

I am convinced that everyone needs encouragement. We live in an imperfect world full of problems and troubles. Daily, the attacks on Christianity seem to get worse. Doing the right thing (according to the Bible) only lands one in condemnation by those who follow a worldly standard. If you have the gift of encouragement--use it! The rewards may not be physical or monetary, but they are there nonetheless. The difference you can make in someone's life may be the difference that keeps them faithful, that keeps them trying, that keeps them from giving up all hope.

I am blessed to have several encouragers in my life. When I am down I can count on them to pick me up and keep me going. Oh, to be able to return the favor! And one of the most interesting things is that those who I count as my encouragers do it not looking for public recognition or flattery. They do it because they know of its value, and the good it accomplishes. They encourage so that others will do good, and that in turn helps them to do good.

Encouragers are positive people who see the glass as half full, the silver lining in every dark cloud, and know that it is always the darkest just before dawn. Encouragers have a way of turning a bad situation into a good one; they brighten a room when they enter it and find ways to snatch victory out of the jaws of defeat. Those who have exercised this wonderful virtue have the ability to be an encouragement by their presence alone. The very fact they are there is a message of courage and hope to those who are in despair.

If you have ever wondered what your "gift" is, and are still puzzled as to what contribution you can make to the body of Christ let me suggest that you try to be a Barnabas--be an encourager. A card here, a phone call there; an email, a little gift, and especially a special word spoken can do volumes for those who need support.

See you Sunday! -gls