

KEY WORDS OF THE CHRISTIAN WALK
PART 2--“ENCOURAGED”
1 PETER 4:12-13

INTRODUCTION

In the first message in this series, we discussed the fact that often life will throw us a curve or two along the way. We often find ourselves faced with circumstances that are not pleasant or just plain difficult to deal with.

(Give some examples)

That is not unusual, even in the life of a believer! In fact, we see here in our text that Peter reminds these brethren, who were going through great trials, that there is nothing unusual about Christians facing trials. In fact, he intimates it is to be expected! *Read Vs 12*

And then, he told them the attitude they were to have in such times:

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

Now the word “rejoice” and the word “sufferings” don’t seem to go together, do they. That’s contrary to our flesh and contrary to our normal thinking!

Now we’re looking at three words in reference to the Christian walk – “discouraged,” “encouraged,” and “courageous.”

In the first message, we looked at the “discouraged walk.”

We saw how we can become discouraged in our Christian walk because :

1) The way we are going gets difficult! 2) Because things happen that we don’t understand! Or 3) Because others discourage us in our walk!

Tonight I want us to consider the “encouraged walk” of a believer.

Thank God for those who encourage us in the right way!

I. BE CAREFUL OF THE WRONG KIND OF ENCOURAGEMENT!

We need to be careful about what we allow folks to encourage us in!

A. Some People Can Encourage Us To Stray From God!

Some folks will hinder our Christian walk by turning us to idolatry. (Now don’t turn your ears off...listen to the Scripture)

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1 Corinthians 10:14--“Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.”

1 John 5:21--“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

Now understand that they’re not just talking about the image of a god or goddess that most people often associate with Bible times and also with countries that are less developed than ours.

Few of us, if any, have a problem with that kind of idolatry!

But, there are some other more subtle forms of idolatry that we may not readily think about but that are prevalent in our society and can find their ways into our lives!

1. Rebellion and Stubbornness.

1 Samuel 15:23--“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”

When a person lives their lives in willful and stubborn disobedience to God and His Word, they are guilty of a form of idolatry!

2. Covetousness.

Colossians 3:5--“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:”

Covetousness can mean to desire that which is not my own or that which is forbidden.

Covetousness can mean to not be content with what one has in life to the extent that one makes possessions the focus of their life and to be willing if necessary to enrich oneself at the expense of others.

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3. **Anything That Is In God’s Stead In Our Lives.**
 - a. **Anything that takes the time that belongs to God.**
People will make the time to worship their god!
 - b. **Anything that takes the treasure that belongs to God.**
People will make sacrifices for their god!

Remember what caused Israel to get caught up in idolatry. They failed to drive out the inhabitants of the land God gave them. Instead, they formed close associations with those inhabitants and those people became a snare to them.

We must also be careful who we let influence us and our families! **Don’t allow someone to encourage you to stray!**

Some People Can Encourage Us To Stray From God!

B. Some People Can Encourage Us To Sin Against God!

Now understand that straying from God is sin itself.

However, when we get away from God, it is so easy for us to be encouraged to do other wicked things too!

Psalm 64:5--“They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?”

1. **Good Parents Have A Genuine Concerned About Who Their Children Hang Around With!**
They don’t want their children encouraged in the wrong things! We teach them the principle laid down in *Proverbs 1:10--“My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.”*

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2. **Did You Know That This Problem Is Not Confined To Children? Adults Can Be Encouraged In The Wrong Things Also!**
Proverbs 13:20--“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”

What kind of people do you hang around and allow to influence your life? Godly people, or ungodly people?

3. **We Must Make The Right Choices For Ourselves Just Like We Do For Our Children!**
There are people who will hinder our Christian walk... we need to avoid them!

Ephesians 5:11--“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

Psalm 1:1--“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

1 Peter 3:10-11--“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew (avoid) evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.”

So, there is *THE WRONG KIND OF ENCOURAGEMENT--*

- A. *Encouragement To Stray From God.*
- B. *Encouragement To Sin Against God.*

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II. THE RIGHT KIND OF ENCOURAGEMENT--
ENCOURAGEMENT TO SERVE GOD.

When the great painter Benjamin West was a young boy, he decided to paint a picture of his sister while his mother was not at home. He got out the bottles of ink and started, but soon he had made an awful mess. His mother came home and saw the mess. Instead of scolding him, she picked up the portrait and declared, "What a beautiful picture of your sister!" Then she kissed him. Later in life he said, "With that kiss I became a painter."

Encouragement can be a wonderful thing in our lives if it is in the right things! I remember what encouragement did to me as a youngster growing up!

A. We All Need Encouragement From Others.
(Deuteronomy 1:38; 3:28)

1. Joshua had a tremendous task before him.
 - a. To lead the rebellious nation of Israel into the Promised Land.
 - b. To follow Moses' leadership.
2. God knew what a great task Joshua was faced with and new that Joshua needed the encouragement of Moses.
3. We are no different than Joshua--We all need encouragement in our Christian walk!

B. We Also Need To Learn To Be An Encouragement To Others. (Judges 20:22)

Example--Have you ever seen teammates be an encouragement to one another right before a big game? How about during a game? How about when the going gets tough?

Example--I've seen some of our former Presidents who encouraged the troops who were going to battle for our country

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As men prepare for battle, it is natural to be afraid and apprehensive. However, it is important to encourage one another in spite of the fear and apprehension.

As believers, we need to learn this valuable principle. We need to encourage one another to be faithful in our Christian walk. We all need this...because we are all in a battle!

Remember Barnabas in Acts 9:26-30? Turn there.

Barnabas was an encourager. In fact, his name means “son of consolation.”

When Saul, who later became known as the Apostle Paul, needed someone to be an encouragement to him, God sent him Barnabas.

Barnabas had already been an encouragement to the apostles and the new saints in Jerusalem by his unselfish financial gift. (Look at Acts 4:36-37)

Later we see that Barnabas became an encouragement to the Church at Antioch. (Look at Acts 11:21-30)

What a great example for all of us today.

Oh how we need to strive to be an encourager to those around us. Not only with our lips, but with our lives!

C. Encouragement, Like Discouragement, Can Be Contagious.

1. Someone said that encouragement is like peanut butter on a sandwich--the more you spread it around the better things stick together.

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2. Paul reminds us in Galatians 6:7 that we will reap what we sow.
I believe that applies to more than just sin! The law of sowing and reaping applies to many areas in our lives.
If we sow encouragement, we will reap the benefits!

Conclusion

What kind of encouragement do we allow to influence us?

The wrong kind--To stray from God or to sin against God?

Or the right kind--To serve God? We get to decide. It is our choice

We can choose to be around those who encourage us to walk with God or those who don't.

We also get to decide how people will remember us. When our name comes to mind, do people think of us as encouragers or discouragers ?

We can choose and ought to choose to become encouragers! Someone may be about to quit on the Lord because of discouragement. A word of encouragement to hang in there might be all that's needed!

What will our choices be?