

# ENCOURAGEMENT

Study Guide and Notes

# Preface

## Points for Awareness and Action

- David, a man after God's own heart, needed to be encouraged in sudden and unforeseen circumstances. He was intentional in finding his encouragement from the Lord.
- Suggest two or three ways in which you would identify and gently introduce encouragement to someone who is within your circle of influence. How would you need to prepare your heart for this first?

# 1

## Points for Awareness and Action

- Suggest two examples of encouragement you have received in the past. One should be where there was the use of words in the encouragement you received, and the other should be an example of indirect or nonverbal encouragement. Which did you prefer? Why?
- Consider the four bullet points just before the end of the chapter you have read. Which of these four elements do you think you most need to concentrate on if you are to be an encouragement to other people?

# 2

## Points for Awareness and Action

- Think about the words of Paul in Ephesians 4:29: “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” What are you going to do in order to encourage people who hear the words you speak?
- God has given us His Word, a word not only to teach, rebuke, and correct, but also to train us in righteousness. Do you love His Word, the Bible? Identify one other verse in this chapter that will inspire you to encourage others. Then think of how you could apply the principles to help a friend or family member.

# 3

## Points for Awareness and Action

- Words that are fitly spoken really originate in God, the giver of every good and perfect gift. You, as an image-bearer of God, are able to reflect His character in your speech.
- Think for a moment about the way you speak, and the words you use. James says some very important things about our speech and how we use our tongues. Think of three areas in the way you use your tongue that might need attention.

# 4

## Points for Awareness and Action

- When we compare our lifestyles in our busy twenty-first century with the lifestyles of people in the New Testament, it is fair to say that we face particular challenges in how to keep in good spirits. (a) List the two greatest challenges to you and to others you know when it comes to overcoming discouragement. Then, (b), suggest how the Bible guides you to manage and overcome these challenges.
- The terms humility and Christlikeness have come up frequently in this chapter. Readers are encouraged to live a life of consecration to God. Think of two or three areas in your life that you might need to work on as you endeavor to develop or cultivate these graces. What strategies might you consider employing as you seek to live a life with clear and ongoing reference to God and His will in your day-to-day experience?

# 5

## Points for Awareness and Action

- Humility is a wonderful grace; Jesus demonstrated it perfectly. In your daily walk with Jesus, and as you endeavor to become more and more like Him, suggest what your greatest priority should be as you live in a world that has wrong views of humility.
- Self control is listed as one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit. Read the whole list in Galatians 5:22-23 and make it a point of prayer that the Lord will help you cultivate the work of his Spirit in your life, especially in light of the natural impulses of the flesh that so often are in conflict with life in the Spirit.

# 6

## Points for Awareness and Action

- Kindness originates in God Himself. A discouraged person is very likely in need of expressions of kindness. Think of two or three ways in which you may show kindness to people you know.
- Read Ephesians 4:29, and, to begin with, consider how many times in a day you might be tempted to speak discouragingly. Then, try to change the cycle, and see whether you can speak encouragingly and give grace the same number of times the following day.

# 7

## Points for Awareness and Action

- Showing encouragement to others is a highly intentional matter. You have to learn to think beyond yourself to the needs and circumstances of others. You will be amazed by how much people appreciate this!
- This chapter has emphasized four points in particular—attention, affirmation, appreciation, and affection. Map out in your mind how you can strategically cultivate the grace of encouraging others by applying these matters.

# 8

## Points for Awareness and Action

- From the various lists in this chapter, identify five areas in which you can plan to follow these guidelines. Be sure to put at least two of these into effect in the next week, and be sure to apply all five of them within the next four weeks.
- Jesus, sometimes referred to as a friend who sticks closer than a brother, is a great encourager. He encourages us especially by His Holy Spirit. Suggest three ways in which you can draw alongside others and become an instrument of love and grace to them in their discouragement.

# 9

## Points for Awareness and Action

- Consider the example of the employer who found out about his employee and his dedication to the care and nurture of his invalid wife. Do you know of other stories such as this one? In your own words, express the primary lesson to be learned from such incidents.
- How would you best develop a strategy to find out about a negative situation before judging what appears to be the cause?

# 10

## Points for Awareness and Action

- Think about how the Lord Jesus came down from heaven to be born, live, die, and rise again for ordinary people like you and me. We didn't love Him—in fact, we were unlovely; and yet He showed his love to us and while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).
- “To be an encouragement to others, I will intentionally live a life of consecration to God.” Discuss this quotation and how it might apply to you in light of your practical circumstances in day-to-day life.