

LESSON 11

How to Encourage One Another

Hebrews 10:23–25; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. 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 10:23–25.

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing, 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

Class Overview: Encouragement is one of the most powerful tools God gives His people to strengthen faith and sustain hope. In Hebrews 10:23–25 and 1 Thessalonians 5:11, we are reminded that encouragement is not optional, it is essential for the health of the body of Christ. The church grows stronger when its members speak words of life, show up for one another, and build each other up in love. Through encouragement, we help each other hold firmly to our confession of hope, stir one another to love and good works, and prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord. This lesson reminds us that encouragement doesn't require great skill, only open eyes, willing hearts, and faithful presence. When the people of God become encouragers, the church becomes a place of joy, healing, and unity.

Class Objectives:

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

1. Explain why encouragement is vital to perseverance and unity in the church (Hebrews 10:23–25; 1 Thessalonians 5:11).
2. Describe how gathering together and showing up for others strengthens relationships and faith.
3. Identify simple, practical ways to build others up through words, actions, and prayer.

4. Understand how each act of encouragement strengthens and stabilizes the body of Christ.
5. Reflect on personal or cultural obstacles that prevent encouragement and learn to replace silence with compassion.
6. Make a personal commitment to encourage at least three people this week—by word, by action, and by prayer—as a reflection of Christ’s love.

Introduction:

ENCOURAGEMENT HAS POWER. It’s the spark that reignites weary hearts. It reminds us that our labor matters, that we’re seen, valued, and loved. In a world full of criticism, cynicism, and noise, encouragement is the language of grace, and it’s one of the most Christlike things we can give to another person.

The Hebrew writer captured this beautifully in Hebrews 10:23–25: *let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. And let us watch out for one another 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.* The Christian life is not meant to be lived in isolation. God designed the church to be a community of mutual encouragement, a place where believers hold each other up, stir one another toward love, and strengthen one another’s faith. Encouragement isn’t just a suggestion; it’s a spiritual responsibility.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul said: *therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.* Every one of us is called to be a builder of faith, to use our words and actions to strengthen those around us.

In today’s lesson, we’ll see that encouragement strengthens faith, requires presence, and builds the body. It’s not complicated or flashy; it’s simply love in action. And it’s one of the most powerful ways we can reflect the heart of Jesus in the everyday moments of life.

Encouragement Strengthens Faith

The Hebrew writer says, *let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since He who promised is faithful. And let us watch out for one another to provoke love and good works.* This passage captures two vital truths: faith needs endurance, and endurance needs encouragement. The Christian life is often a long road filled with unexpected valleys. There are days when hope feels dim and obedience feels heavy. That's why God places us in the local church, so that when a brother or sister's faith grows weary, another can speak strength back into it.

1. Encouragement Helps Us Hold On

The command, *let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering*, assumes that life will try to shake us. Trials, loss, criticism, and disappointment can all make us feel like letting go. But encouragement acts like a spiritual grip; it reminds us that God's promises are still true and that we are not alone in clinging to them.

When someone looks you in the eye and says, "I believe in what God is doing in you," or "Don't give up, God is faithful," it does something deep inside. It steadies the heart. Encouragement doesn't remove the storm, but it strengthens your anchor in it.

2. Encouragement Is an Act of Spiritual Awareness

Verse 24 says, *let us watch out for one another to provoke love and good works.* The phrase "watch out for" means to pay close attention, to be spiritually alert to the needs of others. It's the opposite of passivity. Encouragement requires attentiveness. You can't build up people you're not looking at.

Encouragement means noticing when someone's faith is flickering and stepping in before it fades. Sometimes it's a note, a prayer, a conversation in the foyer, or a simple "I've been thinking about you." These small acts often have an eternal impact.

In 2010, a group of Chilean miners were trapped underground for 69 days. During the long weeks of waiting for rescue, what kept them alive emotionally was communication, messages from above, reminders that they weren't forgotten. Each note sent down carried hope: "We're still

with you. Don't lose heart." That's what encouragement does in the body of Christ. It sends down hope into the dark places of someone's soul and reminds them that they are not forgotten, that God is still working.

3. Encouragement Is a Faith Transfer

When we encourage someone, we're not just offering positive words; we're sharing faith. Our confidence in God becomes contagious. Encouragement says, "I know God's not finished yet, and I'll believe that with you until you see it." That's why encouragement isn't optional; it's essential. Faith was never meant to survive in isolation. It grows in the warmth of fellowship, in the presence of voices that remind us of who God is and what He's promised.

Practically, this means we should look around the church every week and ask: *Who needs to be reminded today that God is still faithful?* When you speak life into another believer, you're helping them hold on to hope, and you're fulfilling the call of Hebrews 10 to strengthen the faith of the family.

Encouragement is not just nice; it's necessary. It's what keeps faith alive in weary hearts.

Encouragement Requires Presence and Intentionality

The Hebrew writer continues: *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.* Encouragement doesn't happen by accident; it occurs when believers make a deliberate choice to *show up* for one another. The church is not just a collection of individuals; it's a family. And like any healthy family, encouragement only thrives when its members are present, attentive, and engaged.

1. Encouragement Thrives in Presence

The phrase "not neglecting to gather together" reminds us that physical presence matters. In-person fellowship is God's design for building one another up. You can't fully encourage from a distance. You can text, call, or write, and those are good things, but there's something about seeing

someone's face, sharing a meal, or sitting side by side in worship that fills the heart in ways words alone cannot.

The early Christians met regularly, in homes, courtyards, and catacombs, not because it was easy, but because they knew they needed each other. When persecution, fear, or hardship threatened their faith, the gathering of believers renewed their strength.

Encouragement begins with *being there*. Presence is half the ministry.

2. Encouragement Requires Intention

The command to “encourage each other” is active. It means we don’t wait until someone looks discouraged, we look for opportunities to build others up before the discouragement even comes. Encouragement is proactive, not reactive.

It might look like noticing someone who’s new and making them feel welcome. It might mean calling someone you haven’t seen in a while, or writing a note to a young parent, teacher, or servant who’s working quietly in the background.

During World War II, the British government launched a morale campaign with three simple posters: “Freedom Is in Peril—Defend It with All Your Might,” “Your Courage, Your Cheerfulness, Your Resolution Will Bring Us Victory,” and “Keep Calm and Carry On.” Those messages became lifelines for a nation under siege. In the same way, spiritual encouragement is how the church keeps morale alive when the world presses in. We remind each other: *God is still good. His promises still stand. You’re not alone, keep going.*

3. Encouragement Is Urgent and Ongoing

Notice the urgency in the text: *all the more as you see the Day approaching*. The closer we get to eternity, the more encouragement we need. The pressures of life, the rise of apathy, and the weariness of waiting for Christ’s return can make hearts grow cold. That’s why encouragement is not a one-time event, it’s a continual practice. Encouragement is the fuel of perseverance. It keeps the fire burning in the hearts of God’s people as we await the Lord’s return.

Practically, this means:

- **Be consistent in gathering.** Don't underestimate the ministry of simply being present.
- **Be intentional in noticing.** Look around you before and after worship. Who seems tired? Who hasn't been there lately?
- **Be generous in speaking life.** A word of hope may be exactly what someone needs to keep pressing on.

The church becomes stronger every time we gather, not just because of sermons or songs, but because of the quiet ministry of believers who show up and encourage one another. Encouragement isn't optional; it's how the church keeps its heart beating.

Encouragement Builds the Body

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul writes, *therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing*. This short verse captures one of the most straightforward and powerful truths about church life: encouragement is the building material of the body of Christ. It's how faith grows, how hope stays alive, and how love keeps multiplying. Every word of encouragement you speak adds strength to someone's soul.

1. Encouragement Is Construction Work for the Heart

The phrase, *build each other up*, comes from the language of construction. Just as a builder adds one brick at a time, every believer contributes to the spiritual structure of the church through words and actions of encouragement. The body of Christ doesn't grow stronger by accident; it's built intentionally by believers who speak life and faith into one another. Every kind word, every prayer, every gesture of support is like another stone laid into the wall of someone's faith. Encouragement is the spiritual equivalent of construction work, and every Christian is a builder.

2. Encouragement Strengthens Unity and Stability

Encouragement does more than make people feel good; it makes the church *strong*. A discouraged brother or sister is a vulnerable believer; a discouraged church is a weakened church. But a congregation filled with encouragement becomes a fortress of faith.

Think about the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, one of the most iconic suspension bridges in the world. From a distance, it looks as though two enormous cables hold up the roadway. But each of those cables is made of more than 27,000 individual steel wires, all woven tightly together. No single wire could bear the weight of the bridge alone, but together, they create incredible strength and stability.

That's exactly how encouragement works in the body of Christ. The church doesn't stand firm because of one strong person, but because thousands of small, unseen acts of encouragement are woven together through love. Every kind word, every prayer, every gesture of support adds another strand of strength. And when those strands are bound together in Christ, the church becomes unshakable, able to carry the weight of one another's burdens with grace. Paul says in Ephesians 4:16 that the church "builds itself up in love as each part does its work." Encouragement is every believer's contribution to that ongoing construction project.

3. Encouragement Multiplies Itself

Paul ends the verse by saying, *as you are already doing*. The Thessalonians were already known for their encouragement, and Paul's words push them to keep going. Why? Because encouragement spreads. It's contagious. When you lift someone up, they're more likely to lift someone else.

A church that consistently encourages builds an atmosphere of joy and faith. People walk into that kind of congregation and *feel* the difference, the warmth, the hope, and the genuine care. Encouragement transforms the church from just a place we attend into a family we belong to.

Practically, that means:

- **Be intentional with words.** Compliment spiritual growth, not just performance.
- **Be specific.** "You did a great job leading that prayer" is good; "Your prayer reminded me how faithful God is" is better.
- **Be consistent.** Don't save encouragement for special occasions; make it a daily habit.

Encouragement is not about flattery or false praise; it's about building truth into another person's life. When you encourage, you join God in His building project, shaping hearts, strengthening faith, and holding the body together in love. A church that encourages one another well doesn't just survive; it *thrives*.

Practical Application:

How to Encourage One Another

Encouragement is one of the simplest ministries in the church, but it's also one of the most neglected. Too often, we assume people "already know" they're appreciated, valued, or loved. But encouragement only works when it's expressed. The church becomes stronger when its people turn encouragement into a daily discipline.

Here are several practical ways to put this into action:

1. Speak Life Daily

Words have incredible power. Proverbs 18:21 says, *death and life are in the power of the tongue*. Make it a goal every day to speak life into someone else. Tell them how you see God working in them. Say, "I appreciate you," "I believe in you," or "You encouraged me." Don't underestimate how one sentence can lift someone's spirit for an entire week.

2. Be Present and Attentive

Encouragement begins with awareness. You can't build up someone you never notice. Pay attention to who's missing from worship, who looks weary, who's serving quietly without recognition. A text, call, or kind word at the right time can remind them that they're not forgotten.

3. Write It Down

A written note lasts longer than a spoken compliment. Consider writing one encouraging note or message each week. Be specific: mention what you appreciate, how their faith inspires you, or what you've learned from their example. These small acts often become treasures that people hold onto for years.

4. Celebrate Growth, Not Just Success

Encouragement is not about flattery; it's about seeing what God

is doing in someone's life and calling it out. Celebrate faithfulness, repentance, and perseverance, not just accomplishments. A sincere "I see you growing in grace" can mean more than applause for any achievement.

5. Create an Encouraging Culture

Encouragement spreads when it's modeled. If church leaders, Bible class teachers, and members intentionally use words of affirmation, others will follow. Encourage openly in conversations, meetings, and worship. A church filled with encouragement is a church filled with energy, joy, and unity.

6. Pray for Those You Encourage

The greatest encouragement comes through prayer. When you tell someone, "I'm praying for you," and do it, you're carrying their burden to the throne of God. Let them know you've prayed for them; it builds deep trust and spiritual strength.

Challenge

This week, choose three people to encourage intentionally:

- 1. By word:** say something uplifting face-to-face.
- 2. By action:** do something that helps or blesses them.
- 3. By prayer:** intercede for them and follow up.

Keep a simple "Encouragement Journal" for one week. Write down who you encouraged, how they responded, and how it impacted your own spirit. You'll quickly see that encouragement not only builds others, but it also builds *you*.

Conclusion

Encouragement is one of the most Christlike ministries we can practice, because Jesus Himself was the ultimate encourager. He lifted the weary, restored the broken, and strengthened the fainthearted. When others saw failure, He saw potential. When others offered judgment, He offered hope. His words didn't just comfort; they gave life.

That same ministry now belongs to us. The writer of Hebrews calls us to "encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day

approaching.” In other words, encouragement isn’t optional; it’s essential. Every believer has the power to build up someone’s faith, to remind them that God is still faithful, and to rekindle the flame of hope in their heart.

We’ve seen today that encouragement strengthens faith, requires presence, and builds the body. It doesn’t take special skill, just a willing heart. A kind word, a note, a prayer, or even a simple smile can lift a soul that’s ready to give up. And when encouragement becomes a way of life, it changes the culture of a church. People stop competing and start caring. They stop criticizing and start building.

This week, don’t wait for someone else to encourage you; *be* the encourager. Look for those who are tired, discouraged, or unnoticed, and breathe life into them. Speak words that heal instead of harm. Build bridges instead of walls.

Because when we encourage one another, we do more than make people feel good; we make Christ visible. And in a world starved for hope, that may be the most powerful ministry we can offer.

For Discussion

1. Can you think of a time when someone encouraged you at just the right moment? What impact did it have on your faith, attitude, or perseverance?

2. Why do you think encouragement is essential to helping believers “hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering”? How can your words help someone stay anchored in faith?

3. The writer of Hebrews ties encouragement to gathering together. What does that teach us about the importance of showing up, both physically and emotionally, for one another?

4. Paul says encouragement “builds up” the church. What does that mean in practical terms? How can we each become “builders” in our congregation?

5. What sometimes keeps us from encouraging others—fear, busyness, self-focus, or discomfort? How can we overcome those barriers and become more intentional encouragers?

6. Who in your life needs encouragement right now? What specific step will you take this week—a word, note, visit, or prayer—to strengthen that person’s faith?
