

Encouraging Yourself in Tough Times When No One Else Can

Most of us have not been given the tools on how to flourish during adversity, so we all need help to grow. One of the greatest aids that we need during challenges is encouragement. No person on the planet is exempt from needing it. I don't even need to be going through adversity to value encouragement. But during tough times, that raw encouragement can give me what I need to access the strength I need.

Gaining Courage and Strength

A mere casual look at the word "encouragement" shows us that it speaks of "adding courage" giving us a strength to face the storms that rage against us. We need to encourage one another. We also need to be around people that are going to encourage us.

But what happens when external encouragement seems unavailable? What do we do when we are in a place of feeling like our back is against the wall? What about when discouragement is all around, when we feel a thick dark cloud around us that won't relent, when a situation seems overwhelming or when a battle we face within seems unrelenting?

During times like this, you as a believer will need to learn the art of encouraging and strengthening yourself. We often come to these places where it is just us—God and the enemy. No one is there to give us the word we need, the hug we desire or the answer to unlock the solution. We can either get angry and fall into the pit of self-pity, or we can take hold of the opportunity available for us to learn the practice of self-encouragement. When you cultivate this practice, no one can steal it from you.

A fabulous example is in the life of David. You can find his journey of encouraging and strengthening himself in 1 Samuel 30.

David and his men came to their home town of Ziklag to find that it had been burned to the ground. Their wives and children had been taken captive. The pain at this point was so palpable the men were crying until there were no tears left. To make matters even worse, the people became angry in their grief. They blamed David for their calamity and considered stoning him to death.

“Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep” (1 Sam. 30:4).

The first thing they do is weep. They weep until they do not have any tears to cry.

Have you ever done that? Have you learned to be OK with weeping?

It's painful, but at the same time, so needed to keep the heart alive and healthy. The end result that comes in learning to encourage yourself is that your heart stays alive and healthy.

Fact: Most likely your situation is not as bad as David's. It could be pretty rough, but few of us have this kind of tragedy going on. On top of the devastation, the people want to turn it on David and stone him.

This would be a great time for most to quit, but notice David's response:

“Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God” (1 Sam. 30:6).

The great men and women of God have learned to breathe life back into their own being. This word strengthened speaks of *becoming strong, to be courageous, to grow firm, restore to strength, give strength, encourage*. All these words help us to see what needs to happen when we are up against adversity.

David's strengthening and encouraging of himself helped him to not only get back up and face the situation, it opened up the ability for him to gain a strategy from heaven to overcome and take back everything that is stolen. His victory began with being able to encourage himself.

We have a decision to make in adversity. After we have wept and cried until no more tears are available, will we sink in despair and bitterness, or will we encourage ourselves, stand and take our place in the battle?

Question: Where do you need to learn to encourage yourself today? {eoa}

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