

4

We Encourage One Another

WHAT
HAVE YOU
BEEN TOO
AFRAID
TO TRY?

The POINT >

We need the encouragement of others and they need ours.

> EPHESIANS 4:17-32

¹⁷Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their thoughts. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts. ¹⁹They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more. ²⁰But that is not how you came to know Christ, ²¹assuming you heard about him and were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²²to take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, ²³to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the

truth. ²⁵Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and don't give the devil an opportunity. ²⁸Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. ³⁰And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. ³²And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

One of the best ways to deal with stage fright or anxiety (as with tests, games on the basketball or volleyball court, and speech class) is to give yourself a break!



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit intercedes before the Father on our behalf when we don't know how or what to pray.

All of my life, I've enjoyed music. However, the thought of playing or singing in front of a crowd was absolutely terrifying when I was younger. My senior year of high school, I decided to give music a go, so I joined the choir. I could handle singing on stage with 35 other people. That mindset worked until my choir director assigned me a solo. Everything I had feared about pursuing music was becoming very real in ways I simply wasn't ready for; so naturally, I refused the solo.

Thankfully, our director didn't easily accept my "no," and he encouraged me to give it a shot. Day by day, he took the time to help me grow not only in my capacity to sing well, but also in my confidence. There was no end to his encouraging words, and this made a huge difference in my life. Not only did I sing the solo, but less than a year later, I decided to pursue music as my vocation. Because of his encouragement, music would become the primary way I'd serve the church and support my family for years.

In living out our faith, there will be many times we're hesitant, even afraid, to walk forward in the things God has called us to. Encouragement from fellow believers is more valuable than we often realize. Words of support can help us press forward when we might be tempted to give up. We need the encouragement of other believers, and they need ours.

EPHESIANS 4:17-22

1 What are some characteristics of our old self?

2 What changed the most when you became a follower of Jesus?

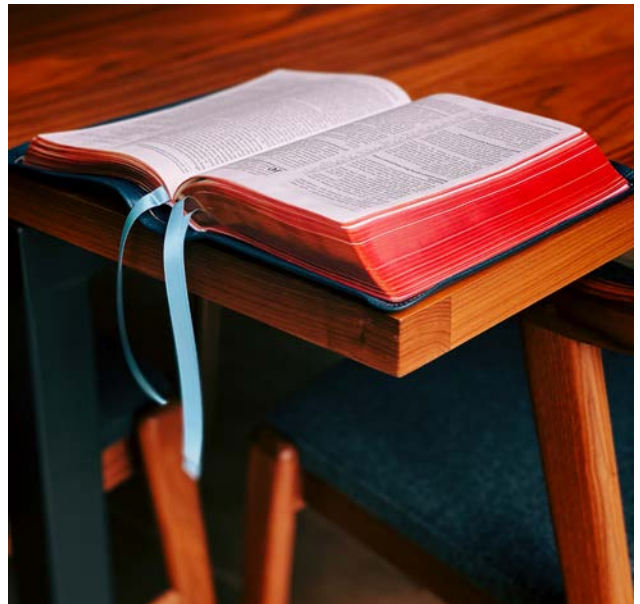
EPHESIANS 4:23-28

3 What are some practical steps we can take to see our minds renewed?

4 Who has inspired you to live consistent with your new life in Christ?

5 How can we encourage each other to consistently live according to Christ's teaching?

Jesus saves us in order to change us. #BSFLtheChurch



EPHESIANS 4:29-32

6 What do these verses communicate to us about the influence of our speech?

7 How do we apply these verses to our interactions on social media?

8 How has your language changed since you became a Christ-follower?



LIVE IT OUT



GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit intercedes before the Father on our behalf when we don't know how or what to pray.

Because of our own faults and weaknesses, we often need the support and encouragement of others in our lives. One of the greatest encouragements we have is the Holy Spirit. Not only is He our counselor or helper, which means one who provides encouragement or exhortation, He also prays for us when we are too weak or don't know how to pray. To know that the Holy Spirit, who is Himself God, is praying on our behalf is one of the greatest encouragements imaginable.

> CHRIST

The Holy Spirit ministers to believers in a number of ways, including serving as a helper, providing comfort, and building up believers.

9 Where do you turn when you need help?

10 In what ways can you look to the Holy Spirit to help you remain encouraged in walking in faith?

> COMMUNITY

11 Memorize Ephesians 4:29 this week. Write it below to get started today.



12 Every day, send a text or make a call to someone who could use some encouragement.

> CULTURE

We live in a culture where many people are quick to criticize others.

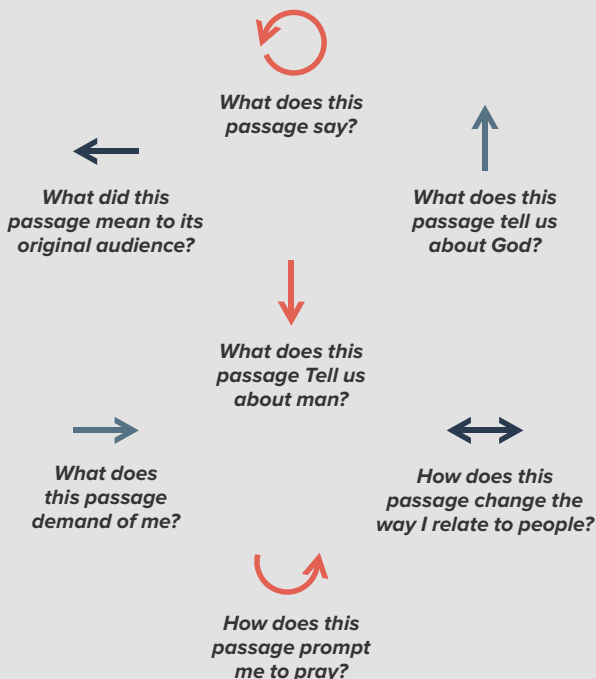
13 How are you tempted to fall into this pattern? Choose intentionally to refuse complaining and criticism.

14 How can you provide encouragement to a friend who is not a Christian, particularly for the purpose of helping him or her to take steps toward Christ?

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One

HEBREWS 10:23

People often visit our churches, come to faith in Christ, and start off with a fire in their bellies. However, when this new life of faith doesn't go as smoothly as they'd imagined or even once the excitement wears off, many walk away. The Hebrews who received this letter were suffering for their faith, and they were tempted to walk away. But they were encouraged! Here's why. Faith in Christ gives us a hope for eternity that is available nowhere else. If they were to walk away, they may have avoided some difficult things, but they would also have lost the hope—the confident expectation that they would receive God's good promises—in Christ. God is faithful to deliver on His promises. In turn, He calls us to be faithful to our confession. When we hold on to Jesus, we can be sure we'll receive His eternal blessings.

➤ **Why are people tempted to walk away from the church?**

➤ **When has it been difficult for you to hold on?**

Day Two

HEBREWS 10:24



As we hold on to Jesus, we're not to worry about ourselves alone—we are also to be continually concerned for other believers. Belonging to a family involves our caring deeply about our fellow family members, and this certainly applies to our church family. It should be one of our deepest desires that those we care about continue their pursuit of Jesus. Therefore, we should continually encourage our friends to live in obedience to God's Word. If others hadn't encouraged us in the past, we certainly wouldn't be where we are today in matters of faith. And God wants to use us to help others grow in their faith, holding on to Christ even when it's not easy.

➤ **Who has encouraged you in your faith?
How did they do this?**

➤ **How will you commit to encouraging a friend in their faith this week?**

Day Three

HEBREWS 10:25a

This world is against Jesus and the things God has taught in Scripture. We can see this very clearly in our culture today. Because of this, it's not always easy to follow Christ faithfully. It's even more difficult when we seek to do so alone. God never intended that our faith be lived out in isolation, yet so many professing Christians today believe that belonging to a church is non-essential. The author of Hebrews told the church never to neglect coming together. Some had fallen away, and surely they had suffered for it. If we want to remain faithful to Jesus, being regularly involved in a church—learning, growing, and serving—is absolutely essential.

➤ **Why do so many people today believe belonging to a church isn't essential?**

➤ **Why is it so important to be regularly involved in a church?**

Day Four

HEBREWS 10:25b

Encouragement is an essentially important part of following Christ. Without it, we'd all surely fall. But with it, we can make it through any difficulty. The Holy Spirit provides encouragement to God's people (Acts 9:31), and for that we should be incredibly thankful. But we must know that one of the greatest ways God provides encouragement in through the church. When we fail to engage regularly with the church, it's easy to become discouraged in our pursuit of Christ. We should remain continually engaged in the church, so we don't fall away. But there's one more (and perhaps even more important) reason to be a part of the church. It's so we can encourage others. To follow Jesus means to love others as much or more than we love ourselves. When we truly love our brothers and sisters, because of our concern for them, we'll involve ourselves in the church so we can be used to encourage others.

- **Why is encouragement so important?**
- **How has your desire to love and serve others changed as you've grown in your faith?**

Day Five

HEBREWS 10:25c



In the last days, Jesus promised that persecution against the church would increase. We're living in the last days, and this means that remaining faithfully devoted to Jesus will become increasingly difficult. With this in view, we need to understand the increasing urgency of encouraging others to hold fast to their confession of Jesus as Lord. When we face hardships because of our faith, we may be tempted to give up. However, the end is near, and if we remain devoted to Jesus, we'll soon experience God's blessings in eternity. Jesus is worth the sacrifice. Let's encourage each other to press on.

- **List the hardships you've faced for your faith.**
- **In your own words, why is Jesus worth the sacrifice? Encourage others to see this too.**