

**Xenos Christian Fellowship
 Christian Ministry Light Unit 3
 Practical Issues
 Week 5 – Encouragement and Admonition**

Encouragement and Admonition

(Eph. 4:15) but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,

(1 Thess. 5:14*) And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.

The importance of encouragement and admonition

	Our Problem	God's Remedy	Definition
ENCOURAGEMENT	We are weak and live in a broken and hostile world	Strengthen us by communicating God's indicatives/promises from the Bible.	Communication of God's truth in love in ways that strengthen Christians to go on following God's will.
ADMONITION	We are sinful and prone to self-deception, and live in a world designed to seduce us from God.	Seeks to correct them by communicating God's imperatives/commands.	Moral correction through verbal confrontation which is motivated by love.

Encouraging one another

Parakaleo comes from the root *kaleo* ("to call") and the preposition *para* ("around").

Four Types of Encouragement:

1.

Affirmation of position:

Affirmation of potential:

John 1:42

2.

All humans have an innate need to know that their accomplishments matter.

Paul was a master encourager and it is one of the keys to his great leadership.

(1 Thes. 1:2-8) "2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, 4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; 5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. 6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything."

(Philemon 1:4-7) "I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers, 5 because I hear of your love, and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints; 6 and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake. 7 For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother."

How is this different from flattery or manipulation?

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3.

(Gal. 6:2) Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

(1 Thess. 4:14,18) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus...Therefore comfort one another with these words.

4.

(Heb. 12:11-13) All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. 12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

(Gal. 6:9,10) And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

(1 Peter 5:9,10) But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. 10 And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

How To Become An Effective Encourager

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Qualification:

- *Take creative initiative.*

(Heb. 10:24,25*) and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

Edification goals for home group:

With spouse/close friends/disciples:

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(James 1:19) This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;

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(Rom. 15:4) For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

(Titus 1:9) holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Qualification:

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Warning: Resist these three common lies...

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“Son of encouragement” (Acts 4:36)

Admonishing one another

Definition:

(Rom. 15:14*) And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.

- **"Goodness"**
- **"Knowledge"**

(Col. 3:16) Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

(Mat. 18:15) "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

Why Admonition Is Unpopular

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Receiving Admonition

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(Prov 9:8) Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you. Reprove a wise man, and he will love you.

(Prov 10:17) He is on the path of life who heeds instruction, but he who forsakes reproof goes astray.

(Prov 12:1) Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.

(Prov 13:18) Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline, but he who regards reproof will be honored.

(Prov 15:5) A fool rejects his father's discipline, but he who regards reproof is prudent.

(Prov 15:32,33) He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor comes humility.

(Prov 17:10) A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.

(Prov 24:24,25) He who says to the wicked, "You are righteous," peoples will curse him, nations will abhor him; But to those who rebuke the wicked will be delight, and a good blessing will come upon them.

(Prov 27:5,6) Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

(Prov 29:1) A man who hardens his neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy.

(Eccles. 7:5) It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man than for one to listen to the song of fools.

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Receiving Admonition in our Close Relationships

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Giving Admonition

- 1.

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The context of Matthew 18:15

- You may need to consider the following questions. They sometimes apply and sometimes don't. God often uses these considerations to express his wisdom on the issue.

Does the Bible clearly describe this issue as sin?

Do you know for a fact that the person did what you think, or is it hearsay?

Do you tend to be overly critical or overly soft in your dealings with others?

Be especially careful about judging motives of others when their actions are not clearly wrong (1 Cor. 4:5).

Is the person already aware of this issue and working on it?

How serious is the issue?

What is his/her role in the church?

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2.

Qualifications:

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3.

Face-to-face is preferable to a phone call. Don't use email!

Qualification:

4.

5.

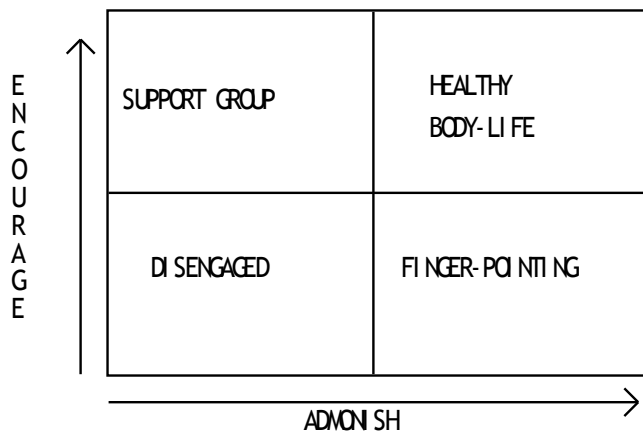
6.

7.

Qualification:

(2 Tim. 2:24) And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

Assessing Relationships & Groups



"DISENGAGED" – Also known as "playing church." This is the antithesis of Christian Body-life and often characterizes the modern church. Our criticism of the traditional church (RITUAL OF FELLOWSHIP; TURN & GREET; FELLOWSHIP HALL) is about this. People are physically present during meetings, but that's about it. People rarely get together outside of meetings. Or if they do get together, it is usually limited to diffuse settings or superficial and safe conversations. People are courteous, even friendly—but distant. There is an atmosphere of superficiality, sometimes an unspoken conspiracy to not be deeply involved in one another's lives.

"FINGER-POINTING" - This is what characterized many of our home churches during the early 1980's. People were being admonished too frequently (sometimes for things that

should have been tolerated, sometimes for things that weren't even sin). People were being held accountable for things they hadn't agreed to do. This kind of group or relationship is usually goal- and task-oriented, and highly activist. But because there is little encouragement, a legalistic climate develops. The goals of the group or focus on sin tends to dominate so there is limited time and energy to help people in need. Anger and self-righteousness rather than genuine love become the motivation for admonition. In this climate, it's easy to be afraid to open up about your weaknesses and failures, because you're afraid you will be judged. It's easy to simply perform in the externals to earn approval and acceptance. People burn out, or run away because they can't take the pressure . . .

"SUPPORT GROUP" - This could also be called the "schmoozing" atmosphere. Our culture, working from a humanistic and deterministic base, approves of encouragement and regards it as essential for our fragile psyches. The theory seems to be "If we just affirm and encourage people, they will naturally grow." But it hates admonition and regards it as destructive and an unloving violation of personal privacy. Of course, this is inadequate because people are also sinful and prone to self-deception. When we are not being called on to take responsibility to deal with our sins and move forward, our moral problems and low commitment go unaddressed and therefore tend to get worse. The group or relationship takes on a warm, but soft tone. It becomes more resistant to confrontation, challenge, calls to action—seeing them more and more as "unloving," "intrusive," "legalistic." People who see the need for admonition get frustrated because they aren't supported in this difficult work. They may even be viewed as the unloving one, the problem in the group.

HEALTHY BODY-LIFE - In a home group or relationship which has healthy Body-life, people are communicating both encouragement and admonition in appropriate and timely ways. The leaders have modeled this, and others have begun to imitate them. The atmosphere is warm, but also forward moving. People feel affirmed, but also challenged. The chart is somewhat deceptive here, because in a healthy group encouragement will be more frequent than admonition. This is the ideal toward which we should strive.
NOTE: We have a policy in this church that in serious situations you can "go over the head" of your leaders. Every home group has a staff consultant that can be approached for advice if there is not resolution on the home group level. We also have a Grievance Board if needed.

Playing your role

(1 Corinthians 9:23-27) And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it. (24) Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. (25) And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. (26) Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; (27) but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

(2 Corinthians 3:5-6a) Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant...

Conclusion:

(Luke 6:46-49) "And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? 47 "Everyone who comes to Me, and hears My words, and acts upon them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock; and when a flood rose, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 "But the one who has heard, and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house upon the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great."

Memory Verses

Rom. 15:14* - All Christians have the responsibility to admonish one another. Goodness (love) and (biblical) knowledge are the two keys to effective admonition.

1 Thes. 5:14* - All Christians should practice encouragement and admonition as appropriate.

Heb. 10:24,25* - Effective encouragement requires prayerful forethought. We should come together with other Christians willing and ready to encourage them.

Assignment

Study for the exam!