



Spiritual Medicine

Hebrews 3:12-13

¹² Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.



Here is the BIG IDEA in this lesson:

Encouragement is the spiritual antidote for a hard heart.

Introduction:

Could you use a good dose of encouragement? Everyone could. George Adams once said, "Encouragement is oxygen to the soul." Without it, we die a slow death. The Word of God describes encouragement as a spiritual antidote for a hard heart. The letter to the Hebrews was written to a group of people who needed some spiritual encouragement, just as we do. From a theological standpoint, the central theme of the book is the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ in all things. As our Mediator, He reconciles us; as our Advocate, He restores us; but as our Great High Priest, He sustains us. The Lord Jesus Christ is set before us as One whose supremacy is of the highest order and whose sympathy is of the greatest possible degree (4:14-16). Therefore, if we are to experience and express true encouragement, we must learn it from Him. From a practical standpoint, the overarching aim of the writer is to show us how to make use of Christ's prophetic office as God's Word to us (Chapters 7, 12).

We must keep in mind **two audiences** if we are to interpret this book properly: *the convinced* and *the committed*. The first group was *convinced*, but *unconverted*. The second group was *committed*, but *immature* (5:11-14). In the first group, they believed all *the right things*, but their hearts had never been changed; because of this, the writer gave them a stern warning to beware that they "*do not drift away*" nor "*neglect so great a salvation*" (2:1-3).

The second group, most likely, was very active in the church. They received proper instruction and had ample time to grow, but they were not practicing what they had learned. They were still drinking spiritual milk and unable to eat the spiritual meat of the Word (5:12-14).

The spiritual danger they faced was three-fold:

1. The presence of “*thorns and thistles*” in their lives (6:7-8; Cf. Matt.13:22)
2. A lack of *spiritual fruit* or “*things that accompany salvation*” in their lives (6:9; Cf. Gal.5:22ff)
3. A failure to show spiritual “*diligence*” in their lives (6:10-12)

The spiritual prescription from the Divine Physician is *encouragement*. Read Hebrews 3:12-13 and 10:24-25.

- **Hebrews 3:12-13**—“*Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*”
- **Hebrews 10:24-25**—“*And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 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.*”

Let’s discover what it means to encourage one another.



Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

- A. According to Hebrews 3:12-13, what condition are we to avoid?
- B. What do the following verses teach us about unbelief?
 - John 5:33-38
 - John 10:25-26
 - Hebrews 3:16-19
 - Hebrews 4:2
 - Hebrews 12:1
 - Hebrews 12:15-17

C. Look at Hebrews 3:13 carefully. We are given three directions to follow concerning encouragement. What are they? Here are some clues:

1. *"But encourage one another..."* We are to encourage one another _____
2. *"...day after day..."* We are to encourage one another _____
3. *"...as long as it is still called 'Today'..."* We are to encourage one another _____

D. **What is encouragement?** The Greek word for "encourage" is "parakaleo." "Para" means *by the side* and "kaleo" means *to call*. It is a call to one's side, hence, *to aid*. Its aim is to produce a particular effect: to comfort and to strengthen. It is a side-by-side ministry. The Holy Spirit is called the "parakletos" because He undertakes Christ's office and acts as His substitute in the world while He is physically away. Encouragement is a *verbal* ministry and a *visible* ministry of *pouring courage into the soul*.

E. According to Hebrews 3:13b, what is the consequence of neglecting this duty?

F. What did Christ give us in order to encourage us? Read John 14:16.

G. Where do we find encouragement?

- Personally? Read Romans 15:4-5.
- Corporately? Read Romans 1:11-12.

H. How do we encourage others? Read Hebrews 10:24-25.

Practically, this means we need to:

- *Ask* what another brother/sister needs; do not presume to know what he/she needs.
- *Be faithful in the ministry of attendance*. Simply showing up not only puts you in an environment of blessings, but it is often an encouragement to others.



Application: Making Truth Stick

Here's a poem to ponder:

If you're feeling low and worthless, there seems nothing you can do,
Just take courage and remember, there is someone needing you.
You were created for a purpose, for a part in God's great Plan;
Bear ye one another's burdens, so fulfill Christ's law to man.

Are you Father, Son, or Daughter? You've a work, none else can do.
Are you Husband, Wife, or Mother? There is someone needing you.
If perhaps in bed you're lying, you can smile or press the hand
Of the one who tells his story, he will know you understand.

There are many sad and lonely, and discouraged, not a few,
Who a little cheer are needing, and there's someone needing you.
Someone needs your faith and courage, someone needs your love and prayer,
Someone needs your inspiration, thus to help their cross to bear.
Do not think your work is ended, there is much that you can do.
And as long as you're on earth, there is someone needing you.²

Being a doer of the Word (2 Tim.3:16)

1. What did I learn ("teaching")?
2. Where do I fall short ("reproof")?
3. What do I need to do about it ("correction")?
4. How can I make this a consistent part of my life ("training")?

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Answer Key

Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

- A. an evil, unbelieving heart
- B. What do the following verses teach us about unbelief?
- it causes one to reject those whom God sends.
 - it perverts the plainest teaching
 - it excludes men from heaven
 - it renders the Word unprofitable to the soul
 - it impedes spiritual progress
 - it is the root of all bitterness
- C.
1. mutually
 2. continually
 3. urgently
- E. becoming hardened by the deceitfulness of sin
- F. The Holy Spirit
- G.
- a. The Word of God
 - b. fellowship with like-minded believers
- H. by considering how to stimulate one another

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Previous versions: January 6, 13, 15 2018

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