

Encourage One Another

A shaky economy, a dismal political scene, crime in the streets, fraud in religious circles, sin among professing Christians, and continuous conflict among believers. We look at the situations around us, and admittedly, they are depressing.

This kind of scenario has occurred often throughout the history of the Church. And, again and again, we turn to God's Word to understand God's perspective on these matters. One place we turn to is Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians.

The Apostle Paul had taught the Thessalonians that the Lord would return soon. Somewhere some of them had gotten the notion that the Lord had already returned for His own. Now, if I was a believer in Christ, and someone had told me that He had already come and received His people to Himself, then I might begin to question the sincerity of my faith. This is what the believers in Thessalonica were doing.

Paul reminds them, that no matter what was going on in the political, economic, or religious realms, they are still to be prepared and eagerly look forward to Jesus' soon coming again. This is also God's message to us today. We can look at the world around us, and see that it's going nowhere fast. If that's not discouraging, I don't know what is.

Yet Paul urges us to encourage believers who are depressed or discouraged in their work for the Lord. He points to his example of holiness and righteousness, and says that he encouraged them "to live lives worthy of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12). As we look for Christ's return, we are challenged to live in purity and holiness (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8). While many Christians are tempted to throw in the towel and live after the fashion of the world, and thus hope to avoid serious conflict, God tells us to continue to live in a manner pleasing to Him.

As believers, we are to urge one another on in pleasing God. While we are to uphold God's standards, often we make those standards seem so impossible as to discourage folks from living God's way. Some

Christians feel inadequate to live the Christian life. Paul tells us to, "Warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak" (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

Take some time to speak an encouraging word, write a helpful note, or give a brightening smile to someone who is involved actively in the Lord's work. Many folks give much and never receive any acknowledgment of their giving of themselves. While we are not in the Lord's work for praise, we still need to know that our work is appreciated by and helpful to other Christians.

Encourage one another!

P.S. I wrote this column 32 years ago, and it still rings true as ever!

Craig Alan Myers, CBC Executive Board Member

Weekly Prayer Points

Please pray for all CBC camps this summer. Pray for God to move in the hearts of the campers and staff, that souls would be saved, and that God would call youth into the ministry and mission field through our CBC camps.

Please pray for these congregations and pastors:

- Columbia Furnace Congregation in Edinburg, VA and Pastors Bill Fitchett and Buster Doman
- Covington Community Congregation in Covington, WA and Pastor Rod Meyers

CBC Prayer Committee