

Unleash the Power of Encouragement

Well, I want to help you. I've been discouraged and I've been encouraged, and I've found out that being encouraged is better! God doesn't want you to be discouraged.

Let's face it, when you're discouraged you're not going to rise up in faith and conquer the enemy. You're not going to help anyone. No, you probably feel like going back to bed and pulling the covers over your head!

I don't think we've properly understood the importance of being encouraged. When you're encouraged, you feel strong. You make things happen. You believe God. And you reach out to help and bless others. Being encouraged is more vital than we've thought!

Think about the story in 1 Samuel 30. David and his mighty men, returning to their home in Ziklag, found that their enemies had come and stolen their wives, their children, all their worldly goods, and burned their houses to the ground. The Bible says that these powerful men "wept until they had no more power to weep" (v. 4). That's some major despair and discouragement.

Then, just when it seemed like things couldn't get any worse, the men started talking about stoning David. Think about that! David's family and belongings had been stolen too! His house had been burned too! He too had wept until he had no more power to weep, and then his own men – the guys he always expected to watch his back – wanted to kill him!

I can't imagine what David was feeling in that situation.

But the Bible says, "David encouraged himself in the Lord." And God told him to go get everything back. So three verses

later, he and 600 of his men went to do battle against the enemy (v. 9).

Wait! What 600 men?

The ones who had just been talking about killing him! Think about what happened here:

David had lost everything and was about to be killed.

He encouraged himself in the Lord.

His encouragement was contagious enough to convince 600 angry men to change their minds and follow him again.

They went and defeated the enemy, taking back their stuff and rescuing their families ().

All because David encouraged himself. If he hadn't, he would have died. He never would have become king, Solomon never would have been born, and Jesus never would have been called the "Son of David." Not only that, but his wife and children (plus all the other wives and children) would have been slaves all their lives.

In this case, getting encouraged was a matter of life and death. And one man getting encouraged changed the whole situation.

I wonder what situations might change in your life or area of influence, if you were encouraged?

I think it's worth asking yourself: what encourages me? We know that encouragement comes from the Lord. Find out what encourages you and do more of it. Maybe it's a favorite Christian book or a favorite teaching CD. Maybe it's a list of certain scriptures, or a certain praise & worship song.

One of my favorite things is to take my favorite ministry magazine to a coffee house and read for an hour or so. It

works every time – I emerge encouraged!

That may sound carnal or selfish, but I've learned that when I'm encouraged and refreshed, I'm more energetic, more efficient, and a greater help to people.

Karen and her husband, Brent, traveled full time as itinerant ministers, and also pioneered two churches in the Northwest. In 1997, upon Brent's unexpected death, she became Senior Pastor of their church in Boise, Idaho. Now an instructor at RHEMA Bible Training Center in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, Karen wants to share what she has learned about the faithfulness of God through good times and bad. Visit her website for more information about her ministry.