



Building Up: encourage & admonish

study #3



Body Language: How God's People Should Treat One Another

Encourage: coming alongside

The Greek word for “**encourage**” is “parakaleo”, which means “to call someone alongside for help.” It is also the same root word that is used for “paraclete” - the “comforter, or counselor, or helper” that Jesus talks about in the Upper Room, as He is about to leave the disciples: “*But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*” (John 14:26) The same term is also used to describe Jesus himself, in 1 John 2:1 - “*But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*” “Parakaleo” in this verse is “one who speaks in our defense.” What a picture of encouragement - the Holy Spirit coming alongside to help and empower us; Jesus coming alongside to defend us from condemnation!

Look up “encouragement” in an English dictionary and jot down the definition:

1 Thessalonians 4:18

*“Therefore **encourage each other** with these words.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:11

*“Therefore **encourage one another** and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”*

Hebrews 10:24-25

*“And let us consider how we may **spur one another on** toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us **encourage one another** -- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

Encouragement means...
to come alongside someone with words and actions that renew their strength to face the battles of life

Life Application

1. Name 3 encouragers in your life. How many of them know of the impact they had on you?
2. When were you last able to “come alongside” someone? How did you help them (words, actions, support, compassion, etc.)?
3. The New Testament lists “encouragement” as a gift some Christians have (Romans 12:8). Do you have that gift? If not, who do you know that does have it?
4. Do a character study of Barnabas (the “son of encouragement”) in the book of Acts. How did he encourage Paul (Acts 9) and John Mark (Acts 15)?

Admonish: speaking truth in love

The Greek word for admonish is “noutheteo”, which means “to impart understanding, to set right, to lay on the heart”. It is translated as “to admonish, warn, remind, correct”. The stress is on influencing not just the mind but also the will. The idea is not punishment but a moral appeal that leads to change. In that sense it takes on the meaning “to discipline”.

(from Kittel’s Theological Dict. of the New Testament)

Read the following passages and write your own definition of what it means to admonish one another:

📖 Colossians 3:16

*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and **admonish one another** with all wisdom...”*

📖 Acts 20:31

*“So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped **warning** each of you night and day with tears.”*

📖 Romans 15:14

*“I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to **instruct one another**. “*

📖 1 Thessalonians 5:14

*“And we urge you, brothers, **warn** those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”*

“Admonishing is a ministry calling for much warmth and closeness. There is no hint of a distant judgmentalism. Paul’s admonitions were stimulated by a deep love for young believers ... often accompanied by tears. When we love our brothers and sisters and have genuine concern for their well-being, we can hardly hesitate to encourage them to live godly lives...”

Larry Richards

Life Application

1. The ministry of admonishment is like a lighthouse, warning of danger and illuminating the darkness. Who has had that ministry in your life?
2. Admonishment is not easy. Often we err on either extreme - being too soft (so there’s little or no help) or being too hard (hurting someone in the process). What are some guidelines that can keep us from being ineffective or too harsh? (see Ephesians 4:15, Galatians 6:1 and Matthew 18:15-17)
3. In Galatians 2:11-14 Paul felt the need to confront someone. Who is it, what are the circumstances, and what do you think the results were?