

Jeff Lingerfelt
PO Box 12131, SC 29211
803-467-7634
Jeff.lingerfelt@capitolcom.org

LEADERSHIP DURING DIFFICULT DAYS
PRACTICING ENCOURAGEMENT-BUILDING UP OTHERS
1THESSALONIANS 5:11

Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. ² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. ¹¹ **Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.**

"PITHY PARADIGM"
THE ART OF ENCOURAGEMENT:¹

"Encourage one another daily." Hebrews 3:13

It is right to praise people when they do well. Hearty, cheerful, sincere commendation is good everywhere. It is good in homes. Approval encourages and stimulates to better service in the future.

Too many people seem afraid ever to say a kindly word to others about what they have done.

When a person dies there is no lack of commendation; but what does the dead man care for such words? Many a time along his years, when he was weary and over-burdened — if the thousandth part of the kindly things spoken by his coffin, had been spoken in his ear — he would have been cheered and strengthened by the encouragement!

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore looks back to the previous context, on account of such a thing, for this reason or for this purpose. Because of the foundational truth regarding our blessed hope just explained, Paul now issues a two part exhortation. Doctrine always precedes duty. Our belief is the foundation for our behavior.

Both verbs in this exhortation are in the "present imperative" they are both commands to continually carry out the tasks of encouraging and edifying. Both are always needed by day people who are surrounded by night people and who live in a world of ever increasing spiritual darkness.²

Thomas Watson writes that...

In other races, many times, one hinders another; but, in the race to heaven, one Christian helps another. "So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." One Christian helps by his prayer, advice, and example—to confirm another. What is the fellowship of saints, but one Christian helping forward another in the heavenly race?

Spurgeon comments...

The more of this the better. Christian people should constantly converse with one another for mutual edification.

Encouragement should not be an intermittent occurrence but a daily occupation and it should be an ever increasing occupation in view of the fact that each day draws us one day closer to the return of Christ.

Hebrews 3:13 *But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

Hebrews 10:25 *not forsaking our own assembling together (it's difficult to encourage one another if we don't assemble together), as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day (of the Lord's return) drawing near.*

Seasoned Saints who have walked with Christ for years, Are you discipling the next generation? Mt 28:1-20.

Encourage one another - Earlier Paul used this same verb with the idea of comforting one another. Hiebert notes that...

Many commentators, and most of our modern versions, hold that the better rendering is "encourage," since the section being concluded is definitely calculated to cheer the hearts of the readers and to encourage them to diligence in their Christian life. But comfort as well as encouragement may well be implied in the verb, depending upon the individual need.

Encourage from *parakaleo* from *para* = alongside of, with *kaleo* = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to summon. *Parakaleo* can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action. Sometimes the word means convey the idea of comfort, sometimes of exhortation but always at the root there is the idea of enabling a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence and with courage.

With this contextual truth they were to encourage and build up one another. They were to remind one another of the confidence that they were "Day and Light people" and could look to the future, knowing that because Christ died for them and now lived in them, they would never know the **wrath of God** which would be meted out in the **day of the Lord**. The Blessed Hope of the Lord's Return should encourage every believer to resist the spirit of the dark age in which we live.

One another speaks of a mutuality or sharing of sentiments between two persons or groups of persons. **One Another** is a reciprocal pronoun which denotes that the encouragement and edification is to be a mutual and beneficial activity. As each one encourages and edifies the other, they will both benefit. This is the description of a healthy body and relationships. We have all experienced that when we have come to the aid of a another in regard to their spiritual life, we have invariably received a blessing to our own life.

Romans 12:10 - Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; **Romans 12:16** - Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. **Romans 13:8** - Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. **Romans 14:13** - Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this--not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.³

Build Up, *oikodomeo* from *oikos* = dwelling and *doma* = building [of a house] from *demo* = to build

Oikodomeo is used here as a metaphor meaning to build up, establish, confirm, edify one another.

It has been said that there are two types of people in the world, "those who come into a room and say, 'Here I am!' and those who come in and say, 'Ah, there you are!'"

How different are those two approaches! One says, "Look at me! I need attention"; the other says, "Tell me about yourself." One says, "I'm important"; the other says, "You are important." One says, "The world revolves around me"; the other says, "I'm here to serve you."

Wouldn't it be great to be known as that second kind of person—someone others love to have around? Someone who displays the love of Christ openly and unashamedly?

The New Testament gives us some practical suggestions about becoming the kind of person who demonstrates Christ's love. We are told to give preference to one another **Ro 12:10**, edify one another **Ro 14:19**, care for one another **1Co 12:25**, serve one another **Ga 5:13**, bear one another's burdens **Ga 6:2**, forgive one another **Col 3:13**, comfort one another **1Th 5:11**, and pray for one another **Jas 5:16**.

Healthy relationships focuses on the one another's of the New Testament. "Just as you are also doing" indicates the assembly of the Thessalonians were practicing and implementing these biblical imperatives. Relationships must be mutually encouraging and building up one another. That is what makes fellowship imperative.

Are you an encourager or discourager? Whom have you built up today? Whom have you tore down today? Our mutual mandate of encouragement and building up is a daily activity and not a weekly, or monthly, or even yearly. It must be every time believers come together. That is what makes biblical fellowship beneficial. How are you doing?

¹ http://gracegems.org/Miller/shining_life.htm. The Shining Life, J.R. Miller, 1911.

² http://preceptaustin.org/1thessalonians_59-11.htm

³ Romans 14:19; Romans 15:5; Romans 15:7; Romans 15:14; Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 6:7; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Corinthians 11:33; 1 Corinthians 12:25; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; Galatians 5:13; Galatians 5:15; Galatians 5:17; Galatians 5:26