

WANTED: “ENCOURAGERS”

(Scripture: Acts 15:35-41)

INTRODUCTION:

1. **This morning’s sermon is titled, Christians are to be encouragers and not discouragers.**
2. **In our churches today, we need Christians to be encouragers--building one another up, inspiring one another, and strengthening one another in our faith.**
3. **God has called Christians to be encouragers:**
 -  **(1 Thess. 5:11) “Encourage one another and build each other up.”**
 -  **(Heb. 10:25) “Let us encourage one another...”**
 -  **(Heb. 3:13) “Encourage one another daily...”**
4. **Although God has commanded us to encourage one another, sometimes, we do just the opposite.**
5. **Since we are human beings, at times, we...**
 - a. **Discourage one another instead of encourage one another.**
 - b. **Concentrate on people’s weaknesses and faults instead of their strengths.**
 - c. **Criticize others instead of complimenting them on their good qualities.**
 - d. **Tear down instead of building up.**

**TODAY, WE WILL EXPLORE TWO
POINTS REGARDING
ENCOURAGEMENT THAT I HOPE WILL
INSPIRE US TO BE ENCOURAGERS
AND NOT DISCOURAGERS.**

**I. FIRST, WHY SHOULD WE BE AN
ENCOURAGER?**

**A. BY BEING AN ENCOURAGER, WE
CAN CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE!**

1. In (Acts 13:5ff), a young man named John Mark was an enthusiastic worker for the Lord.
2. In fact, he loved God so much that he accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey.
3. However, along the way, John Mark decided to return home and leave the missionary effort.
4. Later in (Acts 15:36-39), Barnabas wanted to invite John Mark to join them for another journey, but Paul did not want to.
5. As a result, the partners went separate ways, Barnabas with Mark and Paul with Silas.
 - Read (Acts 15:36-40).
6. Can you imagine how devastating it was for Mark when Paul refused to let him go on the next missionary journey?
7. He could have been so discouraged that he quit the ministry or even gave up on God.

8. However, Barnabas (Son of Encouragement) stood beside his friend John Mark despite his past failure and encouraged him in the work of the Lord.
9. He lifted John Mark up and gave him another chance and inspired him to continue in the ministry.
10. Barnabas' encouragement changed John Mark's life.
11. Think about it, what would have happened if Mark had quit?
12. We probably wouldn't have the Gospel according to Mark.

ILLUSTRATION:

Judy Tatelbaum was:

a young social worker in a New York City psychiatric clinic, she was asked to see Roz, a 20-year-old woman who had been referred to her from another psychiatric facility. It was an unusual referral in that no information was received ahead of her appointment. She was told to "play it by ear," and to figure out what the patient's problems were and what she needed.

Without a diagnosis to go on, she saw Roz as an unhappy, misunderstood young woman who hadn't been listened to in her earlier therapy. Her family situation was unpleasant. Judy didn't see her as disturbed, but rather as lonely and misunderstood. She responded so positively to being heard. Judy encouraged her to start a life worth living—to find a job, a satisfying place to live and new relationships. They hit it off well, and she started making important changes in her life right away.

The records from the previous psychiatric facility arrived a month after Roz and Judy began their successful work together. To Judy's complete surprise, Roz's records were several inches thick, describing a number of psychiatric hospitalizations. The records diagnosis was "paranoid schizophrenic," with a comment on her being "hopeless."

That had not been Judy's experience with Roz at all. So she decided to forget those pieces of paper. She never treated her as if she had that "hopeless" diagnosis. She did find out about the horrors for Roz of those hospitalizations, of being drugged, isolated and abused.

First Roz found a job, then a place to live away from her difficult family. After several months of working together, she introduced Judy to her husband-to-be, a successful businessman who adored her.

When they completed their therapy, Roz gave her the gift of a silver bookmark and a note that said, "Thank you for believing and encouraging me well."

13. Each time we encourage someone, it may change the course of his or her life.

14. Too often we can diagnose people unfairly and label them a failure.

15. Moreover, we treat them as failures.

16. However, in reality, we should believe in and encourage them and when we do, we can change the course of their lives.

II. SECOND, HOW CAN WE ENCOURAGE OTHERS?

A. WE NEED TO LOOK FOR THE BEST IN PEOPLE AND NOT THE WORST.

- 1. We all have weaknesses.**
- 2. No one is perfect.**
- 3. And since we are all frail human beings, we could pick each other to death with criticism.**
- 4. But if we look at people's strengths and good qualities, we will enjoy each other and build each other up.**
- 5. We cannot dwell on people's weaknesses, but instead we should focus on their good qualities!**

ILLUSTRATION:

The story is told about an old man who lived in a small town who was known around town for never saying any unkind words to anyone. Every word that came out of his mouth was encouraging and positive. And people in the town couldn't stand it because they liked to talk about people. So one day, a vicious, dog, who terrorized the towns people for years, died. And so the towns people got together and began to say all kinds of bad things about the dog. After a while, the people went over to the nice man's house to see what he would say about the dog. They knew that he could not say anything good about the dog. However, when the town's people asked him what he thought about the dog, the nice man paused, and said, "That dog sure did have pretty teeth."

- 6. If we look for the best in people and not the worst, we will always find something good in everyone.**

B. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS.

1. When someone does something good in your eyes, simply tell them.
2. It will make a world of difference to that individual.
3. For example:
 - a. If you enjoyed someone's prayer, tell them.
 - b. If someone becomes a Christian, encourage him or her in their faith.
 - c. If someone at your work does a good job, give them a pat on the back.
 - d. If your children do something good, give them praise.
 - e. Children constantly need encouragement because it builds up their self-worth and importance.

CONCLUSION:

1. **Brethren, we need to be a people of encouragement!**
2. **The Bible commands us to do this.**
3. **By being an encourager, we can change someone's life, and we can build people's self-worth.**

4. **It is so easy to get caught up in tearing others down.**
5. **But this mindset is worthless.**
6. **There is nothing good that can come out of discouraging others.**
7. **So if you are constantly tearing people down, it is time to stop it and start building them up with kind words of encouragement.**

8. **When we leave this earth, do we want to be remembered as encouragers or discouragers?**