

ENCOURAGEMENT | *Text Some Courage In*

Simple words can have a profound impact on someone's life. We know that's true when it comes to harmful words, but it's also true in the positive. So many times in my life I have been the recipient of a simple passing comment of encouragement that changed how I was thinking, or feeling, changed the trajectory of my day – even (a few pivotal times) I'd say the trajectory of my life. Have you ever experienced that? A kind word, at the right moment, that had a meaningful impact?

1 Thess. 5:11 says ***“Speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you'll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind. I know you're already doing this, but keep on doing it.” (MSG)***

I don't know how you think about the word “Encouragement” – whether that just sounds like sappy, insincere flattery; giving bland compliments or saying nice things. But the word encouragement literally means to “put courage into.” Courage is that dig-deep ability to do something that frightens or intimidates you; it's strength in the face of pain or grief or even just fatigue. And there's certainly enough of that going around in the world these days. In fact, there always is.

Encouragement is an important **spiritual practice** that helps to form the heart of Christ in us, **and** it's a powerful way of imparting the heart of God to others (*at a time when they may need it more than you know*). It's an infusion of strength and love, all at the same time.

Who could you put some courage into today, with a 2-minute text? Think of just 1 or 2 people who might be needing it right now.

And then consider: what could you say to them, to infuse that strength and love?

- What do you **admire** in them?
- Where do you see them **soaring**?
- Where do you see them **struggling**, and you want them to know they're not in it alone?
- Maybe it's a simple: you make me **smile** when you walk in a room
- Maybe it's something **deeper**

It doesn't need to be some big eloquent novel, simple comments can change lives. Take a minute & jot some thoughts down now.

I **encourage** you, if you didn't send the text right now, to find the time and space to impart those words somehow today.

In the book of Hebrews, the writer actually tells us to encourage one another *daily*. What would it look like this week for you to be someone who uses your words to put courage into the people around you?

Let's pray;

God we thank you for the gift of each other. May we take seriously our call to care deeply for one another, to build each other up with courage, and hope, and love, and words of life. Give us spirits that are sensitive to yours, so that we can both listen and respond as you lead. Train us to live this daily, God, we pray. Amen