

Young Women Active for Christ

January 2012



ENCOURAGEMENT

Playlist

Check out these songs as you think about encouragement.

"Listen to the Sound" — Building 429
"Learning to Be the Light" — NewWorldSon

"There Will Be a Day" — Jeremy Camp
"Blessings" — Laura Story

Warm Up

It's January—a time when the world seems to hold new possibilities, when we make New Year's resolutions, when we decide that we can start over and can change for the better. We commit to be healthier, to make better grades, or to be more organized. Making the resolutions is the easy part. Sticking to them is another story.

I read in a magazine once that when you start a new diet or workout program, it takes four weeks for you to notice a change in your body, eight weeks for your close friends and family to notice a change and twelve weeks for everyone else to notice. That means you have to work a long time before you start to see positive results. When you're working hard for something you want and you don't see results, it's easy to get discouraged and want to quit.

In those times, we need encouragement. Sometimes, we need a cheerleader to tell us we're doing a great job. Other times, we need a coach to call us out and make us do better. Whether we need cheers or correction, encouragement helps us stay on track. This is why people with workout partners or personal trainers are so much more successful at sticking to a workout plan.

As a child of God, you have the greatest cheerleader and coach on your side. God desires to be both. He offers you the promises of His Word, the comfort of His presence, and the fellowship of His people to help you reach your goals and stay positive.

Strength Training

Check out the Scripture listed and answer the questions with your group.

Read 1 Kings 18:20-40 and 19:1-21

In 1 Kings 18. what success did Elijah have?

After his success there, what caused Elijah to become discouraged (1 Kings 19)?

How discouraged do you think Elijah was? Why?

How did God encourage Elijah? Was God more of a cheerleader in this case, or more like a coach?

What gift did God give to Elijah to provide him with constant fellowship and encouragement in the future? (Check out 1 Kings 19:15-21.)

Work Out

For this Work Out, you will need a sturdy chair.

Get two volunteers from your group. Have one volunteer stand on a chair and the other stand on the floor beside the chair. First, the person on the chair should try to pull the person on the floor up into the chair.

Did she succeed in pulling the other person up? If she did, was it hard to do?

Have your volunteers return to their original positions—one on the chair and one on the floor. Now, have the person on the floor try to pull the other person off the chair.

Did she succeed?

Was it harder to pull a person up or pull a person down?

Your friends can have huge impacts on your life. They can affect a lot of your most important decisions—like who you choose to date and where you want to go to college. As we saw from our Work Out exercise, it is a lot easier to pull a person down than to pull a person up. Friends with negative attitudes can cause you to have a negative attitude, too. On the other hand, if your friends are positive and encouraging, then you will most likely be positive as well.

God thought it was important for Elijah to have a friend, and He provided the prophet Elisha to fill that role. What does this, along with our Work Out exercise, tell you about the importance of your friendships and how you pick your friends?

Cool Down and Stretch It Out

The three C's of life: choices, chances, and changes.

You must make a choice to take a chance, or your life will never change.

—Author Unknown

Have you made any New Year's resolutions this year? Have you prayed about them and made sure it is God's will for you to commit to those things?

Write your New Year's resolutions here:

Now pick a partner from your group and commit to pray for each other as you try to reach these new goals. Pray for your partner this month and try to think of ways you can encourage her. For example, if your friend wants to be healthier this year and is committed to working out three times a week, then you can join her for a jog or for a workout class.

Write your ideas and prayer requests for your friend here:

Happy New Year! I wish you all the best with your goals for 2012.



About the Author

Christina Hopper is 25 years old and attends Sulphur Springs FWB Church in Northport, AL, where she teaches the Junior Youth Group. She is a student at Mississippi University for Women where she is pursuing a degree in Creative Writing and English Education.

