

The Encouragers Checklist
Text: 1 Thes. 5:11-23

Introduction

- A. I am really proud of you, the whole congregation last week really took the lesson to heart, and I saw more people than I think I have ever have here, talking and visiting after last week's sermon. That is what I am talking about, what we need to be doing weekly and daily so keep up the great work, keep encouraging one another!
- B. Prayer.
- C. After 30 years of marriage his wife was ready to throw in the towel. 'I have had it, living with you. You never tell me you love me anymore.' The husband replied, 'I told you I loved you when we got married; if I change my mind I'll let you know.'
- D. What is true in married life is true in the church and in the Christian life, we need to be told, and reminded regularly that we are beneficial and important to God and to His family.
- E. Unfortunately too many Christians expect one another in the Body, the people we sit by, Bible teachers, those who serve in our worship, and everyone who has a function to run on autopilot, like the hard-hearted husband. We sometime forget people thrive on appreciation. Christians need encouragement. Sometimes Christians are the worst: I have heard, 'You're working for the Lord and He'll reward you.' Yes, we're all working for that final pat on the back in the sky, but God expects us to pat others on the back along the way.
- F. 1 Thess. 5:11 states, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." The Paul points out areas where we as Christians need to be an encourager.
- G. I have made available a checklist to help each one of us to be better encouragers. I hope that as we go through this lesson you will be able to take notes and try to make it your goal to be a better encourager in at least one or more of these areas.
- H. Lets begin with verse 11.

Body

- I. Encourage and build up someone 1 Thess. 5:11.
 - A. If you recall last week we looked at Heb. 3:13 which it reminds us that encouragement is something we do daily.
 - 1. Again here in 1 Thess. 5:11 we are reminded to encourage one another to build one another up.
 - 2. Encouragement has the power to motivate, strengthen, and help us to continue on in the Christian faith.
 - a. Eph. 4:29, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.
 - b. Isaiah 1:17, "learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow."
 - c. Acts 11:23, "When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to

the Lord with all their hearts.

- d. Romans 12:8 “if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”

B. Is there someone you know who needs encouragement? Paul goes on to point out some people and circumstance in which we can bring encouragement too:

II. Appreciate your leaders 1 Thess. 5:12.

A. Paul’s instruction is to spiritual leaders of the church such as, Elders, Preachers, Bible Teachers, and Missionaries. We can even broaden this to include all those who labor in the church in some manner, even include parents and grandparents who teach the Bible to their children and grand children.

1. Paul tells them to “recognize those who labor among you”
2. John MacArthur says this means to “know your “leaders” well enough to have an intimate appreciation for them and to respect them because of their value.”
3. It means to know your leaders for who they are in Christ.
4. Then Paul says to “esteem them”, which means to think rightly of them he gives three areas in which we are to show appreciation for them, or we should support our leaders.
 - a. In their laboring; means working to the point of exhaustion. I can say this is true.
 - b. In their overseeing, literally means standing before the flock to lead them in the way of righteousness.
 - c. In their admonishing is the instructing in the truths of God’s Word.

C. What Paul is saying about spiritual leaders, “Take some time to contact someone who has encouraged you. Let the person know what his or her work has meant to you.” (John Maxwell p21).

1. “Years ago an experiment was conducted to measure people’s capacity to endure pain. How long could a bare-footed person stand in a bucket of ice water? It was discovered that when there was someone else present offering encouragement and support, the person standing in the ice water could tolerate pain twice as long as when no one else was present.” (John Maxwell. p25)
2. This is the type of preacher I am striving to be, being their for people so they can tolerate the pain weather that is spiritual or physical, I believe Paul is telling us when we see our leaders doing their work we encourage them and show them appreciation.

III. Live in peace I Thess. 5:13

A. Church strife destroys a leaders physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It makes leadership a great chore instead of a delight and this is no advantage to us. We are to be peacemakers.

1. Heb 13:17, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that

would be of no advantage to you.”

2. Rom 14:19 “So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”
3. Christians should be at peace among themselves, doing all they can to stop any differences from rising or continuing among them, and using all proper means to preserve peace and harmony.
4. Peace is a great encouragement

B. Acts 9:31 reminds us that when the church enjoyed peace. It caused:

1. Strength among the body of Christ.
2. Saints are encourage.
3. and it will grow in numbers.

IV. Warn the unruly or idle 1 Thess. 5:14

A. The word literally means from the Greek those who are unruly, insubordinate, careless, and out of line. It comes from the meaning of a soldier who is out of their rank, and are neither in a disposition nor situation to perform the work and duty; For the Christian it is those who will not do the work prescribed, and who will meddle with what is not commanded.

1. A young mother went to her doctor for an appointment. She took her little five-year-old son with her and made no attempt to restrain him from ransacking an adjoining room. Finally, after hearing a bunch of bottles being rattled, she said to the doctor, “Doctor, I hope you don’t mind little Johnny being in the next room.” The doctor replied, “No, its okay. He’ll be quiet when he gets to the poisons.”
2. If the unruly, careless, are not warned worse things could happen to them or the church.

B. Bad behavior is never a good thing. For the church or the individual and there is a scents of encouragement that is shown when discipline takes place.

1. Heb. 12:5-11

V. Encourage the timid 1 Thess. 5:14.

A. Encourage or comfort indicates soothing and comforting words for those who are “depressed” or discouraged. There are just some Christian who when the going gets tough, these people don’t get going, they quit.

B. We must get close to them and encourage them. Let them know that they are not alone and that they don’t have to fight alone.

1. Last we talked about the lost sheep Matthew 18:1-14.
2. Sometimes we must go and look for those who have left the flock, and show them we do miss them and care.
3. I heard a true story once of a church who was so concerned with one of their member’s absents from the church assembly that after many visits to this member, which he kept saying the church doesn’t care for me. The whole church one Sunday after service got in their cars and all went to his house. When they knocked door, he saw instantly that they cared for him, he was restored and has been faithful ever since.

C. How comforting is it to feel that we are not alone! How supporting to be addressed by one who has had the same conflicts, and has triumphed! It is important to reach out, to be friend the timid, pray for them, and encourage

them. This means we must go where they are and bring them back.

V. Help the weak I Thess.5:14

A. This can refer to any weakness: physical, moral, or spiritual.

1. The emphasis here seems to be upon the spiritual. These needed help to develop strong spiritual muscles.
2. Don't let them fall! Help them to stand and teach them how to walk.
3. Paul tells Titus in Titus 2:1-15, that every Christian has the responsibility to teach help build up the faith in those around us.
4. Rom 15:1-2, "We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up."
5. The same action we take for the timid can be used for the weak, we need to be there for them, and even go get them if we need.

VI. Be patient 5:14

A. It takes patience to live in a family and the same is true of God's family the church. The weaker members often will demand much help today. But one day they may have their own family and help you tomorrow and the same is true of the church the weaker members today could be a choice leader that we help develop, so never give up.

1. Everyone needs warning, comforting, encouraging, and help from time to time, sometimes this is tiresome but we must keep in mind the rewards and blessing that come with our patients.
2. Throughout the New Testament Christians are instructed to patient people.
3. With our patience we encourage others.

VII. Resist revenge I Thess 5:15.

A. As Christians there are moments where that evil can get the best of us, and we want to respond in a negative way. Yet the Bible tells us that we must not seek revenge. Not only in 1 Thess. 5:15 but:

1. Rom 12:17-21, "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."
2. Mat 5:38-39, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.
3. 2 Th 1:5-7, "This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering-- since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels."

4. As Christians, family and friends may reject us and even oppose us. They may show no appreciation for us. We should always serve in love, and be ready to forgive. The goal is to turn enemies to friends in Christ.

VIII. Be joyful I Thess. 5:16

- A. "Be joyful always." A joyful person is generally an encouraging person.
- B. The story is told of two old friends bumped into one another on the street one day. One of them looked forlorn, almost on the verge of tears. His friend asked, "What has the world done to you, my old friend?"
 1. The sad fellow said, "Let me tell you. Three weeks ago, an uncle died and left me forty thousand dollars." "That's a lot of money."
 2. "But, two weeks ago, a cousin I never even knew died, and left me eighty-five thousand free and clear." "Sounds like you've been blessed...."
 3. "You don't understand!" he interrupted. "Last week my great-aunt passed away. I inherited almost a quarter of a million." Now he was really confused. "Then, why do you look so glum?" "This week... Nothing, no one died!"
- C. This is often the way we are. We are blessed in so many ways and expect more all the time. What? Nothing this week! We get discouraged, we forget what we do have!
 1. One of the great ways to be encouraged, and encourage others is to remind each other what we have. We're not as joyful as we should be and that's because we don't recognize what we've already been given.
 2. Mt. 6:30-34 reminds us that everything we have we received from God. Our jobs, incomes, cars, houses, land, food, clothing, you name it. We should count our blessing and realize how much our God has blessed us.

IX. Pray continually I Thess. 5:17.

- A. I Peter 5:7, "casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."
 1. A poster said, "When the world had gotten you down, and you feel rotten, and you're too tired to pray, and you're in a big hurry, and besides you're mad at everybody. Ask for help.
 2. Prayer to the Lord is our help. "Our minds can be kept free of anxiety as we dump the load of our cares on the Lord in prayer. By getting rid of the stuff that drags us down, we create space for joy to take its place." (Swindle p. 103).
 3. Isn't that the kinds of prayers Jesus taught us to pray? Real, down-to-earth, communication with the living God that results in relief and strength.
 4. There is no greater encouragement than praying for others and talking to God about our trials and offering thanksgiving to him.

X. Give thanks I Thess. 5:18.

- A. "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Christians are to be a thankful people.
 1. A thankful person is quick to give thanks to God in all circumstances.

Not that we are thankful for the evil and bad circumstances, but we are thankful that God will take care us during these trials.

2. I like the story about a lady who pulled up to the drive-in window at the bank. The inside teller was facing the hot afternoon sun, so he pulled down the large window shade, making it impossible for his customers to see him through the window. He could see out but they couldn't see in. As this lady pulled up to the window he pushed the button and the drawer moved out to meet her. She put in her deposit and the drawer withdrew. A few moments later the drawer came back out again with her deposit slip and the money she had requested. She counted it and then put the money in her purse. She looked at the window, but unable to see anyone inside, said, "I suppose you're totally automated, but I just feel I ought to say `thank you' anyway." Good job, lady. More of us should be that way.
3. We should be thankful to God for those who serve us even though we may not know them or see them. Giving thanks, and showing our appreciation of a service or a job well done is very encouraging, let strive to tell people Thank you, give thanks in all circumstances.

XI. Do not put out the Spirit's fire I Thess. 5:19.

- A. We quench the Spirit when we ignore or disobey Him. "Stop treating lightly the things of the Spirit" is Paul's strong admonition.
- B. The Christian can stifle the Holy Spirit's workings by not rejoicing (v. 16), praying (v. 17), to giving thanks (v. 18), and the many other commands of the Bible.
 1. Someone has said, "Cold looks, contemptuous words, silence, studied disregard, go a long way to quench Him. So does unsympathetic criticism."
 2. When there is a lack of encouragement with one another in Christ, the Holy Spirit is quenched, stop, and cannot produce the blessings that will help the Body of Christ grow.
- C. When the Spirit's fire is not quenched, one will find a Christian, a fellowship, characterized by the positive aspects of 5:12-26.

XII. Do not treat prophecies with contempt prove all things; hold fast that which is good; I Thess. 5:20-21.

- A. As we talked about last week true encouragement comes from God and His Word. Paul reminds us about his instruction which is inspired by the Holy Spirit, which he is relaying the mind of God, and telling the Thessalonians to pay attention and do not mistreat or neglect God's word.
 1. Paul is forth-telling, the will and counsel of God, it suggests the public proclamation or preaching of the word of God.
- B. It's application for us is very similar, do not disrespect the will and mind of God. Do not take away or add to His word.
 1. Rev. 22:18-19
 2. Pr. 30:6
 3. Deut. 4:2
- C. Attentive hearing must be counterbalanced with a coordinate truth; "test all

things; hold fast what is good,” i.e., what is true. The verb “test” signifies “to approve after testing.” The aim then is to put into practice what God has said. It is never enough just to hear God’s word; reject what is not true and the part we most often forget is we must act upon truth (cf. James 1:22–25 and James 4:17).

1. 1 Jn 4:1, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.”
2. 1 Pe 4:10-11, “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”
3. There is great encouragement from God’s Word, and obeying His will.

XIII. Avoid every kind of evil I Thess. 5:22.

- A. Evil discourages, bring down, and destroys. One of the great reasons why people are so discouraged today is because of the “garbage” we allow ourselves to see, hear, and to be involved with.
- B. I heard a true story of a lady who came to a preacher friend of mine who was having problems with depressions, anxiety, and had thoughts of suicide. She was a mess. He began to interview her about her eating habits, hobbies, work, and what she did with her spare time. He came to find out that the only books she read, the movies she watched, and TV shows she spent time with were horror movies, dark movies, glorifying all kinds of evil. He told her to read, and watch something else that was positive. She listened to him, and the feelings of depression, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide stopped.
- C. It is true there are many reasons that people get depressed and down, and changing to what we read and watch may not always fix our problem. But too many times we don’t cut the evil out of our lives by avoiding every kind of evil and we wonder why we are down.
 1. 1 Cor. 15:33, “Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals.""
 2. Who and what we keep company with can ruin us or encourage us.

Finally

XIV. Long for Christ’s return 1 Thess.5:23.

- A. There is no greater encouraging thought than to know that Christ has not left us alone. The thought that Christ will one day come and take us home gives us the encouragement to live just one more day. Just be kinder, helpful, faithful, and encouraging just one more day.
- B. As Christians, “our citizenship is in heaven“ (Philippians 3:20). We have “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven” (1 Peter 1:4). “For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands“ (2 Corinthians 5:1). “But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).
- C. “All we see is temporal and will pass away. It glistens and is gone. Whatever

trust we place in material things is always misplaced. Heaven awaits us beyond the touch of time and circumstance. We need, as Stephen had, a clearer view of God's throne (Acts 7:55, 56). In an hour of hate and seeming hopelessness, John "saw the holy city, new Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:2). The Christian lives in the knowledge that our future life with Christ will be "far better"

(Philippians 1:23)." (Paul Rogers ©Copyright, 1985, 2004 by Truth for Today ALL RIGHTS RESERVED)

- D. Are you a Christian? Are longing for Christ's return? Are you ready for Christ's return? Christ's return is an encouraging thought for the faithful Christian but for the one who has not confessed their faith in Christ, repented and have been baptized for the forgiveness of sins, in Christ then this a very discouraging thought. Make Christ's return and encouraging event come to Christ today! As we stand and sing.

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