

Encouragement

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(Editor's note: Barnabas International is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. I have enjoyed writing these monthly ENCOURAGEMENT letters to you and to thousands of others around the world. I have decided to re-send my first ENCOURAGEMENT letter out again. Why? Because it explained the original purpose for sending out these letters. And now, twenty years later, the reasons are still the same.)

Good Morning Friend,

Have you ever heard of a noodnik? I learned it, along with millions of others, from Ann Landers. It is a Yiddish term meaning . . . “one who spreads cheer by not showing up. That’s right . . . by not showing up. His absence is better than his presence.

Wow! I hope that that word never describes me, or that it will never again typify me. The Christian, in total contrast, is to spread cheer . . . and joy . . . and blessing by his presence. We are to be encouragers.

Whatever else God wants me to be and to do, I know that He wants me to be an encourager. Chuck Swindoll says, “I know of no one more needed, more valuable, more Christ-like, than the person who is committed to encouragement.”

So you are a doctor, a teacher, a Bible translator, a student . . . an administrator. Fine! But are you an encouraging doctor, an encouraging teacher, an encouraging Bible translator, an encouraging student . . . an encouraging administrator? Does your life bring cheer along the way? Are your words sensitive and uplifting? In the home and on the job, does your presence bring a ray of hope? Are you nudging others toward a closer walk with the Lord?

All around us are desperate people. Weary. Discouraged. Misunderstood. Ready to ‘throw in the towel.’ Or, perhaps they are resigned to a life of miserable, intolerable, debilitating mediocrity. How different it could be in you would touch them with encouragement . . . by a word, a smile, a hug . . . a nugget of eternal truth. You could be used of God to make the difference.

In coming months, God willing, I will be coming into your life for a moment each month. I will be talking from my desk to yours . . . from here to Los Angeles . . . to Manhattan . . . to the village hut in Indonesia . . . to the tropical hills of Colombia. And as I come, I want to do two things:

1. I want to encourage you . . . to love you and to lift you . . . to believe in you and the incredible impact you have for God.
2. I want to urge you to be an encourager. All of us can do a better job with this. I agree with William Barclay when he says, “One of the highest of human duties is the duty of encouragement. It is easy to laugh at men’s ideals; it is easy to pour cold water on their enthusiasm; it is easy to discourage others. The world is full of discouragers. We have a 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 one who speaks such a word.”

Often the Apostle Paul wrote letters, always hoping for the greater reality of face-to-face meetings with his friends. Until then, I will meet you monthly by letter.

Be encouraged,

Lareau Lindquist