

Be an Encouragement

by K.P. Yohannan

K.P. Yohannan's sermon encourages believers to actively spread love and encouragement to those around them, reflecting Christ's compassion in everyday interactions.

Scripture: Proverbs 12:25, Matthew 7:12, Luke 6:38, Romans 15:2, Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 4:29, Philippians 2:4, Colossians 3:12-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 10:24-25

Topics: "Encouragement", "Kindness"

Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the vital role of encouragement in our daily lives, urging us to spread love and kindness starting from our own homes and extending to everyone we encounter. He highlights that simple gestures, like a smile or a kind word, can significantly uplift those around us, countering our natural tendency towards self-centeredness. By encouraging others, we not only fulfill a Christian duty but also create a cycle of positivity that returns to us. Yohannan shares inspiring stories of individuals whose success was fueled by encouragement, reminding us that we all have the power to uplift others. Ultimately, he calls us to actively seek opportunities to encourage and support those in our lives, reflecting Christ's love and compassion.

Transcript

Spread love everywhere you go: first of all in your own house. Give love to your children, to your wife or husband, to a next door neighbor. . . . Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting.¹ Take a minute and look around you. Look close at the faces of people and see in their eyes the desperate longing for understanding and their cry for a few words of encouragement.

If nothing else, just a look, a pat on the back or a smile can make the greatest difference in their day. We are such self-centered creatures that from the moment we wake up until the moment we lay our head back on the pillow, we are consumed with ourselves. We think about our sorrow, our concern and our need for understanding and affirmation. But what does the Bible say about this? "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38). Are you one looking for encouragement and appreciation?

Then I have a suggestion for you: Encourage someone around you. Give to them what you are looking to receive, and you will be surprised how it will return back to you a hundredfold. Listen to the words of Christ, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12, NIV). William

Barclay once said, "One of the highest of human duties is the duty of encouragement. . . . It is easy to laugh at man's ideals. It is easy to pour cold water on the enthusiasm.

It is easy to discourage others. The world is full of discouragers. We have a Christian duty to encourage one another. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet. Blessed is the man who speaks such a word."² How true this is. While reading through the well-known and loved book *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, I came across this story, which again shows the significant impact a little encouragement can have on the people in our lives.

A college professor had his sociology class go into the Baltimore slums to get case histories of 200 young boys. They were asked to write an evaluation of each boy's future. In every case the students wrote, "He hasn't got a chance." Twenty-five years later another sociology professor came across the earlier study. He had his students follow up on the project to see what had happened to these boys. With the exception of 20 boys who had moved away or died, the students learned that 176 of the remaining 180 had achieved more than ordinary success as lawyers, doctors and businessmen.

The professor was astounded and decided to pursue the matter further. Fortunately, all the men were in the area and he was able to ask each one, "How do you account for your success?" In each case the reply came with feeling, "There was a teacher." The teacher was still alive, so he sought her out and asked the old but still alert lady what magic formula she had used to pull these boys out of the slums into successful achievement. The teacher's eyes sparkled and her lips broke into a gentle smile.

"It's really simple," she said. "I loved those boys."³ If we as parents or friends want to motivate our family members or people around us, we must be encouragers. We must choose to give sincere appreciation and honest praise for even the slightest good that people do. Thus we can spur others to greater achievements in life. The renowned psychologist and thinker, professor William James of Harvard, mentions that each individual has tremendous energy, power, strength and potential in themselves.

According to him, compared with what we ought to be, we are only half awake. We are making use of only a small part of our physical and mental resources. Stating the thing broadly, the human individual thus lives far within his limits. He possesses powers of various sorts that he habitually fails to use. Encouragement is a powerful force. An earlier study shows that no one can achieve significant heights in life alone; it is always done with the help and assistance of others.

In this, encouragement is without any doubt one of the most powerful things we can do to help others. Those who have studied the lives of people such as Charles Dickens or H.G. Wells know how timely a word of encouragement and praise proved to be the turning point in their lives, enabling them to attain great heights. Consider Charles Dickens. His life did not exactly provide him with the conditions to be one of the greatest literary writers, yet that is what he became. Forced to quit school when he was 12 due to his father's imprisonment (for outrageous debt), Dickens spent his days pasting labels on bottles in a rat-infested workplace.

He desired to write and pursued that dream, only to have his work rejected time and time again. But one day, one of his stories, although denied for publication, was returned to him with a note saying that he was a great writer and the world needed him. These small words of encouragement sent Dickens running up and down the streets of London rejoicing. They also served as the staying power in his writing, therefore bringing us such literature masterpieces as *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *The Tale of Two Cities* and others. When you read about the lives of great men and women in history, you will always find there was

some person or group who encouraged them, being the key factor to all that they achieved.

Just think about it. Who taught Martin Luther his theology and inspired his translation of the New Testament? Who was the individual who witnessed to Sadhu Sundar Singh of India? Who encouraged Mother Teresa to leave her home in Albania and travel to India? Who was behind the staying power of Amy Carmichael in the midst of endless years of physical suffering and difficulties on the mission field in India? Who was the elderly woman who prayed for years and witnessed to George Verwer for over a decade?

Who financed William Carey's travel to India and his ministry? You see, it is easy to understand. It doesn't take superstars and the most brilliant to encourage others. You can do it. I can do it. English poet, William Wordsworth, once said, "That best portion of a good man's life, his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love."⁴ I want to ask you, when was the last time you encouraged someone with your words or actions? We are most Christlike when we can show compassion and love for others.

Jesus always affirmed and strengthened the weak, the lonely and the unwanted. One of the most significant ways in which we can encourage others is to listen with our hearts to what they are saying. Often people say things not in words, but in their feelings, their actions and even their silence. While listening, ask the Lord to give you understanding to what they are saying. Then you will be able to respond with the determination to encourage and strengthen them. There are times you can do things to show your support and encouragement.

Sometimes it is sharing finances, giving them a book that will help them through a difficult time or sharing a song that will encourage their heart. It could be just simply taking the time to sit down and listen to them. Daily look for something positive and encouraging that you can do or say to the people around you to strengthen them in this life's journey. Appreciate people and acknowledge even the little things that they do. Never underestimate the power of positive words and a solid handshake or pat on the back.

When I look back over the years of my serving the Lord, there have been numerous times of deep discouragement and struggles. Many times I have thought about running away from it all. In each of those times, it was some brother or sister saying "I am praying for you" or doing something to encourage me with their words or actions that gave me the courage to continue the journey. Even today that is true. May you be that to someone today. "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom.

For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38). Notes: 1 Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, *Chicken Soup for the Soul* (Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc., 1993), p. 3. 2 William Barclay, *Letter to the Hebrews: The Daily Study Bible* (Edinburgh, Scotland: St. Andrews Press, 1955), pp. 137-138. 3 Canfield and Hansen, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, pp. 3-4. 4 Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, *A 2nd Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul* (Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc., 1995), p. 3

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