

Encouraging Yourself in the Lord

1 Samuel 30 (text v. 6)

Encourage—To instill confidence and hope... to inspire courage... to strengthen in spirit... to provoke to action. To lend support.

We all need some encouragement now and then. Praise God for Christians with the gift of exhortation who can speak a word of encouragement to help keep us going and not give up or quit.

But what do you do when you become distressed and no one is around to offer a word of encouragement. It is during these lonely times when we must learn to encourage OURSELVES in the Lord.

➡ This is **David's situation**. Read Text (30:1-6):

1. David has been running as an outlaw with his band of 600 men for several years. He fled to Achish, King of the Philistines, for refuge.
2. Achish gave David and his men the city of Ziklag. They settle there to live among the Philistines.
3. While David and his men are away, the Amalekites raid Ziklag, burn the city, and abduct all the families. This was pay-back for David's raids into their territory (27:8). The raider has become the raided.

➡ **LESSON:** Never leave your family unprotected from enemy attacks (1 Peter 5:8)!

Imagine how David and his men felt when they returned to Ziklag, and found the city burned and their wives and children gone! No "welcome home banners." No Yellow ribbons. No signs "We support our troops." No hugs or kisses. Just smoldering ruins (v. 4).

It gets worse—David's men realize David brought all this trouble upon them because of his foolish decisions. They consider stoning David—Hurting people often hurt other people.

➡ It is one of the darkest moments in David's life. The fate of his family is unknown. His men are turning against him. He is left alone with nothing. David has hit **ROCK BOTTOM** (v. 6—"*greatly distressed*").

- ➔ This is what happens when a Christian gets out of the will of God. David was reaping years of sowing seeds of deceit and self-will. Chickens have come home to roost. *“Be sure your sin will find you out.”*
- ➔ David needs some encouragement. But from where? His family is gone. Samuel’s dead. His friend Jonathan is not around (cf. 23:16)?
- ➔ There are times when our situation looks bleak and hopeless. What should we do? Be discouraged? Have a pity party? Quit? Flee? **Failure is the great test of what a man is really made of.**
- ➔ ***“BUT...”*** (v. 6) — **The TURNING POINT!**

I. David TURNED FROM himself (v. 6).

- ➔ For years David had been trusting only in himself, and it resulted in getting deeper and deeper into trouble.
- ➔ David has been out of fellowship with God for a long time. The last time David enquired of the Lord was 23:1-10. (About six years earlier).
- A. Discouragements come from having a self-focus (cf. 27:1). (ILLUS.- Elijah).
- B. Discouragements come from having a situation-focus (cf. 21:10). (ILLUS.- Israel in the wilderness — Num. 21:4).
- C. All God’s dealings with David were designed with one main objective—**To bring David to an end of himself and his own resources.**
 - ➔ God’s purpose was to humble David. God was in the process of bringing David to his knees. For the first time David was left helpless. His back is against the wall. GOD: “Now we’re finally getting somewhere!”

II. David TURNED UNTO the Lord (30:7-8).

- ➔ **David had no where to turn but UP!** The Lord brings us to places like this, under many different sets of circumstances, so we will turn to Him and trust Him.
- ➔ David calls for the “preacher” Abiathar. It was time to dust off the ephod and inquire of the Lord. For the first time in several years,

David finally turns to God for direction, instead of directing his own steps.

➡ *"David encouraged himself in the Lord"* (vs. 6). This is what David should have done back in 27:1.

- He did not encourage himself in his own **prowess**.
- He did not encourage himself in his own **plans**.
- He did not encourage himself in his own **power / position**.

A. Encouraged himself in the **RIGHTEOUSNESS** of God—He knew God will do **RIGHT**.

B. Encouraged himself in the **LOVE** of God. Did God still love David? Amen! Nothing can separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39).

C. Encouraged himself in the **PROMISE** of God. God promised David would be King. Nothing can thwart the promises of God. God has promised *"all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

D. Encouraged himself in the **FAITHFULNESS** of God. Though he failed the Lord, David turned to the One who never failed him. 2 Tim. 2:13—*"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful!"* David refused to believe that failure was fatal.

➡ How would God answer David after all his failures?

- "I'm sorry son, but I can't trust you anymore. You've failed Me too many times."
- "I'm going to put you on probation until you prove yourself to Me."
- "David, you've made your bed, now you got to sleep in it."

➡ **NO!** God gave him a definite answer—*"Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all."* **THIS IS THE GRACE OF GOD!**

III. David TRIUMPHED in the Lord (30:18-24).

➡ David pursues – He is running with the promise of God. He is off to reclaim his family.

- David gets **help from an unlikely source**—An Egyptian (vs. 11-15).
- A. David **RECOVERS ALL** (vs. 16-20). ***THIS IS GOD'S GRACE!***
 - God is the God of restoration and **SECOND CHANCES!**
 - 1. Naomi failed the Lord in Moab and became bitter. But she was restored and became the grandmother of King David!
 - 2. Jonah failed the Lord and tried to run from God's will. But when he sunk to the bottom, God gave him a second chance. God used his preaching to bring Ninevah to repentance.
 - 3. Peter denied the Lord three times and wept bitterly. But God gave him a second chance and he preached on the Day of Pentecost and 3,000 souls were saved and baptized.
 - 4. John Mark bailed out on his first missionary journey and deserted Paul, but God gave him a second chance and he wrote the second book in the N.T.
- B. It was a **TEAM** effort (vs. 21-24 cf. John 4:36-38; 1 Cor. 3:5-8).
 - 1. Success in warfare requires soldiers on the front line and soldiers on the supply line. Without both the war would be lost.
 - 2. Missionary work. Some need to go to the mission field. Others need to hold the rope at home through prayer and keep the supplies coming.

SUMMATION: It is a blessing to have friends and family to encourage you when you are facing a crisis. But what do you do when you are alone in a dark time—There are no family, no friends, and no encouragement cards in your mailbox?

You must turn from your own strength and your own resources and turn unto the Lord to encourage yourself **IN HIM**.

Get on your knees to pray. "*Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass*" (Ps. 37:5).

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