

Closing thoughts...

Life is trying, life is exciting, life is exhausting, life is joyful—life is up; life is down. You get the picture? Sometimes we can lose sight of God's perspective. We often forget that life should be lived with Heaven in mind. This world is not our home. While we are still here, though, we can offer kind words, smiles, hugs, surprises or helping hands. We can make *encouragement* our ministry of choice. Tomorrow, I may be the one needing encouragement. Today, it may be you. If so, my contact information is listed in this year's Program and Plan Book, p. 45. Send a message. I'd love to encourage you personally.

-CAROLYN

Beginning thoughts...

A New Year always brings excitement...birth-days to celebrate, vacations to take, holidays to plan, and many other things to participate in throughout the year. It's another year for looking forward to the Lord's return. No, don't be afraid to keep reading. I'm not making any endtime predictions for exact days and months here. However, it is another opportunity to make sure we are ready to meet the Lord should He choose to come again in 2012.

This is where the encouragement comes in. We will each have numerous opportunities in the coming days, weeks, and months to use our faith and genuine love for the Lord as a real influence and motivator in someone's life. Just think of all the people you will encounter as you go about your daily life. It may seem overwhelming thinking about it, but just remember that, "His mercies are new every morning." We all have that assurance from God. As long as He delays His coming, we can use our abilities and talents to offer hope to someone. By far the biggest encouragement we can offer others is our prayers.

If you happen to be the one needing the encouragement, start by daily reading a chapter in Proverbs. With 31 chapters in the book, that means one chapter for each day of the month, with one left over in months with 30 days. Why not access the wisdom and guidance found in these Scriptures? Determine to be optimistic and cheerful. If you read the alternate study this month, you will see it's all about attitude. How's yours?

Study by CAROL REID
Guide by CAROLYN MICHAEL

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Encouragement FOR LEADERS AND SERVANTS

BODY FITNESS GOAL: Encourage God's leaders and servants through prayer, words and a listening ear.

CORE DEVELOPMENT: *"But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see" (Deuteronomy 3:28).*

- 🔊 Go over the questions and answers on p. 25 of *Treasure*.
- 🔊 Do you believe that leaders of your church need encouragement?
- 🔊 Have you ever felt like, "It's just his/her job to do that; why should I say anything to encourage this person?"
- 🔊 Do we take our pastor, deacons, and other servants for granted?
- 🔊 What are the qualifications for pastors? (*1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:7-9*) For deacons? (*1 Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:3-4*)
- 🔊 Think about Joshua again. When did he become Israel's leader? (*After the death of Moses—Joshua 1:1-2.*)
- 🔊 Who encouraged Joshua? (*God—Joshua 1:3-5.*)
- 🔊 Read Joshua 1:9 aloud together. This is one of the most encouraging verses in the Bible.
- 🔊 Write this verse on a 3x5 card and put it where you can see it often.
- 🔊 One of Joshua's traits as a great leader was his ability to encourage the Israelite people. (See *Joshua 3:9-11; 4:20-24; 6:10-16; 17:16-18; 22:5-6; 24:14-15.*)
- 🔊 What part of Joshua 24:15 do we usually hear preached? (*"Choose you this day whom you will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord".*)
- 🔊 Does this verse mean anything to you? Should we set our minds and hearts to serve the Lord?
- 🔊 The last paragraph on p. 25 offers suggestions of ways to help others. Make a list of people for whom you might use some of these ideas.

COOL DOWN: Dismiss by praying for your pastor using the suggestions mentioned.



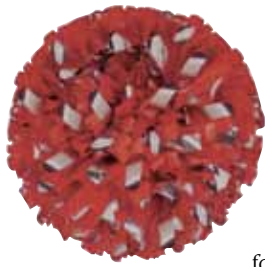
Encouragement THROUGH THE WORD

BODY FITNESS GOAL: Find and share encouragement from the Word of God.

CORE DEVELOPMENT: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).*

- 🔊 Ask yourself: Do I really believe the above verse: 2 Timothy 3:16?
- 🔊 Go over the questions and answers on p. 27, *Treasure*.
- 🔊 Are you an encourager to others?
- 🔊 If yes, what are some ways you encourage people? (*Don't be bashful here. We all need new ideas and ways to help others.*)
- 🔊 If your answer was no, why?
- 🔊 How do we receive comfort through the Word? (*Hope—Romans 15:4; Comfort—1 John 5:13; Joy—Jeremiah 15:16; Wisdom—Colossians 3:16.*)
- 🔊 How long will the Word endure? (*Forever—Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25*)
- 🔊 How was the Word written? (*2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21*)
- 🔊 Who is the Word meant for? (*Everyone—Hebrews 4:12; Romans 1:16*)
- 🔊 The Core Development verse is 2 Timothy 3:16. We've probably heard this passage quoted frequently in the time since we first started attending church, but do we know what verse 17 says? (*"That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*)
- 🔊 Did you realize we're trying to gain perfection? (*Read Hebrews 6:1; 13:21; James 1:4*)
- 🔊 Yes, this does mean we are to work, but it is to please God and be able to help others. Read Hebrews 6:10-11.
- 🔊 For which of these things does the Bible provide help as no other book can? (1) Instruct the mind, (2) Touch the heart, (3) Lead us into salvation and life.)
- 🔊 Can the Word of God help us when we need correcting in our daily walk? (*Proverbs 6:23*)
- 🔊 Sing the chorus, "B-I-B-L-E".

COOL DOWN: Dismiss with prayer for those you need to encourage.



Encouragement FOR THE TASK

BODY FITNESS GOAL: Encourage yourself and others toward faithfulness in daily routines and preparedness for special ministry opportunities.

CORE DEVELOPMENT: *“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).”*

- 🔊 What do the words “comfort” and “stablish” mean to you? (*Comfort—reassure; stablish—steady and strengthen*)
- 🔊 Go over the questions and answers on p. 29 of *Treasure*.
- 🔊 Do you need encouragement when it comes to doing the Lord’s work?
- 🔊 Does the Lord have a rating scale for jobs—some more meaningful than others? (*No job is insignificant when you’re working for the Lord. Colossians 3:22-24; Matthew 10:42; Luke 22:27.*)
- 🔊 Read the Core Development verse (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17) again. We as believers have a great resource in God Himself.

LEADER’S NOTE: Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, is urging them to make choices that would release the power of God (2 Thessalonians 3:3-5). Yet in 3:1-2, Paul is asking for prayer. If anyone ever needed prayer, it was Paul. Still, he consistently encouraged the believers of the different churches with his preaching and his life. No one ever doubted where Paul stood in regard to his faith or where his power originated. It came from knowing Jesus Christ as His Savior. Ladies, we have that same power in our Lord. Jesus doesn’t just have power, He *is* the POWER.

- 🔊 Is it easy to keep working in the church without any notice or appreciation for what we do?
- 🔊 Should we quit if no one encourages us? (*No, just keep working as unto the Lord—Ephesians 6:7; 1 Corinthians 15:58.*)
- 🔊 God has special promises for His workers. Read the following Scriptures aloud: Romans 2:10; 1 Timothy 5:17; Daniel 12:3.
- 🔊 Sing or read the words to “I Want To Be A Worker”, p. 514, *REJOICE! The Free Will Baptist Hymn Book*.

COOL DOWN: Dismiss by praising the Lord for blessings in your life.



Encouragement ONE TO ANOTHER

BODY FITNESS GOAL: Encourage one another, helping believers stand taller, see farther, and reach wider to spread the gospel.

CORE DEVELOPMENT: *“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do ” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).*

- 🔊 How can you encourage or comfort yourself?
- 🔊 What do you do when you are unhappy or sad?
- 🔊 Go over the chart together on p. 31 in *Treasure*.
- 🔊 Since Scripture is the great encourager, would you share your favorite verse and tell us why or how it helps you feel better?
- 🔊 What did Jesus say about the Scriptures? (*Matthew 22:29*)
- 🔊 Who encourages you? Your mother? Father? Husband? Children? Friends? Pastor? Sunday School teacher?
- 🔊 Do these folks need uplifting, also? (*Yes, that is the meaning of the Core Development verse, 1 Thessalonians 5:11.*)
- 🔊 What can we do? (*Love, support, help, encourage, minister and pray for them whenever possible.*)
- 🔊 Should we ever quit or give up on reaching out to others? (*No—Galatians 6:9-10; 2 Timothy 3:14-15—doesn’t say we won’t be tired, but urges us to continue and not quit.*)
- 🔊 Have you found your purpose in living? Is it to gain wealth or fame?
- 🔊 What should our purpose be? (*1) To use our abilities to fulfill the Will of God; (2) To enjoy life God’s way; (3) To strengthen and encourage others to find the salvation of God.*)

COOL DOWN: Dismiss with a prayer for those who need special encouragement; asking God to allow you a part in it.