

Encouragement

by Mick Wells



The Apostle Paul's companion, Barnabas, was an encourager. In fact, his very name means "Son of Encouragement." -- Acts 4:36. We're told in Acts 11:19-24 that Barnabas was sent to the new believers at Antioch and that he *"encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts."* The scriptures tell us that Barnabas *"... was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord"* through him.

Throughout God's word we can see that the Lord places great emphasis on encouraging fellow Christians in the faith, and edifying the church. On the other hand, we're told of terrible judgment awaiting those who destroy the faith of others. Jesus said, *"Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come."* -- Luke 17:1. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul wrote, *"The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be."* -- Galatians 5:10.

What joy it must bring to the Lord when we encourage one another in a positive, faith-building way, in an atmosphere of Christian love. Some are especially gifted by the Holy Spirit for service in this way — *"If a man's gift is ... encouraging, let him encourage."* -- Romans 12:8.

I can recall a time in my life that the enemy caused me to feel utterly abandoned and without hope. I thank the Lord that a Christian friend was there to assure me of God's love and grace toward me.

I want to be an encourager, don't you? I pray that all of us, like Barnabas, can uplift, edify, and strengthen the faith of believers in our daily lives.

As a closing thought, I simply want to share a few of God's promises that are particularly encouraging to me:

"...neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

-- Romans 8:38, 39

"... him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

-- John 6:37.

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