

Introduction:

- A. Everybody disciple of Christ needs encouragement - Heb. 3:12-13; 10:24-25; Acts 11:23.
 - 1. Every Christian has times of discouragement, doubt, fear.
 - 2. Every Christian needs encouragement to grow, serve, and persevere.
 - 3. To Encourage means to give comfort, exhort, strengthen.
 - 4. **One of the reasons that many people give up on an effort is too much criticism and too little encouragement.**
 - B. Encouraging each other in the faith is an attribute of love, mercy & goodness – 1 Ths. 5:14-15.
 - C. Gal. 6:10 – Encouragement is one of those things that we are never without opportunity to do!
- I. BARNABAS: Son of consolation (encouragement) - Acts 4:36-37; 11:21-24.
- A. Qualities demonstrated by Barnabas...
 - 1. **Generosity** (4:37) – With our possessions, money, thoughts, words & actions.
 - 2. **Unselfishness** (cf. Acts 4:37; opposite 5:1-2) – Willing to deny himself to be of service to others, like Jesus (Jn. 10:11) and Paul (2 Cor. 12:15).
 - 3. **Devoted to service** (Acts 9:27; 11:22) – Eager to help, to assist, to work.
 - 4. Spiritually focused (11:23) – Not self-absorbed, intent on God's interests & the spiritual welfare of others.
 - 5. **Good man** (Acts 11:24) – ἀγαθός Thayer: 1) of good constitution or nature 2) useful, salutary 3) good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy 4) excellent, distinguished 5) upright, honourable.
 - 6. **Full of the Holy Spirit & faith** (Acts 11:24) – under the influence of the Holy Spirit through surrender to the will of God - Eph. 5:15-18.
 - B. **We are not meeting our spiritual responsibilities if we are not trying to edify, or build up, one another in the faith - Eph. 4:29; Rom. 15:1-3.**
 - 1. A smile, a word of comfort, speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), an effort to rescue from sin & error, encouragement when others are discouraged, etc.
 - 2. Every act of encouragement is seen by our Master & will be rewarded by Him – Heb. 6:10.
- II. A few ways that we can encourage *one another (*some 34 positive admonitions in NT)
- A. **By sharing a devotion to Christ** – Acts 4:36-37.
 - B. **By setting an example**, sharing and encouraging an absolute confidence in God.
 - 1. The one who saves us will stand by us.
 - 2. We must stand by Him, and help others do the same!
 - C. **By encouraging others in faithful service to Christ** – Acts 9:26-27; 11:25.
 - D. **By employing the word of God** (not wisdom of man) – Acts 13:46 (at Antioch of Pisidia).
 - E. **By assisting others** spiritually & physically – Acts 20:27, 35 (Paul probably would not have gotten far without Barnabas).
 - 1. Spiritually – Heb. 10:24-25; Jud. 20-23.
 - 2. Physically – Mat. 25:34-40 – the weak, suffering, sick, poor, etc.

Decision:

- A. **Everyone needs encouragement, even, maybe especially, those who think they don't.**
- B. Sons of encouragement are not born; they are made through growing faith, diligent work, and compassionate hearts which are committed to Christ, His cause, and His church.
- C. Encouragers are needed, can it be said of us that we are sons & daughters of encouragement?