

Community of Encouragement

Hebrews 3:13, 10:24-25

Scripture

Hebrews 3:12-13 ¹² See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. (NIV)
 10:24-25 ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (NIV)

Main Idea

Background & Focus

Both of our "encourage one another" passages are taken from the book of Hebrews. The community at Hebrews was in danger of leaving behind their community based on the gospel for their former community of traditional Judaism. The author of the book calls this community to see the eternal consequences of turning from Jesus to any Jesus-less form of religion. In Hebrews, the Christian life is presented as a journey of faith, since it is from faith that all other obedience springs forth. Because it is faith that unites us to Jesus, the author presents Jesus in all the glory and splendor of the gospel to strengthen our trust in the completed work of Jesus for us and the promises in Jesus that are yet to come.

Encouragement is the practice of coming alongside another person in their journey of faith and pointing them to the gospel. Encouragement can take a variety of forms but centers on a commitment to use your words and your presence to motivate others toward a life of faith. The focus on this study then is to foster the practice of "journeying together" in our walks with Christ.

Starters

- Describe a time when you felt encouraged in your relationship with God by the words or the presence of another Christian.

Discussion

Q1: According to 3:12, 13, sin turns us away from God through deceit and unbelief. Does this ring true in your life? And how might community counteract sin's strategies?

Q2: To guard our hearts against unbelief and deceit this passage (v13) tells us to encourage one another daily. Why do you think God points us to encouragement as a daily need?

Q3: Is it possible in our day and age to make encouragement a daily practice? What keeps us from being daily encouragers and what might daily encouragement look like in our setting?

Q4: Often, in our spiritual lives, we can become preoccupied with our own needs and growth. 10:24 calls us to consider/think about how we can spur and motivate others to love and good deeds. As we seek to do this for each other in this group, let's discuss how each one of us is motivated to love and good deeds. (i.e. What kinds of things spur you on and motivate in your walk with Jesus?)

Q5: In 10:25, the stress is on regularly meeting together. How can we develop the bad "habit" of not meeting together? And why is actually being in the physical presence of others such an important part of encouragement?

Q6: In the broader context of these passages, the author of Hebrews encourages us by pointing to the richness and depths of Christ's work for us in the gospel.

In Chapters 3, 4, 5– he points to Jesus as a sympathetic and powerful high priest
In Chapters 10 – he points to the complete and finished work of Jesus for our forgiveness
In Chapter 11 – he points to the examples of those who believed despite hardship

In light of this, let's encourage each other by sharing how we have been encouraged recently by the richness and depth of the gospel.

Prayer

Share an area in your relationship with God where you are in need of daily encouragement. As prayer needs are shared, pair up as couples or as individuals to commit to a week of daily encouragement for the needs that are shared.