

How Do We Stay Encouraged?

By: David Sproule

“How do we stay encouraged in a world full of struggles and letdowns?”

It is easy to become discouraged, if we allow the trials and circumstances of life to determine our outlook and our level of joy and peace in life. The devil would enjoy nothing less than to watch us wallow in the cares and troubles of life and avoid all the contentment and encouragement that the faithful Christian can enjoy.

So, how can the Christian stay encouraged in our world today? Many thoughts and principles could be shared, but let us limit our scope to the ones emphasized by Paul in his letter to the Christians in Philippi. If there was anyone who could have allowed the “struggles and letdowns” of this world to get him down and keep him down, it was the apostle Paul. Nonetheless, writing from prison in Rome, Paul penned a masterpiece of encouragement. Let us examine some of the key principles set forth in this book to keep us encouraged.

Focus on others before self! Read the first twelve verses of Philippians. For someone who was suffering wrongfully at the hands of his enemies, Paul did not focus on himself and his problems. Thirteen times in those first twelve verses of the book, Paul used the pronouns “you” or “your.” Mediate further on verses 3 and 4 of chapter 2: “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out

not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” Paul was focused on his brethren more than he was on himself, and he stayed encouraged.

Focus on the gospel! When bad things happened to Paul, he looked for how good things might be forthcoming (not for himself) for the sake of the gospel. Paul emphasized the “fellowship in the gospel” that Christians enjoy (1:5), the work in which he was engaged in “the defense and confirmation of the gospel (1:12, 17), and how Christians “strive together” when they “serve” and “labor” in the gospel (1:27; 2:22; 4:3). He focused on how the gospel might be furthered more than on his own personal struggles and letdowns, and he stayed encouraged.

Focus on Christ! Paul was “hard-pressed between” life and death, for being in the custody of the Romans, they easily could have put him to death. While the threat of harm and death would monopolize our attention and worry our hearts, Paul set his focus on the Lord and His cause. “Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (1:20-23). To focus on Christ (and stay encouraged) includes:

- **Bearing fruit for Christ** (1:11, 22-26). This will help you stay encouraged.
- **Learning to think like Christ** (2:3-5). This will help you stay encouraged.
- **Remembering the sacrifice of**

Christ (2:6-8). This will help you stay encouraged.

– **Rejoicing in Christ** (3:1, 3; 4:4, 10).

There are too many to enumerate, but find these principles of personal encouragement:

– **Focus on working for Christ** (2:12-13).

– **Focus on being positive rather than complaining** (2:14-15).

– **Focus on shining as a light in the midst of darkness** (2:15).

– **Focus on the future reward rather than the past** (3:7-14).

– **Focus on living as a citizen of heaven** (3:20-21).

– **Focus on trusting God and praying to Him about everything** (4:6-7).

– **Focus on the strength that Christ provides to do all things for Him** (4:13).

True encouragement in life comes when one refuses to allow his level of joy to be set by the world and chooses rather to “rejoice” in his relationship “in the Lord” (3:1, 3; 4:4, 10).

13 Things Every Teen Needs to Know (#1)

By: Selected

I want to share some things with you that I hope you will truly consider, take to heart and keep with you for the rest of your life. Not because I’m saying them but because they represent absolute and vital truths that will impact your future on this earth and in eternity.

Lock this in your heart: **There is a God, He is alive!** There are going to be people (teachers, friends, family members, strangers) who will tease you, challenge you and try to get you to reject the existence and power of God. Don’t listen to them; don’t follow after them. Listen to and follow rational analysis and real evidence.

Truth: The universe is here! But, how? Every “effect” must have an adequate “cause” to explain its existence. When you see an jet airplane in the sky (an “effect”), there must be an adequate “cause” to explain its origin and existence. What is the adequate “cause” of the existence of this universe, this world and even you, which are all contingent on something outside themselves? Did it come from nothing? Has it always existed? Or, is there a “prime cause” and “sustaining cause” (i.e., a supernaturally powerful and eternal being) who created all things? That’s the only thing that makes sense and supports the evidence, isn’t it?

Truth: The universe evidences design, order and arrangement. But,

how? Design demands a designer. When you see a jet airplane in the sky (which evidences tremendous design), there must have been an intelligent designer who crafted such detail and precision. (It didn’t happen by accident, did it!) The universe, this world and even your own body demonstrate such incredible detail and precision, that it is impossible to come to any other rational conclusion than there must have been an Intelligent Designer who crafted it all! The almighty, all-powerful, all-knowing, infinite God is the only Designer possible, isn’t He?

Truth: The human race possesses a moral consciousness. But, how? While moral codes vary from culture to culture, our world is still a moral society and rational persons recognize moral responsibility. That is why, when you see a jet airplane in the sky, you would never expect it to drop nuclear bombs on the neighborhood school full of children. Because one’s moral code can progress, degenerate and even be criticized, it is obvious that there is a higher objective standard to which all humans hold (whether they realize it or not). From where did that sense of moral obligation come? The evolutionary process from an amoeba? If there is no God, there would be no morality. But there is morality, therefore, there is a God!

This is a lot to digest, but remember: **There is a God!**

Upcoming Events

TODAY!: Fall Quarter Bible Classes begin.

TODAY!: The Children’s Summer Series Awards will be given out during our monthly potluck that will be held after morning worship. Please bring a potluck dish/dessert to share. There will also be a 12:45 pm service.

Sunday, Sept. 10: Youth Devo here at the building hosted by the Siegel family.

Friday, Sept. 29: Game night here at the building at 6:30pm. Please bring finger foods and games.

Area Events:

Doug Jobses will be a speaker at the Hill Country Creation Tour on Sat. Sept. 16th. Please refer to the bulletin board in the hallway for more information.

Nov. 11: Weber Road church of Christ Bible Bowl.

Prayer List

Prayer Requests:

Members

Jeff Cannady, Les Daltry, Kin and Sandra Marie, Veronica Serenil, and Clark Withers.

Compassion Card Program:

If you know of a non-Christian who is in need of encouragement, and lives within a 30-mile radius of Victoria, please see James Cammock.

Volunteers Needed

Sign up sheets for hosting Youth Devos, preparing communion, and opening & closing the building for 2023 are on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Service Roster

Week of September 3, 2023

Sunday Morning
Scripture Reading..... Blake Jacobs
Song Leader Doug Jobses

Opening Prayer..... Mark FitzSimmons
Closing Prayer..... Clifton Rutherford

Lord’s Supper & Offering
Bread.....Mike Atkinson
Cup.....James Cammock
Offering..... Ron White
Assist..... Willie Fossati
Assist.....Jack Jobses
Assist.....Mack Terry

Sunday Evening
Song Leader Kevin Sheeran

Opening Prayer..... Ken Dorries
Closing Prayer.....Bryce Dolan

Lord’s Supper & Offering.....Willie Fossati/
James Cammock

Wednesday Evening
Adult Class Brandon Starling
Devotional Ron White

Other
Prepare Communion for September.....Bass

Congregational News

Birthdays
Natalie Prince.....Sept. 6
Herb Ramsey.....Sept. 9

Anniversaries
Petro & Sarah Castillo.....Sept. 5

Food Helpers for the month of Sept. - Team A

If you have any prayer requests or upcoming events to be announced, please contact our secretary, Nina Siegel, at (361) 573-0030 or email office.midtownchurch@gmail.com

Our Elders

Mark FitzSimmons
Ron White

Our Deacons

James Cammock—Evangelism
Lupe Escojido— Benevolence
Bryant Siegel—Education and Finance

Our Preacher

Brandon Starling

Weekly Reading

I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my
fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."
Psalm 91:2

Service Times

Sunday Morning Bible Class.....9:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship.....5:00 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Class.....7:00 P.M.

Attendance Records

Week of August 27, 2023

A.M. Bible Class.....79
A.M. Worship.....108
P.M. Worship.....71
Wednesday Bible Class.....61

*Financial information is located on the bulletin
board in the hallway.*

Supported Works

John & Carla Moore *Bible Land Passages*

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CHURCH OF CHRIST

5901 N. Main
Victoria, TX 77904
361-573-0030

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