

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Encouragement means to provide moral support or to give someone “courage” to face a problem or challenge.



Encouragement is one of those gifts for both the receiving and the giving person: the receiver obviously gets a boost or is *lifted-up*; the giver is gratified with a sense of *being needed* and attentive to others’ needs and circumstances. One fascinating outcome of this arrangement is that, even when we are down, encouraging others may actually encourage us. Our effort at helping others genuinely helps us.

The book of Romans tells us that *everything written in the past* (from the scriptures) *was written to teach so that, through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope.* The same chapter closes with the encouraging words, *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Many other scriptures provide encouraging verses as well as stories of those who gave and received encouragement. In Paul’s letters to Titus, the men of the church are *encouraged to be temperate or self-controlled.* In the teaching, the men should *show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned.*

Recently, I received a phone call from a friend of mine. For many months, he (and his family) has been enduring several major problems; on this particular day, he and his wife had been rear-ended in their van but were not seriously hurt. He called to provide a word and a prayer of encouragement – this while he endures these problems and the jolt of the accident earlier that day. His call and his encouragement are that much more valuable because of the example he has set: laying aside personal problems, he cares enough to reach out and to share with those who are need.

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