

Becoming People of Encouragement

I. God is an encourager and to be like Him, we must become one too - Romans 15:5

A. The Lord has given all of us the “*ministry of encouragement*”

1. 2 Corinthians 3:6 - “*Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament.*”
2. 1 Corinthians 12:25 - “*The members may have the same care for one another.*”
3. Hebrews 10:24-25 - “*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*” NIV

B. Hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

1. Hebrews 3:12-13 - “*See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.*”

a. God is telling us that it is possible for us to be so deceived by sin that our hearts will become hardened, our lives will become sinful, and we will end up again in unbelief.

b. This will cause us to fall away from the living God.

2. What is sin?

a. The essential nature of all sin is selfishness

- Isaiah 53:6, “*All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own.*” NLT
- 2 Corinthians 5:15, “*He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live to please themselves. Instead, they will live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them.*” NLT

b. Sin is doing what I want to do in any given situation as opposed to what God wants me to do. It’s missing the mark, Romans 3:23.

c. Every disobedience is the result of greater love for self than God.

d. It’s not only doing what you shouldn’t, it’s also not doing what you should.
James 4:17

e. It's also not doing something in faith.

1) Romans 14:23, "Anything that is not based on faith is sin." TEV

2) **Only hearing from God produces faith, Romans 10:17**

3. How is sin deceitful?

a. Because it looks and feels right - Proverbs 14:12

b. There is a season of pleasure in sin - Hebrews 11:25 & Job 20:5

c. In a redeemed person self-interest is dethroned and God interest is enthroned, sin seeks to undo that.

d. The more we live for ourselves and not Him the more our heart becomes hardened and our ears become dull.

1) **Lived near some train tracks - mechanism in our brain that allows us to filter out the unimportant.**

2) Once you consider what you want as more important than what God wants, than God's voice gets filter out of your life.

3) **We have what I call the thickening of the spiritual eardrum.**

4. Because we can no longer hear God - then unbelief sets into our heart and we eventually fall away.

5. Falling away from God is a gradual process.

a. It's little by little, area by area.

b. Satan's tactic is to concentrate on one area at a time.

C. The Antidote for a sinful, unbelieving heart is, "*daily encouragement.*"

1. "*But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today.*"

Acts 11:23 - "*Then when he had come and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord.*"

1 Thessalonians 2:11 - "*Just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children.*"

1 Thess 4:18 - "*So then, encourage one another with these words.*" TEV

1 Thess 5:11 - *“And so encourage one another and help one another, just as you are now doing.”* TEV

2 Timothy 4:1-3 - *“I solemnly urge you to preach the message, to insist upon proclaiming it (whether the time is right or not), to convince, reproach, and encourage, as you teach with all patience.”* TEV

2. **We can't get by on once a month, what God says we need everyday.**
3. We need to encourage each other to not do certain things and to start doing other things.

- **Daily encouragement will inspire hope in situations of despair.**
- It will breathe life to areas that are dying.
- **It will sustain one another's faith.**

4. Doing this will cause others to believe in God, soften their hearts toward God and be drawn to God.

D. Luke 22:31-32 - Sifting will cause a turning away from things that will keep us from strengthening and encouraging others..

E. Six things that we need to turn from in order to be to give others “daily encouragement.”

1. Self-centeredness

- a. Which is a preoccupation with self.

b. We need to pray and ask God sensitize us to others.

2. Pride.

a. Pride often manifests itself in lofty airs, distance from others, and in contempt of others.

- b. Most things God will prompt us to do are too insignificant for a proud person to do.

3. Forgetfulness and Laziness

4. The idea that some people don't need it.

5. The attitude that some people don't deserve it.

6. Being Judgmental - This promotes hypocrisy in the Church for people are afraid of being real.