

ENCOURAGEMENT

1. Problem.

- a. Can I be honest with you? There are some things I'm currently discouraged about:
 - (1) The West's shift away from biblical Christianity..
 - (2) The new dark age into which we seem to be heading.
 - (3) China's bellicosity.
 - (4) The lack of of biblical literacy in New Zealand.
 - (5) Lack of men my own age with whom I can fellowship at a deep level.
 - (6) Certain aspects of New Zealand culture, such as the tally poppy syndrome, that stymie the church's advance.
 - (7) Brethren traditions that hinder Brethren churches from growth and impact.
 - (8) Disunity our local church is currently experiencing because of really strong personalities.
 - (9) Seeing the gospel retreat rather than advance in New Zealand.
 - (10) That I am not making more of an impact in terms of evangelism and discipleship.
 - (11) An area of sinful weakness in which I continue to stumble and in which I see other men stumbling.
 - (12) Don't have enough time to finish all the projects and tasks I'd like to do.
 - (13) My body can't perform as it once did.
 - (14) Sometimes it feels as if Satan and his allies are winning.
- b. What about you? Please share with a neighbour two or three things you are currently discouraged about.
- c. Discouragement.
 - (1) We are fallen creatures, and we live in a fallen world with other fallen creatures.
 - (2) No matter how well things are going, there is always something to be discouraged about.
 - (3) Unbelievers and believers both experience discouragement.
 - (4) One-third of the book of Psalms is lament psalms (Ps 3; 4; 12; 13; 22; 31; 39; 44; 57; 69; 71; 74; 77; 79; 80; 94; 139).
 - (5) The major problem in several books of the Bible is discouragement (Job, Lamentations, Habakkuk).
 - (6) Jesus himself experienced disappointment and discouragement.
 - (a) At Nazareth (Mt 13:54-58).
 - (b) At Jerusalem (Mt 23:37-39).
 - (c) At Gethsemane (Mt 26:36-46).
 - (7) Paul, too, experienced severe discouragement (2 Co 11:28; 2 Ti 4:9-16).
 - (8) Elders, pastors, and, missionaries routinely experience disappointment (Adoniram Judson, Eric Liddell).
 - (9) Discouragement may very easily lead us to sin in the form of grumbling and discontent.
 - (a) Israel in the wilderness (Ex 15:24; 16:2; 17:3).
 - (b) Local church (1 Co 10:10; Php 2:14; Ja 5:9; Jud 16).
 - (10) Discouragement can be absolutely debilitating.

- (a) **Pr 18:14** 14 A man’s spirit will endure sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?¹
- (11) All of us need encouragement.
- (a) “In our interpersonal relations we should never forget that all our associates are human beings and hunger for appreciation. It is the legal tender that all souls enjoy.”²
- (b) “No soldier wants to go into battle alone, and none of us likes to stand up and be the lone voice in a meeting. We want to know someone has our back or is standing with us. We carry out our responsibilities better when we encourage one another. We all need encouragers in our lives.”³
- (c) In the West, we pride ourselves on our autonomy, independence, and self-sufficiency. We try to do without encouragement. But as people created in God’s image, we need daily encouragement to function at our best.
- (12) I don’t hear a lot of encouragement in the New Zealand church.

2. Definitions.

a. Greek.

- (1) *παρακαλέω*: “to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage” or “to instill someone with courage or cheer, comfort, encourage, cheer up.” [Used 137 times in the LXX and 109 times in the NT.]
- (2) *παράκλησις*: “the act of emboldening another in belief or course of action, encouragement, exhortation” or “lifting of another’s spirits, comfort, consolation.” [Used 0 times in the LXX and 29 times in the NT.]
- (3) *παράκλητος*: “one who appears in another’s behalf, mediator, intercessor, helper.” [Used 0 times in the LXX and 5 times in the NT.]

b. English.

- (1) **en•cour•age**: “[Middle English *encoragen*, from Anglo-French *encorager*, from *en-* + *curage* courage] 15th century...to inspire with courage, spirit, or hope: hearten...to attempt to persuade: urge...to spur on: stimulate...to give help or patronage to: foster...*synonym* encourage, inspire, hearten, embolden mean to fill with courage or strength of purpose. encourage suggests the raising of one’s confidence especially by an external agency (the teacher’s praise *encouraged* the students to greater efforts). inspire, somewhat literary, implies instilling life, energy, courage, or vigor into something (patriots *inspired* the people to resist). hearten implies the lifting of dispiritedness or despondency by an infusion of fresh courage or zeal (a hospital patient *heartened* by good news). embolden implies the giving of courage sufficient to overcome timidity or reluctance (emboldened by her first success, she tried an even more difficult climb.”⁴

3. Spectrum.

¹ When we are discouraged, we need encouragement.

² Dale Carnegie.

³ Ben Mandrell.

⁴ *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

a. Key verse.

- (1) **1 Th 2:12** 12 ... We encouraged (παρακαλέω) each one of you, consoled (παραμυθεόμαι)⁵ you, and charged (μαρτύρομαι)⁶ you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.



The παράκλησις Spectrum

Exhortation	Encouragement	Comfort
The soldier who is abandoning his post.	The soldier on the eve of battle.	The soldier who is wounded or dying.
A coach yells at his runner on the final lap of the race.	A coach inspires his runners the day before the track meet.	The NZ and US runners help each other finish the Rio Olympics 5K after crashing into each other.
A coach yells at his losing team at half-time.	A coach inspires his team before the game.	A coach consoles his losing team because they played their best.

b. Exhortation.

- (1) **Ac 2:40** 40 And with many other words [Peter] testified and continued to exhort (παρακαλέω) them saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.
- (2) **Ro 12:1** 1 I appeal (παρακαλέω) to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
- (3) **1 Pe 2:11** 11 Beloved, I urge (παρακαλέω) you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.
- (4) “The essence of encouragement is exposure without rejection.”

c. Encouragement.

- (1) **1 Th 5:11** 11 Therefore *encourage* one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
- (2) “[T]he way to develop the best that is in a person is by appreciation and encouragement. There is nothing else that so kills the ambitions of a person as criticisms from superiors. I never criticize anyone. I believe in giving a person incentive to work. So I am anxious to praise but loath to find fault. If I like anything, I am hearty in my approbation and lavish in my praise.”⁷
- (3) Encouragement has a lot to do with morale during wartime. We are engaged in a war against the world, the flesh and the devil. At times we may feel like giving up. We all need encouragement from one another.

d. Comfort.

⁵ “[C]onsole, cheer up τινά someone” (BDAG, 769).

⁶ “[T]o urge someth. as a matter of great importance, *affirm, insist, implore*” (BDAG, 619).

⁷ Charles Schwab.

- (1) **Ge 24:67** 67 Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.
- (2) **Mt 5:4** 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted (παρακαλέω).
- (3) **2 Co 7:13** 13 Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.
- (4) "Understanding is sometimes better than advice."

4. Sources.

a. Trinity.

- (1) God the Father.
 - (a) **1 Sa 30:6** 6 And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in Yahweh his God.
 - (b) **Ps 119:76** 76 Let your loyal love comfort (נָחַם) me according to your promise to your servant.
 - (c) **Is 40:1-2** 1 Comfort (נָחַם), comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from Yahweh's hand double [blessing] for all her sins.
 - (d) **Is 51:12** 12 I, I am he who comforts you. Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass...?
 - (e) **Ro 15:5-6** 5 May the God of endurance and encouragement (παράκλησις) grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Messiah Jesus, 6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Messiah.
 - (f) ***2 Co 1:3-7** 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Messiah, the Father of mercies and the God of all encouragement (παράκλησις), 4 who encourages (παρακαλέω) us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to encourage (παρακαλέω) those who are in any affliction through the encouragement (παράκλησις) with which we ourselves are being encouraged (παρακαλέω) by God.
 - (g) **2 Co 7:6** 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus....
- (2) God the Son.
 - (a) **Is 61:1-3** 1 The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is upon me [Jesus], because Yahweh has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, 2 to proclaim the year of Yahweh's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3 to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit, that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of Yahweh, that he may be glorified.

- (b) **2 Co 1:5** 5 For just as the sufferings of Messiah are abundant for us, so also our *encouragement* (παράκλησις) is abundant through Messiah.
 - (c) **Php 2:1** 1 So if there is any *encouragement* in Messiah, any *comfort* from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy....
 - (d) **2 Th 2:16-17** 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Messiah himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal *encouragement* and good hope through grace, 17 *encourage* (sing.) your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.
 - (e) **1 Jn 2:1** 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an *Advocate/Encourager* (παράκλητος) with the Father, Jesus Messiah the righteous.
- (3) God the Holy Spirit.
- (a) **Jn 14:16-17** 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another *Encourager* (παράκλητος), to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.
 - (b) **Jn 15:26** 26 But when the *Encourager* (παράκλητος) comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will testify about me.
 - (c) **Jn 16:7** 7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the *Encourager* (παράκλητος) will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.
 - (d) **Ac 9:31** 31 So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord [Jesus] and in the *encouragement* of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.
- b. God's word.
- (1) **Ps 119:52** 52 When I think of your rules from of old, I take *comfort* (חַנּוּן), Yahweh.
 - (2) **Ro 15:4** 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the *encouragement* (παράκλησις) of the Scriptures we might have hope.
 - (3) Scripture encourages us that, just as God has faithfully kept his promises in the past, he will continue to faithfully keep his promises in the future.
- c. God's people.
- (1) **1 Sa 23:15-17** 15 David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. 16 And Jonathan, Saul's son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and *strengthened* his hand in God. 17 And he said to him, Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this.
 - (2) **1 Ki 19:18** 18 Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.
 - (3) **Ac 4:36** 36 There was a Levite—a native of Cyprus, Joseph—to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means son of *encouragement* (υἱὸς παρακλήσεως)).

- (4) **Ac 11:23** 23 When [Barnabas] came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced. And he *encouraged* (παρακαλέω) them all to remain faithful to the Lord [Jesus] with loyal devotion.
 - (5) **Ac 14:21-22** 21 When [Paul and Barnabas] had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, *encouraging* them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.
 - (6) **Ac 15:30-32** 30 So when [Barnabas and Paul] were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. 31 And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its *encouragement*. 32 And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, *encouraged* and strengthened the brothers with many words.
 - (7) **Ac 20:1-2** 1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples. And after *encouraging* (παρακαλέω) them and saying farewell, he left for Macedonia. 2 When he had gone through those regions and had given the believers much *encouragement* (παρακαλέω), he came to Greece....
 - (8) **Ro 12:6-8** 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the *encourager* (παρακαλέω), in *encouragement* (παράκλησις)....
 - (a) God grants some the spiritual gift of encouragement.
 - (9) **1 Co 14:3** 3 On the other hand, those who prophesy speak to other people for their upbuilding, *encouragement* (παράκλησις), and *consolation* (παραμυθία).⁸
 - (10) ***2 Co 1:3-4** 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Messiah, the Father of mercies and the God of all *encouragement* (παράκλησις), 4 who *encourages* (παρακαλέω) us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to *encourage* (παρακαλέω) those who are in any affliction through the *encouragement* (παράκλησις) with which we ourselves are being *encouraged* (παρακαλέω) by God.
 - (11) **Col 4:8** 8 I [Paul] have sent Tychicus to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and that he may *encourage* (παρακαλέω) your hearts.
 - (12) **Phm 7** 7 For I [Paul] have derived much joy and *encouragement* from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you [Philemon].
 - (13) **1 Th 3:2-3** 2 ...And we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Messiah, to establish and *encourage* you in your faith, 3 that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this.
 - (14) **1 Th 3:6-7** 6 ...Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. He has told us also that you always remember us kindly and long to see us—just as we long to see you. 7 For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been *encouraged* (παρακαλέω) about you through your faith.
- d. False sources of comfort.

⁸ “[T]hat which serves as encouragement to one who is depressed or in grief, *encouragement, comfort, consolation*” (BDAG, 769).

- (1) **Zec 10:2** 2 For the household gods utter nonsense, and the diviners see lies. They tell false dreams and give empty *comfort* (נחם). Therefore the people wander like sheep. They are afflicted for lack of a shepherd.

5. Command.

- a. ***Is 35:3-4** 3 *Strengthen* (קִיַּץ) the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. 4 Say to those who have an anxious heart, Be strong. Fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.
- b. **2 Co 13:11** 11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice. Aim for restoration, *encourage* one another....
- c. **1 Th 4:16-18** 16 For the Lord [Jesus] himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Messiah will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore *encourage* one another with these words.
- d. ***1 Th 5:11** 11 Therefore *encourage* one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
- e. ***1 Th 5:14** 14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the idle, *encourage* the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.
- f. ***He 3:13** 13 But *encourage* one another every day, as long as it is called today, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
- g. ***He 10:24-25** 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but *encouraging* one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

6. Objects.

- a. Spouse.
 - (1) Husbands, we are to encourage our wife by esteeming, honouring, and cherishing her.
 - (a) **Pr 31:28-29** 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: 29 Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.
 - (b) This involves speaking highly of her in front of others, opening the door for her, giving her encouragement or praise, noticing something different about her hair or clothes, being physically affectionally with her in public, making her feel first in importance, and being proud of her and all she does.
 - (2) Wives, you are to be your husband's biggest cheerleader and a confidant when he needs to talk and get something off his chest.
 - (a) Every man wants to be a hero to his wife and children.
- b. Children.
 - (1) Fathers, we are to exhort and encourage our children to take risks, be brave in unfamiliar situations, and be competitive and independent.
 - (a) One ministry, Growing Kids God's Way, urges fathers to encourage their children through smiles, positive expressions, and short notes hidden in their child's lunchbox.

- (b) The problem we are seeing with New Zealand youth is largely due to a lack of biological fathers in the home encouraging their own children.
- (c) As churches and as a community, we do well to honour fathers and encourage them in their parenting tasks. We should make it a habit to thank and encourage dads as we see them involved with their children in the park, at the shopping centre, coaching the sports team, volunteering at school, and elsewhere. Let them know how vital they are to their children and to society.
- (2) Mothers, you are to encourage and comfort your children in fine motor skill growth—eating, dressing, doing finger-play, colouring, cutting, and tying.
- c. Believers.
 - (1) **2 Co 2:6-7** 6 This punishment by the majority is enough for such a person. 7 So now instead you should forgive and *encourage* (παρακαλέω) him, so that he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow (λύπη).
 - (2) **2 Co 13:11** 11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice. Aim for restoration, *encourage* one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.
 - (3) ***1 Th 5:14** 14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the idle, *encourage* the fainthearted/discouraged (ὀλιγόψυχος), help the weak, be patient with them all.
 - (4) ***He 3:13** 13 But *encourage* one another *every day*, as long as it is called today, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
 - (5) ***He 13:22** 22 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, bear with my word of *encouragement*, for I have written to you briefly.
- d. Church leaders.
 - (1) **2 Ch 30:22** 22 And Hezekiah spoke *encouragingly* to all the Levites who showed good skill in the service of Yahweh.
 - (2) ***He 13:17** 17 Obey your leaders (ἡγέομαι) 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.
 - (3) Our church leaders—elders, pastors, and missionaries—need our encouragement.
- e. Unbelievers (co-workers, friends, neighbours).
 - (1) **2 Co 5:20** 20 So we are ambassadors for Messiah, because God is *exhorting/encouraging* (παρακαλέω) through us: We plead with you on behalf of Messiah, be reconciled to God.
- f. Jewish remnant.
 - (1) ***Is 40:1-2** 1 *Comfort* (ἠγάπη), *comfort* my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from Yahweh's hand double [blessing] for all her sins.
 - (2) **Is 51:3** 3 For Yahweh *comforts* Zion. He comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of Yahweh. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.
 - (3) **Is 66:13** 13 As one whom his mother *comforts*, so I will *comfort* you. You shall be *comforted* in Jerusalem.

7. Content.

a. God's unchangeable purpose and promises.

(1) ***He 6:17-18** 17 So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong *encouragement* to hold fast to the hope set before us.

(2) Here's some promises for us to remember.⁹

(a) Old Testament.

- 1) God has promised to bless Abraham and, through his descendants, the whole world ([Genesis 12:2-3](#)). This promise, called the [Abrahamic Covenant](#), pointed to the coming Messiah for whom Abraham looked ([John 8:56](#)).
- 2) God has promised that if we search for Him we will find Him ([Deuteronomy 4:29](#)). He is not playing hard-to-get.
- 3) God has promised protection for His children ([Psalm 121](#)).
- 4) God has promised that his love will never fail ([1 Chronicles 16:34](#)).
- 5) God has promised Israel her sin will be forgiven, her prosperity restored, and her nation healed ([2 Chronicles 7:14](#)).
- 6) God has promised blessing for all who will delight themselves in his word ([Psalm 1:1-3](#)).

(b) New Testament.

- 1) God has promised salvation to all who believe in his Son ([Romans 1:16-17](#)). There is no greater blessing than the free gift of God's salvation.
- 2) God has promised all things will work out for good for his children ([Romans 8:28](#)). This is the broader picture that keeps us from being dismayed by present circumstances.
- 3) God has promised comfort in our trials ([2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#)).
- 4) God has promised new life in Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). Salvation is the beginning of a brand-new existence.
- 5) God has promised us every spiritual blessing in Christ ([Ephesians 1:3](#)), including an inheritance that is reserved for us ([1 Peter 1:4](#)).
- 6) God has promised to finish the work he started in us ([Philippians 1:6](#)). He started the work in us, and He will be sure to complete it.
- 7) God has promised peace when we pray ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)). His peace guards our heart and your mind in Christ.
- 8) God has promised to supply our needs ([Matthew 6:33](#); [Philippians 4:19](#)).

(c) Jesus in the Gospels.

- 1) Jesus has promised us rest ([Matthew 11:28-30](#)).
- 2) Jesus has promised an [abundant life](#) to those who follow him ([John 10:10](#)).
- 3) Jesus has promised to hold us securely and that no one will snatch us out of his hand ([John 10:28](#)).

⁹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/promises-of-God.html>.

- 4) Jesus has promised us power from on high ([Acts 1:8](#)) that will turned the world upside down” ([Acts 17:6, ESV](#)).
 - 5) Jesus has promised he will return for us ([John 14:2-3](#)).
 - 6) All God’s promises find their yes in Jesus Christ ([2 Corinthians 1:20](#)).
- b. The rapture.
- (1) **1 Th 4:16-18** 16 For the Lord [Jesus] himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Messiah will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

8. Result.

- a. A multiplying church.
 - (1) **Ac 9:31** 31 So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord [Jesus] and in the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.
- b. Faithfulness and loyal devotion.
 - (1) **Ac 11:23** 23 When [Barnabas] came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced. And he encouraged (*παρακαλέω*) them all to remain faithful to the Lord [Jesus] with loyal devotion.
- c. Freedom, joy, and strengthening.
 - (1) **Ac 15:30-32** 30 So when [Barnabas and Paul] were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. 31 And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. 32 And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words.
 - (a) One of the great strengths of the early church was encouragement.
 - (2) **Phm 7** 7 For I [Paul] have derived much joy and encouragement from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you [Philemon].
- d. Hope and harmony
 - (1) **Ro 15:4-6** 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Messiah Jesus, 6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Messiah.
 - (2) **Php 2:1-2** 1 So if there is any encouragement in Messiah, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.
- e. Restoration.
 - (1) **2 Co 2:6-7** 6 This punishment by the majority is enough for such a person. 7 So now instead you should forgive and encourage (*παρακαλέω*) him, so that he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow (*λύπη*).

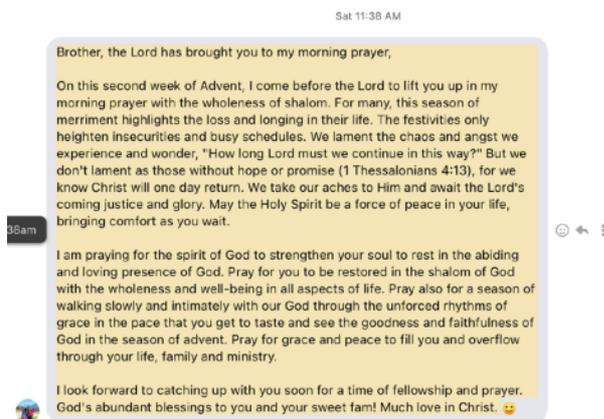
- (2) **2 Co 13:11** 11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice. Aim for restoration, *encourage* one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.
- f. Love and full assurance of understanding.
- (1) **Col 2:1-2** 1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face, 2 that their hearts may be *encouraged*, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Messiah....
- g. Love and good works.
- (1) **He 10:24-25** 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but *encouraging* one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

9. Application.

- As your quiet time ends each day, ask God for the name of one person you can encourage that day. Take a couple minutes, and do it! Make a call, send an email, send a text, make a visit, have a conversation.
- Make sure your encouragement is sincere.
- Be a Barnabas. Buck the trend and be an encourager.

10. Illustrations

Oh, give me a home where the Buffalo roam
Where the Deer and the Antelope play;
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word,
And the sky is not cloudy all day.¹⁰



¹⁰ Brewster Higley (1876), "Home on the Range."