

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 GOD ENCOURAGES EVANGELISTIC ENCOURAGEMENT. Read Acts 9:3-6, 10-18.

Ananias said “Yes, Lord!” until his fear prompted him to remind Jesus that Paul had a violent past. Jesus was, however, more interested in Paul’s future. As “grace giver,” Jesus puts everyone on his “invitation list”, even those who scare us. Thus, Jesus called Paul, “by His grace” before he was ever born (Galatians 1:15-16). Jesus invites all. We are sent to find the invited ones who are “open” and encourage them to accept Jesus. Rick said, *“The gospel is true for everyone, and the gospel can save anyone.”* Discuss some of the reasons we are afraid to invite those who are on Jesus’ invitation list?

2 GOD ENCOURAGES, SO . . . WE ENCOURAGE WITH THE CERTAINTY OF ETERNITY. The real story continues beyond time. So many in our world focus on the temporary, what is called the “good life.” It means having no worries and plenty of things. But in the end, these give no hope. Jesus offers far better. **Read 1 Peter 1:21; Colossians 3:1-4.** The real hope is sharing in the resurrection glory of Jesus. Rick said, (We). . . *“need to share the claim of Jesus’ resurrection with all of the courage the Spirit can give us.”* Discuss how we can hear the Spirit and show courage to help others think about their eternity?

3 GOD ENCOURAGES, SO . . . WE ENCOURAGE WITH THE FIRMNESS OF FORGIVENESS. Rick noted, *“The good news is not that we can be saved,*

but that we are saved by grace.” **Read Romans 4:25.** Jesus has dealt with our sin problem. Our real struggle is having the faith to believe it. Faith says, “Jesus has given me a future with God!” Is it too good to be true? Probably, but it is true! **Read Acts 22:16.** Like Ananias, our message is the same. We encourage others to base their lives on what God has done, not what they have done. Consider what forgiveness means to you. How can your acceptance of forgiveness help you share Jesus with others?

4 GOD ENCOURAGES, SO . . . WE ENCOURAGE WITH THE PROMISE OF PURPOSE. Ananias told Paul that his life, although difficult, would bless a nation of people. And, Paul’s life has also brought meaning and salvation to millions throughout history. God chose him to bring us scripture, living words, that have blessed us and encouraged us to accept and to live like Jesus. This happened because Ananias encouraged Paul to follow Jesus. Share the story of the encourager who helped you accept Jesus.

5 NOTHING ENCOURAGES LIKE THE GRACE OF GOD. Encourage someone by speaking grace to them. Say, “Yes, Lord!” – Close your eyes and silently reflect for one or two minutes. Ask Jesus, *“Lord, please lay on my heart someone at work, in my neighborhood, from my relatives and friends, or a stranger you put in my path this week.”* Make a heart commitment to Jesus that you will pray for them and encourage them to come to Jesus.

