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith;” (1 Thessalonians 3:6-7, NASB)*

Paul encouraged and comforted the Thessalonians when he was there in 1 Thessalonians 2:11 through 1 Thessalonians 3:2. Encouragement for a believer is based on knowledge of the Lord’s return for His bride at the Rapture of the Church. 1 Thess. 4:16-18.

*“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with*





*the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, NASB)*

Believers have a mutual responsibility to encourage and comfort one another. 1 Thess. 5:11.

*“Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11, NASB)*

Encouragement and comfort is a basic ingredient of God’s provision in grace. 2 Thess. 2:16-17.

*“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.” (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, NASB)*

### **Jonathan’s Encouragement of David**

At a moment of great discouragement and depression, God used the noble Jonathan to encourage David in 1 Samuel 23:16.

*“And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God.” (1 Samuel 23:16, NASB)*

Jonathan was the aggressor and David was the responder. Jonathan was active and David was passive. The verb “to encourage” is חזק (châzaq) and means to grow firm or strong, to strengthen, to encourage. David was the object of the encouragement based on Jonathan’s divine viewpoint.

God provides true friends for mature believers such as David to stand in the gap at critical points in their lives. The complete details of what Jonathan said are not related, but the principle of communication is Bible doctrine and divine viewpoint from Jonathan the aggressor to David the responder.

One area of this encouragement is recorded in 1 Samuel 23:17. Do not fear! From this verse we see the principle of encouragement from a mature grace believer in time of tragedy or catastrophe. The grace oriented believer never fights the plan of God. In this day when everyone is pushy and bulldogging, the spiritually mature believers are truly relaxed.

*“Thus he said to him, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father will not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also."” (1 Samuel 23:17, NASB)*

The believer that is jealous precludes any rapport love or friendship love. The mature believer never fights the plan of God even if they know they lose out! The grace oriented believer will always stick with a fellow believer, especially when they have a close friendship. Their steadfastness is truly noble.

The one who rules and has the highest rank always needs trusted subordinates. Subordinate is not a bad word. No one is inferior because they are subordinate. A true grace subordinate takes second place through their own free will. To faithfully serve the Lord in a subordinate position takes maximum use of Bible doctrine and a spiritually mature status. It is not normal thinking as far as the old sin nature is concerned!

David was discouraged. True friends always know when to be an encouragement. God provides grace oriented believers to stand by when someone is in disaster. The details of how Jonathan encouraged David are unknown, but it was divine viewpoint. At this time, Jonathan was a more mature believer than David.

Grace oriented spiritually mature friends are fantastic in their help. The mature believer never fights the



plan of God. David could have avoided three revolutions if Jonathan had been there. Those in subordinate roles need more nobility of soul than those in positions of higher authority. Jonathan was ministering to David, not David to Jonathan.