

SOME THINGS GOD WANTS US TO CONSIDER
PART 5—CONSIDER CHRIST’S PEOPLE
HEBREWS 10:24-25

Introduction

The last four weeks we have been looking at some things that Scripture says that God wants us to consider!

We said that the word “*consider*” is defined as “*To view attentively; to view or examine with attention; to fix the mind on, with a view to careful examination; to think on with care.*”

In the first message we saw that we are *TO CONSIDER THE LORD!*
In the second we saw that we are *TO CONSIDER HIS CREATION!*
In the third we saw that we are *TO CONSIDER CHRIST’S PERSON!*
In the fourth message we saw how we are *TO CONSIDER CHRIST’S SUFFERING!*

Today, in this final segment, I want us to see that God wants us to **CONSIDER CHRIST’S PEOPLE! (Read Scripture)**

As the people of God we are **to consider one another!** Amen!
This is talking about how we are to be a source of **encouragement** to one another **in the right things!**

I believe the Lord would have us to first see the **principle** of encouragement and then see an **example** of encouragement.

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

The word translated “*exhorting*” means “*to call to one’s side, to comfort, to console, to strengthen.*”

Basically, it means **to put courage in** or **to encourage**. At the time of the writing of Hebrews, there was a great persecution. Our tendency during such trying times would be to save our skin or as some would put it “*to each his own.*”

But, the book of Hebrews encourages us to **encourage one another.**

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Someone wrote, “*Encouragement is the kind of expression that helps someone want to be a better Christian, even when life is rough... To encourage is to inspire another with courage.*”

It is interesting to note that this word translated “*exhorting*” is related to the one translated for the name Jesus gave to the Holy Spirit when He called Him the “*Comforter*”.

A lot of folks want to equate the works of the Spirit with signs and wonders. But, when we **exhort or encourage** one another, we show that the Holy Spirit really dwells in our lives! **Exhortation or encouragement**, is one of the best indicators that the Spirit is working in and through our lives!

The word “*exhorting*” here is in the *present tense*. i.e. It is speaking of a habit or a way of life. In fact, the book of Hebrews here suggests that it is to be **continual!** Vs. 24 “*...exhorting one another and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.*” (That suggests we should be **increasing our exhortation** of each other.)

Not only is it in the *present tense*, but it is also in the *active voice*. It means that we aren’t to wait for others to **exhort or encourage** us! But rather, **we are to take the initiative!**

We must **exhort or encourage** even if others could not, even if others would not! Note that we are to “*exhort one another*”. That means that it is not only for pastors or teachers or others in leadership positions, but for every one of us!

Hebrews 3:12-13

When another believer is discouraged and we **fail to encourage**, sin can deceive and harden his heart to the point that it becomes sinful and unbelieving, leading that person to turn his back from God.

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Someone wrote, *“People live by encouragement. Without it they die. Slowly... Sadly... Bitterly.”*

Hebrews 10:24 says, *“let us consider...”* Again, the word *“consider”* means *“to observe attentively, fix one’s eyes or mind upon.”*

In short, we are to focus on **exhorting or encouraging** one another!

It is to be intentional! Maybe we should even try to think of creative ways of **exhorting and encouraging** others!

Verse 24 continues, *“...let us consider one another to **provoke** unto love and to good works.”*

To *“provoke”* means *“to stir up, to stimulate or incite someone to do something.”* And that SOMETHING is a very POSITIVE SOMETHING...to *“love and good works.”*

A. We Are To Provoke (Exhort) One Another Unto Love!

1. Love For The Lord!

Deuteronomy 6:5—“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

Matthew 22:37-38—“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment.”

2. Love For Others!

Matthew 22:39—“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

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a. Love For Others Includes Believers.

John 13:34-35—“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Hebrews 6:10-11—“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:”

Galatians 5:13—“...by love serve one another.”

Galatians 5:22 reveals that love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit of God that lives within us!

b. Love For Others Includes Unbelievers As Well. (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13)

Jesus illustrated who our neighbor was by telling the Parable of the Good Samaritan. **(Luke 10:29-36)**

Who needs me to be a neighbor?

B. We Are To Provoke (Exhort) One Another Unto Good Works!

*Titus 3:8—“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might **be careful to maintain good works**. These things are good and profitable unto men.”*

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Matthew 5:16—“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Good works are works that have their foundation in the Lord Jesus Christ Who alone is good! And the works are related closely to love! They are a demonstration of love!

*1 John 3:18—“My little children, let us **not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.**”*

C. We Are To Provoke (Exhort) One Another To Attend The Assembly Together!

1. Forsaking The Assembly Weakens The Church!

1 Corinthians 12 Paul likens the Church to the body.

2. Forsaking The Assembly Discourages The Church!

Now, let’s read **verse 25** again. We usually use this verse to remind people to be faithful in attending Church services don’t we.

Note the conjunction “*but*.” It gives a strong contrast between the clauses “*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is*” and “*exhorting one another.*”

That means that, even if we attend Church services, if we fail to **exhort or encourage** others, we have not obeyed this verse to the full extent. **Exhortation or encouragement** is to be one of the main purposes of our meeting together as the people of God!

William Barclay wrote, “*It is easy to laugh at men’s ideals; it is easy to discourage others. The world is full of discouragers. We have a Christian duty to encourage one another. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet. Blessed is the man who speaks such a word.*”

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THE PRINCIPAL OF ENCOURAGEMENT...

II. AN EXAMPLE OF ENCOURAGEMENT—BARNABAS!

We need a flesh and blood example so we can see how it works out. Let’s look at the life of someone whom people know more for his nickname than his real name. His name is *Joses*.

Many of you may be thinking, “*Joses?* I don’t remember any *Joses.*” But if I mention “*Barnabas,*” that is the name that is more familiar!

We see him first in **Acts 4:34-37.**

Friends gave us nicknames either to shorten our names, to point out a facial or bodily feature, or to highlight a character quality in us!

Joses earned the nickname “*Barnabas*” for his unselfish, sacrificial act of selling his field to support others who had need.

The book of Acts singled out *Barnabas* among those who sold their properties to help others. Either the donation was big enough so the apostles took notice of it or he himself had set this trend of sacrificial sale.

Whatever the reason, the apostles dubbed him “*Son of Consolation*” (or *Encouragement*) or “*one who encourages others.*”

Note that it was not *Barnabas* or just any other Christian who nicknamed him. But it was the apostles themselves who put their seal of approval on him.

So, if the Apostles were with us today, what kind of nickname would they give us for who we are or what we are doing?

Note that **Acts 11:24** describes him as “*a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.*”

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Remember what I said about **encouragement** being a sure sign that the Holy Spirit is working in and through us?

Note that after giving the example of Barnabas, we see the error of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. Peter described Ananias as one whose heart Satan filled. Acts had set a contrast between Barnabas and Ananias. Satan controlled Ananias. But the Spirit controlled Barnabas.

This gives us a clue as to why he lived up to his nickname “*Son of Consolation*” or “*Encourager*.” The Comforter was in control of his life. Let me ask you, “**Who is in control of your life?**”

Look at **Acts 9:26-27**. Here we find Barnabas sticking out his neck for Saul, who later on became Paul the apostle. Saul had just become a believer himself. But he had persecuted Christians before that time so nobody wanted anything much to do with him. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles.

Barnabas supported Saul when no one else would. I wonder what might have happened to Saul if Barnabas had not sponsored him?

Later on, Barnabas gave Saul his first ministry break. When God opened a door in Antioch, the early Church sent Barnabas there. Look at **Acts 11:23-24**.

True to his nickname, we see the *Son Of Consolation* **exhorted them!** Here we also find that one way to encourage people is to exhort them to cleave to the Lord with all their heart! (i.e. be faithful)

Barnabas could have taken the Antioch work for himself. Yet he took time, money and effort to search for Saul in Tarsus. Look at **Acts 11:25-26**. His investment in Saul paid off. Their ministry was so effective that “*the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.*”

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Now, when God sent the team on their first missionary trip, Barnabas took with them his cousin John Mark as their helper. But notice what happened in **Acts 13:13**. Scripture is silent as to why this happened.

But some time later Paul wanted to do a follow-up. Again, true to his encouraging form, Barnabas wanted to give John Mark a second chance. Look at **Acts 15:36-40**.

This is the last time Barnabas’ name appears in Acts. The focus zooms in on Paul from here till the end of the book. Barnabas left a prominent partner and chose to stand by a person dubbed as a “*failure*” or a “*quitter*.”

Many years later, we see Paul actually commending John Mark to the Church at Colosse in Colossians 4:10.

Colossians 4:10—“Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

While awaiting his execution, Paul asked Timothy to bring with him John Mark. When a person is facing death, he likes to surround himself with close relatives and dear friends. Listen to Paul’s words: *2 Timothy 4:11—“Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”*

Looks like the encouraging efforts of Barnabas paid off. We need more encouragers like him. I wonder this morning, **could you** and **would you** be a Barnabas to others? You could, if you would!

There is probably no one **more needed** or **more valuable** or **more Christ-like** than the individual who is committed to the ministry of encouragement!