

Encourage One Another

Pastors Grant & Berni

Scripture

“So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.” [1 Thessalonians 5:11]

Thought

ENCOURAGE is an amazing word. To encourage means to put courage into, to give confidence, support or hope to someone so they will be able to continue to do something; to help stimulate an activity, state or view to develop. I can tell you one thing for certain: we ALL need encouragement! It's life-changing and it's brain changing too. Studies have shown that children who receive encouragement develop confidence and the ability to overcome difficulties more than children who do not. Scientists who study the brain have found that when we speak encouraging, uplifting and positive words, the hearer's brain translates the encouragement into a change in the way they feel, and thus, the way they think about themselves. No wonder God wants us to encourage one another! When we speak encouraging words to our spouse, it causes a change in how they feel and how they think about themselves.

It's so easy to find fault with our spouse, to nitpick about habits or how they did something wrong (because my way is the right way!). This leads to discouragement. Discouragement causes us to lose enthusiasm for our spouse and marriage and to lose confidence to do what we are called to do. The good news is we all can be encouragers and turn a negative, discouraging environment into a positive, encouraging, life giving one.

Encouragement isn't just a compliment about how they look (but do this too!). The most impacting encouragement is affirming someone's character traits or an area of giftedness that you see could be developed. We need courage to do the things God has called us to do. Parenting, making sound financial decisions, taking risks, starting something new, moving into the unknown, having difficult conversations, getting healthy, doing the right thing when it's not popular, facing challenges head on, stepping up to lead: each of these things takes courage. We are called to greatness, to have an impact and to walk where we haven't before. Most of us are uncomfortable doing this, even scared. We want to play it safe. What do we really need? Encouragement, reminders that God is with us, life giving words that give us confidence to move forward.

The Greek word for “encourage” parakaleo means “to call to one's side, to exhort, encourage, comfort”. I like this picture of coming beside each other to help, strengthen and encourage. It's much different than being positioned facing each other, accusing, pointing the finger, telling what they did wrong, seeing them as the problem or even the enemy. We are teammates and we can win together.

As you decide to become an encourager, you will find that something else happens: you will be encouraged yourself!

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I need your help to be an encourager. Help me see what you have called my spouse to and show me how I can affirm them every day. Thank you for the gift of my spouse. Help us to be a team together to accomplish all that you have for us and our family.

P.S.

Marcial Losada, an organizational psychologist, found in studying the emotions of high-performing business teams that the most effective teams had 3 good feelings for every negative moment. No doubt, we can't avoid all negative moments, but creating many positive, encouraging ones to offset the challenges we face can make our marriage team a happy, productive one.

Action Step

You can create the environment you want in your home and in your relationship. What changes can you make today to build a life giving, encouraging atmosphere? Check how you have been viewing your spouse; a partner and teammate you can come alongside to strengthen, protect and encourage or the person you need to correct and show where they went wrong? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you identify traits in your spouse that can be amplified and promoted. Plan to speak at least 3 encouraging things to your spouse each day according to who God has called them to be and what he has called them to. The more specific encouragement you give, the greater the impact.

Other Verses

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Proverbs 10:11, Proverbs 10:21, Proverbs 10:32, Joshua 1:6-9

The Day