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Encourage

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WHO HAS BEEN THE MOST ENCOURAGING PERSON IN YOUR LIFE?

The **POINT** > Encouragement strengthens relationships.

## > ACTS 9:26-28; 11:21-26

<sup>26</sup>And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. <sup>27</sup>But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup>So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord.

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<sup>21</sup>And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. <sup>22</sup>The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and

they sent Barnabas to Antioch. <sup>23</sup>When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, <sup>24</sup>for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. <sup>25</sup>So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, <sup>26</sup>and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.



# THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

## FACT:

*The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.* This is a pangram, a sentence that uses every letter in the English language. The ways we use our words—and letters—is important.



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // FAMILY

Families are a part of God's plan for filling the earth with His image-bearers, and are responsible for providing for the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and emotional needs of family members.

When I was a kid, there were all sorts of things my parents made me do: brush my teeth, clean my room, and when I was a little older, cut the grass. Most of it I didn't mind very much, but there was one thing they made me do that I absolutely hated—taking Flintstone vitamins. Today, these are still some of the most popular kids' vitamins available, and they're chewy and delicious. However, when I was a kid, they were hard and chalky, and sour and gross! Many parents want to make sure their kids get everything they need to be healthy, so they go the extra mile with vitamins on top of a healthy diet. And as it turns out, a daily dose is good for us.

We could use a regular dose of something else, too. Daily encouragement can provide a spiritual and emotional boost that helps us in many ways. We've been created to live in relationship with others, and we long for acceptance and affirmation. We need a healthy supply of encouragement from others in order to grow as God intends.

Unfortunately, too many of us face a deficiency in this area. Barnabas was a natural encourager, and his life challenges us to be a source of encouragement to others.

## ACTS 9:26-28

**1** When have you felt like the new kid on the block?

**2** What risks do you take when you put yourself on the line for an outsider?



*To be a Christian is to accept the road of suffering. Still, it is a journey we can make with joy.  
#BSFLRelationships*

## ACTS 11:21-24

**3** How do we intentionally grow into the role of an encourager?

**4** What role did encouragement play in the church at Antioch?

**5** When have you been blessed through the encouragement of others?

## ACTS 11:25-26

**6** What are some things that might get in the way of people using their spiritual gifts in the church?

**7** What might hold us back from encouraging others?

**8** How can we actively encourage others to use their spiritual gifts?



# LIVE IT OUT



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // FAMILY

*Families are a part of God's plan for filling the earth with His image-bearers, and are responsible for providing for the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and emotional needs of family members.*

According to God's design, our family is the place we're to experience His love in the most powerful ways. God calls us His children, which means we are the objects of His love and affection, and He desires that we'd experience the same within the context of our earthly family relationships. This is why it's so important that we intentionally use our words and actions to show love and encouragement to our parents, siblings, and other family members.

## > CHRIST

Read Philippians 2:1-2 and 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17.

**9** How does Christ give encouragement to the people of God? How has Jesus personally encouraged you?

**10** How are we called to respond to His encouragement? How will you live these out this week?

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

**FAMILY**

COMMUNITY  
& WORLD

## > COMMUNITY

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Read the following verses:

- > 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- > Ephesians 4:29
- > Romans 14:19
- > Hebrews 3:13

**11** What do these say about encouraging others? How will you intentionally encourage others this week?



**12** Express thanks to someone who has been an encouragement to you.

## > CULTURE

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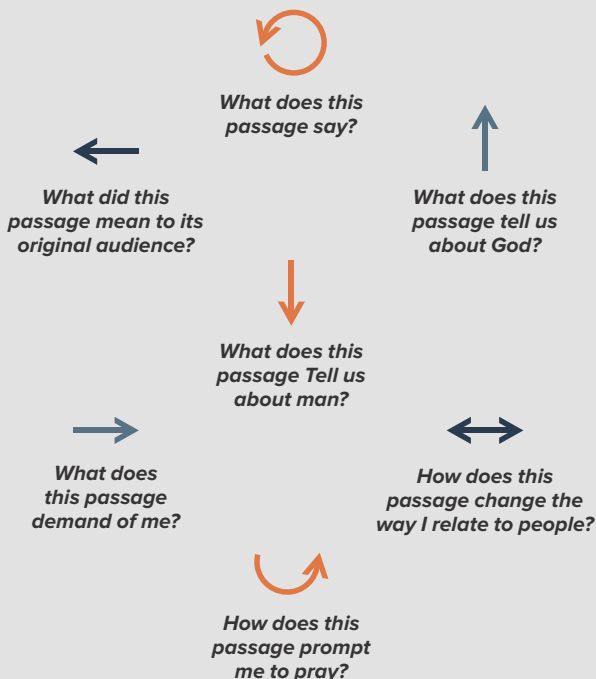
Though we disagree with the people of the world about many things, we are nonetheless called to show them love in real ways. After all, Jesus died for us while we were sinners and living in rebellion against God.

**13** How will you intentionally be an encouragement to a lost friend this week? Let your friend know about the encouragement you find in the church, in the Bible, and in Jesus.

# DAILY DEVOTIONS



## The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



## Day One ROMANS 1:8

Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome. Though he'd desired to visit these Christians and get to know them on a personal level, he hadn't been able to make it. But he'd heard about them, just like many others throughout the world. The people in the Roman church had been transformed through knowing Christ. This affected everything about their lives, and people couldn't help but notice. Because Rome was essentially the center of the world, people came from all over, and when they left, they talked about these Christians wherever they went. Knowing that these people were living faithful lives—and that the news of Jesus was spreading because of their faithfulness—was a great encouragement to Paul. We need to live the same way as this young church in Rome.

➤ **Why were people taking notice of these Christians?**

➤ **How can you help the news of Jesus spread?**

## Day Two

# ROMANS 1:9

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Following his encounter with the risen Christ, Paul committed his life to serving the Lord and immediately began preaching the good news of Jesus wherever he went (Acts 9:20). Having been a Jewish religious leader, Paul knew what it was to follow the law for all the wrong reasons, and it was all empty. But after coming to faith, Paul knew what it was to worship (the literal meaning of “serve”) not out of duty, but from his heart. And one of the most important ways Paul served God, making His worth known, was to share the gospel with the people he encountered.

- **Who do you know who doesn't have a relationship with God?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **How is declaring the gospel an important way we are to worship God?**

## Day Three

# ROMANS 1:10

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Paul genuinely wanted to visit the Christians in Rome. It is likely that the church was started by people who came to faith in Christ at Pentecost. They'd been in Jerusalem for the festival, and when they returned back to Rome, they began their own Christian community. However, they'd never been led by anyone with apostolic authority, and Paul wanted to visit so he could instruct them in essential matters. Plus, because Paul was a Roman citizen, the city and the church there likely had a special place in his heart. But God hadn't yet made a way for Paul to go there, and instead, he wrote this letter to share what he was thinking. Thankfully, today we have the Book of Romans which helps us to understand so much about salvation by grace through faith, the nature of the law, judgment against sin, and more.

- **Why do you think Paul wanted to visit Rome?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **When have you wanted something, but God didn't allow it? How did good come from this?**

## Day Four

# ROMANS 1:11

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One of the specific reasons Paul wanted to visit was so they would understand the spiritual gifts and how they are to be used in the life of the church. When we come to faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit gives every believer a spiritual gift to be used in building up the church. Some are preachers and teachers, which is essential in the church. Others are servants or encouragers, and these are just as essential. Having a spiritual gift is a great privilege. It's also a responsibility, because God wants to use our gifts to impact others, and if we don't put them to use, others miss out on what we have to offer. Paul knew that for the church in Rome to thrive, they needed to receive, understand, and apply their spiritual gifts.

- **What is your spiritual gift? (If you don't know, ask a leader or pastor at your church to help you understand.)**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **How is God calling you to put your gifts to use?**

## Day Five

# ROMANS 1:12

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Among the reasons Paul wanted to visit Rome was not only to encourage them, but to receive encouragement from these faithful believers. He'd heard stories of their faithfulness, yet he wanted to hear from them firsthand. One of the greatest ways we can encourage one another is by walking side-by-side with our friends in faithful living. At times, following Jesus will be difficult. After all, He said the world will come against us. But when we have fellow believers alongside us who are living faithfully, this is one of the greatest encouragements we can know.

- **Who do you know that lives faithfully, even when it's difficult? How have they been an encouragement to you?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **How are you walking side-by-side with Christian friends in order to encourage them?**