

STRENGTHENING YOUR GRIP

Strengthening Your Grip on Encouragement

Hebrews 10:19–25



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Hebrews 10 commands Christians to “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23). But do you know what command follows it, written before the ink had dried on the first? “And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (10:24).

Did you know those commands were in the Bible? God wants us to think about how we can encourage our brothers and sisters in the Lord. And remember, it's impossible to stimulate someone else to love and good deeds if we are not around them. Encouragement is primarily a face-to-face thing.

The family of God is not a place for verbal put-downs, sarcastic jabs, critical comments, and harsh judgments. We get enough of that from the world. This is a place we need to assemble for the purpose of being encouraged . . . and we are free to be ourselves.

In this lesson, we will learn that encouragement is not the responsibility of a gifted few but the responsibility of the *entire* family of God. That means *you*.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. Our Source of Encouragement (Hebrews 10:19–21)

For the Christian, encouragement is rooted in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Hebrews 10 reminds us of just a few of the things we have to be encouraged about.

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God . . . (Hebrews 10:19–21)

How wonderful! Because of Christ, we can have *confidence to approach God*. It may help us to remember that from the time of Moses until Calvary, anyone wanting to approach God had to do so through a priest and had to bring an animal to be slaughtered. But now, because of Jesus's final sacrifice on the cross, the door to the very throne room of God has been swung open. With Jesus as our great high priest, we no longer need to slaughter sheep and bulls on the altar. If we have trusted in Him, we have full access to our heavenly Father.



Quotable

*“That which
will keep a
ministry on target
is a faithful
commitment to
the Word
of God.”*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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2. The Ministry of Encouragement (Hebrews 10:22–25)

The writer of Hebrews told us not only what we have received but also what we should do now:

- First, we should *draw near to God* (Hebrews 10:22). We no longer need to tiptoe to the throne room of God or walk on eggshells in His presence. Instead, God has invited us to walk boldly to Him across the crimson carpet Jesus laid down for us.
- Second, we should *hold fast to the confession of our hope* (10:23). We have a sure hope that God will keep His promises and that His Word doesn't change.
- Third, we should *consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds* (10:24). Having encouraged us about all we possess in Christ, the writer further urged us to ponder how we can continue meeting together as a church and encourage others to live Christlike lives (10:25).



GETTING TO THE ROOT

A Lesser-Known Encourager

Barnabas exemplified a servant of God, who not only accepted his supporting role but excelled in it. As the apostle Paul's partner in ministry, Barnabas encouraged and supported him from the beginning—even before others trusted Paul (Acts 9:26–28).

So what made Barnabas such a good friend to Paul? The name Barnabas literally means “son of prophecy,” but Acts 4:36 renders it “son of encouragement.” In both the Old and New Testaments, prophets proclaimed God's Word, served as His spokespeople, and reminded God's people to obey Him. Perhaps Barnabas reminded Paul of Jesus Christ's words on the Damascus road (9:3–6) and encouraged Paul to keep walking in faith when he faced persecution and trials.

When the young, struggling church needed reinforcement, Barnabas, a godly man who yielded to the Holy Spirit, “began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord” (11:23). Barnabas then found Paul and urged him to take a leadership role. Barnabas recognized the gifts and calling God had given Paul, and Barnabas took second place. May we all value the role of encourager as essential to the work of God!



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LET'S LIVE IT

So how can we practically encourage others each day? We can express appreciation for a friend's gifts and talents. We can thank our parents for their faithfulness. We can acknowledge our kids when they go out of their way to do a good job on a school project. We can even encourage others by the way we live—by modeling integrity, compassion, and diligence. Remember: you don't have to be an outgoing extrovert in order to encourage others. Just prayerfully open your eyes and look for ways to build others up.

When was the last time you received true encouragement? How did it make you feel? Do you know people who need encouragement this week? How can you affirm their gifts or thank them for their friendship?



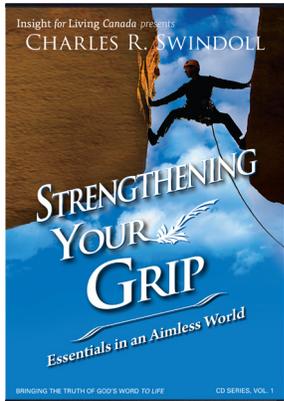
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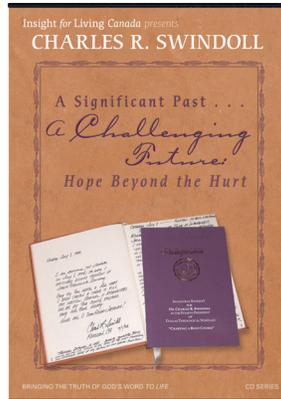
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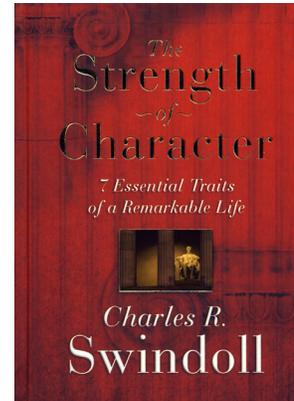
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