

ENCOURAGE

A How To Guide

Encouragement—it is a command, it is a gift, it is a joy, and it is something we can all learn to do better. In this series we will look at some great encouragers in the NT and get some powerful “how to” ideas, because we all need to pour courage into one another.

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

1 Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11 & Hebrews 10:24-25. We motivate others in the direction of Jesus. Rick notes that our effort to “do life together” is assumed. He says, “We don’t just need a personal relationship with Jesus; we need a shared relationship with Jesus.” Share a time when you were really blessed by a word or deed that encouraged you. To what extent would you say the encouragement changed you?

2 “SO ENCOURAGE. . .BY STEPPING OUT WHEN RADICAL GENEROSITY IS NEEDED”. Read Acts 4:36-37. Barnabas sold a possession and gave it to his leaders. His action brought such an encouraging result. This is what radical generosity does and should become the new normal of the church. Share a story you have heard of radical generosity. Describe in your own words what it would mean to consider community first, before you purchase that next possession.

3 “SO ENCOURAGE. . .BY SEEKING OUT WHAT IS GOOD IN THE BODY OF CHRIST”. Read Acts 11:22-23. The racially integrated makeup of the Antioch church was drastically different. It most likely would become controversial. But, Barnabas was sent. He went to discover and encourage, not to investigate and condemn. Rick notes, “There

is something right about not looking for what’s wrong.” In what ways can you develop a practice of considering what God is doing before you consider what has gone wrong? How would looking for what’s good change the dynamics in our families, at work, and with our friends?

4 “SO ENCOURAGE. . .BY CALLING OUT THE KINGDOM POTENTIAL IN OTHERS”. Read Acts 11:25-26. Rick notes that encouragers focus more on what people can become than what they have done. Barnabas rescued Paul. **Read Acts 9:26-27.** Barnabas also rescued Mark. **Read Acts 15:37-40.** Rick said “Barnabas was more than an optimist; he was a believer that the image of God exists in every person.” Thus, Paul later accepted Mark and became an encourager himself. Share some current stories on the results when one believer called out the image of God in another person through encouragement.

5 “GO ENCOURAGE ON PURPOSE!” - Close by taking turns saying something encouraging to members in your group.

