

How to Help a Friend Not Quit

I recently received an email from a friend with three words that kept me going at a time when I wanted to give up writing. Amazing, the power of three words coming to me at just the right time.

I have been learning recently that we are not to seek the approval of others, as we serve Christ, yet the Bible clearly instructs us to encourage one another. Isn't it an interesting paradox that we are not to grope for approval but we do require encouragement? I have concluded, then, that there must be a powerful, God-mandated, appropriate method of encouragement.

In pondering this, I landed in the letter to the Hebrews: "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Heb. 10:23-24, NIV)

This word *spur* refers to motion. It is our job to nudge and push and scoot each other toward love and good deeds.

Have you ever thought about how many times a pastor feels weary and is close to giving up? Do you know frazzled mothers sometimes daydream of walking out of the house and leaving the unceasing demands of children? How often does a wife want to quit trying to love that man?

We live on the edge of quitting every day. I often hear exhausted, frustrated, discouraged people say, "I'm done!" But as followers of Christ, we are not allowed to be done. We have a long list of reasons not to quit.

We must keep moving. So let's ask ourselves two questions: How can we encourage our sisters and brothers in Christ in a way that does not feed their people-pleasing nature and take them to a prideful place? And what can we say or do (or maybe

stopping saying or stop doing) that will encourage our sisters and brothers to keep moving toward love and good deeds?

- What can I say to my pastor (aka husband) that will make him eager to preach again next week?
- What can I do for the housewife that will make her think, “OK, I can keep going through the monotony of cleaning toilets for another day.”
- What can I say to my grieving friend that will help her step toward the love of Christ?

The writer of Hebrews says, “Let us consider ... ” Think about it hard.

Who do you know who is about ready to throw in the towel? Maybe you know that person better than anybody. What’s the one act of love you could do that God could use to set that person in motion again? Maybe you need to give a gentle push. Or maybe you need to bend your knees and put your shoulder into it.

Your greatest deed this day could be offering someone the gift of forward motion.

What about you, dear friend? Do you feel like giving up today? Please don’t.

Hold on to the hope you profess to have in Christ just a bit longer. Remember God is faithful.

Loving the people in your life and doing the tasks God has put in front of you—will you just stick with it for one more day?

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