



2025 | Week 9

A Not-So-Secret Secret

Blog Contributors:

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Whether the marriage is in its early years or has been established for quite a while, we've developed certain habits regarding how we encourage and influence our spouses.

This week, we'll reflect on those established habits and consider what more we can do to positively influence our life partners and the lives of those around us. May this week's topic provide us with a profound understanding and insights into the ways we can demonstrate love, support, and a united journey in marriage.

DAY 1

Whether we're in the middle of a family project or watching our spouses come home from work with a heavy sense of discouragement, a natural sensitivity captures our attention. In such moments, we know that a pause for encouragement is much needed. Over the years, the connection between husband and wife has developed various ways of communicating encouragement. But what if the circumstances don't seem to improve? What if the encouragement is no longer "encouraging" and has just become noise? Have you noticed any such incidents in your marriage?

We understand the natural existence and need for encouragement. However, if we delve a little deeper and examine the intentionality behind the essence of "encouragement," we must address the foundation of our encouragement. Even though we're all capable of sharing this, the truth is we need to determine where and how we obtain our encouragement. Remember, we can't share something we don't possess. If we're not fully aware of the foundation of our encouragement, we can't assess the type of influence it carries. Sadly, we often only realize the effect or influence after some time has passed. Even with the most sincere intent, encouragement can be misinterpreted, leading to negative influence.

Recently, we had the chance to examine our hearts regarding this encouragement. We stumbled upon Isaiah 41, and the Bible study guideline we're following asks for a simple task: list all learnings about God and idols. Verses 5-10 caught our attention and prompted us to reevaluate the encouragement we share with those close to us.

'The coastlands have seen and are afraid; The ends of the earth tremble; They have drawn near and have come. Each one helps his neighbor And says to his brother, "Be strong!" So the craftsman encourages the smelter, And he who smooths metal with the hammer encourages him who beats the anvil, Saying of the soldering, "It is good"; And he fastens it with nails, So that it will not totter. "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend, You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its remotest parts And said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' "

Isaiah 41:5-10

People who choose to worship idols can still display "encouragement" and "teamwork" in accomplishing certain tasks (Isaiah 41:5-7). Their motivation stems from fear (Isaiah 41:5), yet they are quick to share the encouraging message, "Be strong!" (Isaiah 41:6), showing a sense of teamwork (Isaiah 41:7). Conversely, there is also fear among God's people/servants (Isaiah 41:10), yet

such fear directs them to surrender and focus on God's attributes. Following the narrative of the entire chapter, we can conclude that fear exists, and it's in these moments that encouragement matters most. However, true, life-giving encouragement does not merely rely on sweet words amongst us or sincere acts of togetherness; rather, it is founded on the attributes, character, and promises of God—the ultimate provider of hope and deliverer from fear.

So when our spouses or those close to us find themselves surrounded by fear, we may be quick to offer sweet encouraging words or sincere gestures of help. Yet we must be intentional about grounding those noble acts in God's foundation. In the end, God will certainly declare His righteousness, and it's His works that prevail (Isaiah 41:20). In such times, we'll recognize that encouragement not rooted in God amounts to worthless words and actions stemming from a hollow and empty character (Isaiah 41:29).

Let's consistently share encouragement that is grounded in God, made possible by a restored relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

Keep Journeying with Christ!

Your Fellow Couple,

Rey & Annie

DAY 2

Don't get confused about yesterday's post—it seems far from what we've discussed in this week's topic overview. This week, we'll be reflecting on the ways we openly share encouragement in marriage and with those around us. However, it's important to take a little detour and remind ourselves of genuine encouragement that recognizes and points to God. We pray that yesterday's blog was as edifying to you as it was for us when we reflected on those verses in Isaiah 41.

The way we anchor the encouragement we openly share defines how we share them. Today, there are various means and resources available for sharing

encouragement. On our side, we usually send a quick "I love you" text message in the middle of the day, especially when we're apart and attending to our separate responsibilities. We pray for each other when we know we have a challenging day ahead, and we frequently check in with one another. It has become a habit that strengthens our connection as husband and wife. Similarly, when we know someone in our circle is going through a difficult season and trusts us to journey alongside them, we make sure to be there for prayers and open for any conversations.

It may sound natural, but we honestly recognized a very different way of sharing encouragement when we became intentional in our faith journey. In our past lives, we may have had opportunities in the industries we belonged to that allowed us to share encouragement with others. However, looking back at our hearts then, we realized that such actions didn't directly acknowledge Jesus Christ—the One who ultimately shared the best encouragement.

When we examine the details of how Jesus Christ lived His earthly life, we recognize His methods of encouraging His disciples and others. Let's not forget how He separated Himself during certain times of the day—being in a private place, communing with God in prayer. Remember that moment in the Garden of Gethsemane when He asked God, the Father (asking for His will), to remove this "cup" from Him (Luke 22:42)? Then the angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him (Luke 22:43). Some commentaries suggest that this "cup" represents either His sorrows and distress at that time or the approaching suffering and death that He had in view. In many instances, Jesus went away by Himself to be alone and pray (Matthew 14:23, Mark 6:46-47, John 6:15). His humility didn't disregard the "human nature" that experiences distress but instead demonstrated how to be uplifted through God the Father. We can conclude that Jesus' sincere encouragement stemmed from His connection with God, the Father, and extended to the intimate journey with His disciples.

By nature, we will experience distress and challenges that call for encouragement. The legal bond of marriage may serve as a compelling reason for companionship, but it's clear that sharing genuine encouragement—as Jesus did—is not a natural thing for us, particularly when we

feel disconnected from Him. We can only be consistent in boldly sharing encouragement if we are continually journeying with Christ, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light.

' "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

Keep Journeying with Christ!

Your Fellow Couple,

Rey & Annie

DAY 3 | For Husbands

The other day, my wife, Annie, was the designated driver. Since we only have one car for now, she drives me to and from work when she needs to run errands or when our children have school activities. Although we usually have a good time catching up during my long lunch breaks, this time we had more opportunity to be together. She shared how she feels bothered and increasingly discouraged during our current transition. She has three important tasks on her plate; while each task carries a certain importance and sense of urgency, the outcomes remain beyond her control. I could feel her pain through her words and tears, and I admitted that I often felt the same way. Although we've prayed about this transition for quite some time, it's testing our faith and trust in God.

Over the years, I've learned how to better support her in times like this. Initially, she needed my understanding, and asking questions helped me grasp how certain situations affect her heart and mind. My "questioning" doesn't always come easily, so I've learned to give her space to express herself. Eventually, when I see my chance to share my thoughts, I offer suggestions wrapped in encouragement. Regarding the three tasks she has, I advised her to focus on the other two first and trust God. I can still sense her hesitations, but her attitude has improved, and her excitement has returned.

As husbands, we often approach things as quick fixers, but when dealing with our wives, understanding plays a crucial role. We need to take the time to show our sincere intent to understand them and help them navigate their thoughts and emotions. Encouragement doesn't always translate into immediate solutions. Many times, encouragement starts with a sincere gesture of understanding. The Bible reminds us to live with and treat our wives in an "understanding way."

'You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. ' 1 Peter 3:7

For some time, we've been journeying through life with Jesus Christ, and we can't help but share His faithfulness and goodness. If I had known back then that the Bible is full of life instructions, particularly regarding my roles as a husband and father, things would surely have been different. Yet, in moments of realization, I also recognize God's grace, mercy, and love. It's not easy to be an encouragement in today's world, where misconceptions about life, faith, and culture are abundant. I consider it a great blessing whenever I have the chance to share encouragement by telling the story of how I first encountered God and learned about Him. If I hadn't drawn myself to read His word, I would still be living this life, unaware of the truth and relying on other means. It's through His word that I found answers to my questions. It's His word that has guided me to experience a genuine connection in Christ. It's His word that I continuously embrace on this life journey. My prayer is for more people to take the initiative to open the Bible and read it. This is reflected in how I share His word on social media platforms. I pray that highlighting more verses within the chapter of the verse for the day will encourage someone to follow that link and read the entire chapter. Such curiosity can be part of someone's desire to hear encouraging words for that day.

Keep journeying with Christ Jesus.

Your Fellow Husband,
Rey

DAY 4 | For Wives

Looking back on the many years Rey and I have been together, I realize how much learning I still need to do to be an effective “encourager” to him. Similarly, to our friends and those who trust us to journey with them, I have noticed that being an “encourager” is a continuous learning experience.

After so many years of being married to Rey, I can easily tell from his facial expressions when something bothers him. In those instances, not all of my encouragement falls into the right pot. Some of my attempts led to further discussions or even heated exchanges. There have also been instances of misinterpretation, where words of encouragement had a different influence than intended. It was not until I realized that our heart condition highly impacts the encouragement we attempt to share. Reaching this realization was not easy, and I’ve experienced deep guilt when my attempts to influence my husband do not lead to a response that pleases God. It may sound funny, but if we focus on these unpleasant instances, it allows the “enemy” to play with our hearts and minds.

The truth is, being the primary encourager to our husbands is part of the “helper” role that God entrusted to us. When God created Eve, He mentioned that it was not good for a man (Adam) to be alone, so He would make him a helper suitable for him (Genesis 2:18). The term “helper” in this verse comes from the Hebrew word “ezer,” which simply means help. Many commentaries expound on the meaning of this term, referencing other verses that use the same word. John Gill’s Exposition includes the phrase “whom he might delightfully converse with” in the translation of this term [1]. The “delightful conversation” includes encouraging words. However, we do not always have “delightful conversations” with our husbands, and we can all agree that we are not always effective encouragers to them. Thankfully, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to help us be effective encouragers to our partners in life. Christ’s unconditional love restored our connection with God, and His example teaches us how to be loving and encouraging to our husbands. Although we have records of Jesus’ examples, the power of the Holy Spirit that is

gifted to us plays a vital role in influencing our hearts and minds to become effective encouragers.

The same applies when we attempt to share encouragement with others. We are commanded to encourage one another and build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11-24). Today, we have various means (from smartphones and emails to social media platforms) to share encouragement promptly. Our responsibility is to ensure that our message clearly points to a life anchored in Jesus Christ. It’s challenging, especially in today’s culture, but we are fortunate to have apologetics and good teachers to help us become effective carriers and sharers of the encouraging good news.

Above all, if our encouragement is the byproduct of our faith and beliefs in God, we will not be disappointed — we will not be put to shame (Isaiah 28:16, Romans 10:11). God said that.

‘For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” ’ (Romans 10:1, ESV)

Keep journeying with Christ!

Your Fellow Wife,

Annie

DAY 5

Encouragement is defined as inspiring courage, spirit, or hope. It is the act of giving someone support, confidence, or hope. This simple definition has now evolved in different ways and intents, making it easy to lose sight of what encouragement truly is. To ensure that this week’s reflection leads us to the essence of encouragement, we took a little detour in the Day 1 blog post and reflected on Isaiah 41:5-10 to capture the true encouragement that God designed for us.

As we conclude this week’s topic, we acknowledge the vast ways we can creatively share encouragement with our spouses and those close to us. However, we want to

organize our thoughts and insights into three areas that can help us share impactful encouragement.

Encouragement through Words

The call for encouragement doesn't just emerge during challenging times; it is also needed during moments of insecurity. We all have areas in our lives where we feel insecure and lack courage. Often, we respond by avoiding these areas but receiving positive words from a spouse or those who know us deeply can significantly help transform our responses into actions that directly address our insecurities. Our relationship with Christ comes with experiences and testimonies of how He has helped us overcome our insecurities and fears. Such stories can offer encouraging words to someone going through similar circumstances.

Encouragement through Actions

As we get to know our spouse and their plans or dreams, we can be encouraging and supportive by showing interest in their goals and accompanying them as they take steps toward those plans. This journey sometimes requires sacrifices from those who offer support and encouragement. Because self-sacrifice is not natural to us, it is only by God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit that we can be equipped for genuine, selfless support. Ultimately, when this journey is anchored in God, whether things turn out as expected or not, the journey of togetherness often brings greater value to the season we are experiencing.

Encouragement through Silence and Stillness

There are instances when the best encouragement we can provide is simply being present and listening. The willingness to share the burden and pain involved in the journey, as well as accompanying our partner (or friends) in prayer, constitutes some of the most powerful and profound forms of encouragement. Just being alongside someone who needs support and joining them at the foot of Jesus Christ is the greatest blessing we can offer. Furthermore, we witness the exciting ways God transforms such circumstances, culminating in another testimony.

The famous verse often referenced when discussing encouragement is 1 Thessalonians 5:11. This verse begins with the word "therefore," indicating that it is a concluding statement of the previous verses. By reading from 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10, we see the message of why we need to encourage one another and build each other up—to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ.

Encouragement and support for our spouses (or for those who willingly journey through life with us) aim to help them reach their full potential in God and embody goodness as we continue to live this life, exercising the salvation gifted to us. Ultimately, it boils down to our preparedness for the coming day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

'Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. ' 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Your Fellow Couple,

Rey & Annie

NOTES

[1] Gill, J.. John Gill's Exposition of the Bible. Genesis 2:18. www.johngill.thekingsbible.com



Let's embark on a comprehensive learning experience with this week's topic by following the **D.R.A.S.H. - 5 Steps of Learning Method!**

Step 1 | Discover the Truth

- From the shared Biblical truths, Biblical perspectives, and testimonies, what struck you most about encouraging your spouse and others?

Step 2 | Reflect and Meditate on the Truth

- How does this week's topic relate to your current season in marriage? Or family relationships and friends?

Step 3 | Apply the Truth

- After this week's discussion about encouragement, are there any changes you plan to make with the insights you gained from this week's topic?

Step 4 | Share

- Using a storytelling concept, compose a short story about how you will share the truths you discovered in this week's topic with your spouse or other married individuals journeying with you. You may want to consider a 1-minute or 5-minute storytelling technique.
- You can use the following guiding questions in your composition:
 1. What truths did you discover and reflect on in this week's topic?

2. How are these truths and reflections related to yourself and your current marital status?
3. What actions do you plan to take in the coming days that relate to this week's learning?

Step 5 | Help in Navigating the Truth

- Besides your spouse, identify another person (or member/s of your small group) who will journey alongside you as you take intentional actions based on this week's learning. Consider what additional help you may need, such as further discussion or a regular prayer partner.

We pray that you encounter God through this week's topic. May His grace turn your learning experience into a transformative journey, leading to testimonies of breakthroughs that further strengthen your walk with Christ Jesus!

Let us know how this guide has helped you!

May this study tool be effective and helpful for every fellow seeker and believer who is intentionally journeying with Jesus Christ. We would be grateful to hear how this tool has significantly impacted your journey and your relationships with your spouse and others. Please share your feedback or experiences through this [link](#) (or scan QR Code)



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