

LESSON 3

How to Encourage and Build Up

Hebrews 10:24–25

And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching,
Hebrews 10:24–25.

Class Overview: Encouragement is one of the simplest yet most powerful ministries available to every Christian. From Hebrews 10:24–25 we learn that encouragement requires intentionality, presence, and urgency. By considering one another, we stir each other up to love and good works. By gathering together, we strengthen one another through our presence. And as the Day of Christ draws near, encouragement becomes increasingly vital to help us endure trials and resist discouragement. This lesson reminds us that encouragement is not optional—it is essential—and challenges us to use words, presence, and actions to build up the body of Christ.

Class Objectives:

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Explain what it means to “consider one another” (Heb. 10:24) and how encouragement stirs others toward love and good works.
2. Describe why gathering together is essential for encouragement and how our presence strengthens the body.
3. Understand why encouragement becomes “all the more” important as trials increase and the Day of Christ approaches.
4. Commit to specific practices such as speaking words of grace, showing up intentionally, and recognizing silent struggles.
5. Take the class challenge to encourage at least three people this week—one with words, one with presence, and one with action.

Introduction

I'LL NEVER FORGET A SUNDAY YEARS AGO when I was feeling especially worn down. The week before had been heavy, full of problems, criticism, and discouragement. I preached that morning, but afterward I felt like I had missed the mark. *You can't knock it out of the park with every sermon* ... As I stood near the back, one of my older sisters came up, put her hand on my shoulder, and said, "You have no idea how much I needed that lesson today. God used you to speak right into my heart." Her words lifted a weight off me that I had been carrying all week. They reminded me that God was working, even when I couldn't see it. That five-second moment of encouragement fueled me for days to come.

All of us can recall times when a word of encouragement made a huge difference. It might have been a note in the mail during a tough time. Or a visit at the hospital. Perhaps it was a hug or a smile when you felt unseen. Encouragement is powerful. It doesn't cost much, but it can mean everything to the person who receives it.

The Hebrew writer knew this, which is why he urged Christians, *let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the Day approaching* (Hebrews 10:24–25). In a world where Christians were facing persecution and temptation to give up, encouragement was not just a nice gesture: it was a lifeline.

Today, it's no different. We live in a culture filled with criticism, negativity, and loneliness. Many people come into our assemblies carrying burdens we can't see. They may be one word of encouragement away from holding on ... or giving up. As followers of Christ, one of the most powerful tools we have for ministry is not a sermon, a class, or a program. It is encouragement: showing up, speaking life, and building up others in faith.

So, here's the question we'll explore in this lesson: *How can we be intentional encouragers who strengthen the body of Christ and help one another endure until the Day of Christ?*

The Call to Encourage

The Hebrew writer begins with this exhortation: *let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works* (Hebrews 10:24). Notice the phrase “let us consider.” Encouragement is not accidental; it is intentional. It requires us to slow down and think carefully about the needs of others. The word *consider* means to fix your attention on, to study closely. In other words, the writer is saying: Don’t just think about yourself; take time to notice the people around you.

Encouragement begins when we choose to look beyond our own world. That means asking: Who here is struggling? Who here looks weary? Who here needs to be reminded of God’s love? If we never stop to consider others, we will miss countless opportunities to build them up. Paul expressed the same idea in Philippians 2:4, *everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others*. Encouragement starts with eyes that see.

But the writer goes further. He says our purpose is to “provoke” or “stir up” one another to love and good works. The word literally means to *sharpen* or to *stimulate*. Just as iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17), our encouragement should stir something in others, motivating them to love more deeply and to serve more faithfully. Encouragement is not flattery or vague kindness; it is purposeful, aiming to strengthen faith and inspire action.

A coach on the sidelines doesn’t just cheer to make the players feel good; he cheers to push them forward into action. In the same way, our encouragement should not just soothe feelings but should inspire growth. True encouragement doesn’t leave people where they are ... it helps them take the next step.

Practically, this means encouragement requires intentionality. It’s more than saying, “Good job.” It might be telling a young Christian, “I see your faith growing, and it encourages me.” It might be telling a tired parent, “Your example of bringing your kids to worship week after week is a blessing to us all.” It might be sending a message to a teacher, “Thank you for the way you pour into your class; it makes a difference.” These words

don't just affirm ... they stir up. They remind others that their efforts matter and that God is using them.

When we answer this call to encourage, we begin to create a culture of love and service in the church. Encouragement is contagious. One word or act can ripple outward, inspiring others to step forward in faith and good works. That's the power of intentional encouragement.

The Power of Presence

The Hebrew writer continues: *not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other* (Hebrews 10:25). Here we see that encouragement is not just about words ... It's about presence. Our very act of showing up together is a form of encouragement.

The early Christians lived in a hostile world. Some had already begun slipping away from the assemblies, either from fear of persecution or from spiritual weariness. The writer reminds them that neglecting the gathering weakens not only their own faith but also the faith of others. When we are absent, the body feels it. When we are present, the body is strengthened.

Sometimes, the best encouragement you can give is simply showing up. Words may not always come easily, but presence speaks volumes. Think of how comforting it is when a friend visits the hospital, not to say much, but just to sit by your side. Or when someone consistently attends worship, even during personal hardship; their very presence demonstrates their trust in God and encourages others to keep going.

Paul understood this power. Writing to the Romans, he said, *I want very much to see you, so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that is, to be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine* (Romans 1:11–12). Notice that phrase: *mutually encouraged*. Our presence with one another builds up both sides.

Practically, this means our gathering is not just about what we *get* but about what we *give*. When you come to worship, you bring encouragement with you. Your singing, your participation, your conversations before and after ... these are all ways God uses you to

strengthen others. When you stay home, the church loses a piece of its encouragement.

So how do we put this into practice? Aim not only to be physically present but also genuinely *engaged*. Don't arrive late and leave early without making connections. Look around the room: Who needs a handshake, a smile, or a kind word? Who could use someone sitting beside them? Don't underestimate the power of showing up. God uses your presence to encourage others.

The Urgency of Encouragement

The Hebrew writer concludes this exhortation with a sense of urgency—*and all the more as you see the Day approaching* (Hebrews 10:25b). He reminds us that encouragement is not just important ... it is increasingly necessary as time moves forward.

The “Day” here likely points to the return of Christ, but the principle applies even now: as trials increase, as pressures mount, and as faith is tested, the need for encouragement only grows. The closer we get to eternity, the more critical it is to hold each other up. We cannot afford to let one another drift, because the stakes are eternal.

Encouragement is not a “once in a while” gesture; it is a daily necessity. Hebrews 3:13 says, *but encourage each other daily, while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception*. Notice the warning: without encouragement, hearts grow hard. Sin is deceitful, suffering is draining, and Satan is relentless. That's why encouragement is urgent; it keeps us tender, faithful, and focused on the hope before us.

Think of a runner in a marathon. By mile 20, exhaustion sets in. Muscles ache, lungs burn, and the temptation to quit is strong. Then a crowd of supporters lines the road, clapping and shouting, “Keep going! You can do this!” That encouragement doesn't remove the pain, but it gives strength to endure. That is what the Hebrew writer is calling for: a community of church members cheering one another on as we press toward the finish line.

For us, this means we cannot assume that people are “fine.” Many around us are barely holding on. Some sit in our pews smiling outwardly while

silently struggling. A simple act of encouragement: a note, a text, a visit, a prayer, might be the very thing that keeps their faith alive another day. That's why we must encourage "all the more."

The urgency is clear: time is short, struggles are real, and the Day is coming. Encouragement is not optional; it is essential. And the church that takes this seriously will be a place where no one walks alone, where every believer is strengthened, and where together we endure until Christ returns.

Practical Application: How to Encourage and Build Up

Encouragement is not complicated, but it does require intentionality. Hebrews 10:24–25 calls us to consider, to gather, and to encourage "all the more." Here are practical ways to live that out:

1. Speak Life, Not Criticism

Paul writes, *No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear* (Ephesians 4:29). Make it a practice to replace complaints with words of grace. Ask yourself, *Will my words build up or tear down?*

2. Show Up Intentionally

Don't underestimate the ministry of presence. Attend worship faithfully, arrive ready to engage, and look for someone who needs encouragement. A handshake, a smile, or a short conversation can mean more than you realize.

3. Practice Daily Encouragement

Hebrews 3:13 calls us to encourage *daily*. This could be as simple as sending a text, writing a note, or offering a prayer for someone each day. Small acts, repeated consistently, create a culture of encouragement.

4. Recognize Silent Struggles

Be sensitive to those who may not voice their needs. A quiet person in the pew, a young Christian, a weary parent, or someone who hasn't been present for a while; these are often the ones who need encouragement most. Take the initiative to reach out.

5. **Stir, Don't Just Soothe**

Remember that encouragement is not only comfort; it's also motivation. Think about how you can stir others to greater love and good works. Instead of just saying, "You're doing great," you might say, "Your example of service inspires me—keep it up!"

Challenge

This week, choose three people to encourage in specific ways: one with words, one with presence, and one with action. Be intentional. Write their names down, follow through, and watch how God uses your encouragement to strengthen the body.

Conclusion

Encouragement may seem small, but Scripture reminds us it is one of the most powerful tools God has given His people. Hebrews 10:24–25 calls us to consider one another, to be present with one another, and to encourage one another all the more as the Day of Christ draws near. We've seen that encouragement requires intentional thoughtfulness, that our very presence strengthens others, and that the urgency of encouragement grows as trials increase and eternity draws closer.

The truth is, none of us make it to heaven alone. We need one another. We need to be stirred up to love and good works, reminded that we are not forgotten, and strengthened to endure. Encouragement is not optional for Christians. It is essential for the health of the body and the endurance of the saints.

So, the challenge for us is simple but profound: don't leave encouragement to chance. Be intentional. This week, ask God to open your eyes to someone who needs a kind word, a visit, or a helping hand. Remember that your encouragement may be the very thing that helps a brother or sister keep pressing on in faith. And as we make encouragement a way of life, the church will become the place God designed it to be: a place of hope, love, and strength until the Day we see Christ face to face.

For Discussion

1. Can you share a time when someone's encouragement made a significant difference in your life? What did that moment teach you about the power of encouragement?

2. The Hebrew writer says, *"Let us consider one another."* What does it look like in practice to "consider" others? How can we train ourselves to notice the needs around us?

3. Why do you think the writer connects encouragement to gathering together? How does our presence at worship and other gatherings encourage others, even without words?

4. Why do you think encouragement becomes "all the more" important as we see the Day approaching? How does encouragement help us endure trials and resist sin's deception?

5. Of the five applications we discussed (speaking life, showing up, practicing daily encouragement, recognizing silent struggles, stirring not just soothing), which one stands out most to you? Which could you start practicing this week?

6. The challenge this week is to encourage three people in specific ways—with words, with presence, and with action. Who might God be putting on your heart right now for this assignment?

