

# Encourage Yourself in the Lord

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**Bobby's often quoted verse:** 1 Samuel 30:6 (ESV) And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

KJV "encouraged himself." Faced with incredibly demoralizing and frightening circumstances, David found a way to *renew his courage* by drawing on God as David knew Him. And that renewal of courage was the turning point that led to victory.

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Fear (anxiety, panic logic) is the enemy's goal for you because fear will lead to despair and then unbelief. Fear tempts you to give up when you should press in.

**The Enemy's Agenda:** Fear → Despair → Unbelief.

Fear is agreement with the enemy, and agreement with the enemy empowers him to come and steal, kill, and destroy. Faith is the goal. Faith is agreement with God. Encouragement will strengthen your heart to align with a renewed mind. Thus encouragement will lead to faith.

**God's Agenda:** Encouragement → Hope → Faith.

We're at our worst when we're afraid. We're at our best when we're encouraged, and playing up to high and loving expectations.

**Daniel Lanois and Larry Mullen** – drummer from u2). Your best performance will be in response to someone's enthusiastic supportive high expectations. Affirmation and expectation – "You rock! I love what you do!"

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**Transition:** So, has anything I've said so far struck a chord? Do you relate to either or both of these processes of either discouragement and fear to unbelief or encouragement and hope to faith?

Well, the big thing is to get perspective, and to do that we need to step back and ask ourselves and perhaps God some questions...

**Ask yourself...**

1. Where is God in the situation over which I'm stressing?
  2. Did God call me into this situation? Am I in the center of God's will?
  3. What has God called me here to do?
  4. Am I willingly embracing God's choice? Am I okay with this calling and task?
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**Transition:** So you think the assignment is difficult, eh? Then let me say 2 things.

**#1 - God won't lead us into an assignment until He deems us ready.**

Say it with me, "He hasn't sent me here to fail."

"I'm here to be faithful."

**Exodus 13:17-18** <sup>17</sup> When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." <sup>18</sup> So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. <sup>[a]</sup> The Israelites went up out of Egypt armed for battle.

Funny, the next chapter in that story is the Red Sea crossing, where God does all the fighting for them.

God won't lead you into the desert to kill you, but He will lead you into the desert to build your faith. He intends to make your faith in Him strong by letting you face things that are too hard for you, and then rescuing you, time and again. By doing this, he is teaching you the spiritual skills required to live in the land of promise and blessing without forgetting him and volunteering for slavery all over again.

What God commands, God enables. If it's giants in Canaan, Egypt's chariots, Goliath, or the fight in which you now find yourself, you need to really internalize the truth that "I will be with you," is all you need to know. **If** God has called you to it, **then** you and I should lean into it, not cower.

Sometimes the enemy barks and we run, yelping like we got bit.

**#2 - God prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies (Ps 23:5).** This means fellowship with God – intimacy – is our food in the midst of the battle. True spiritual warfare is not yelling at the devil; true spiritual warfare is obedient fellowship with God that taunts satan even when all around us is crumbling. Satan's basic conviction from the beginning has been that God isn't good.

Are you willing to follow the glory out of the promised land and into the wilderness? Out of the spiritual high of the baptismal waters, the beautiful descending dove, and the affirming fatherly voice, and into the desert of trial? If not, then what's really got first place in your heart?

"Why would a loving God do this to me?" Because He's a loving God who intends to change you into the likeness of His Son.

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**Transition:** If you like taking notes, this part is especially for you people.

Now here's a short list of practical things we can do to encourage ourselves in the Lord:

**1.) Return to the Bible stories of God's saving love and power.**

We see who He is by what He does. He hasn't changed! We desperately need to see ourselves and our situation in light of who He is.

**2.) Spend time with people of great faith.**

Not just believers, but rather encouragers who have two things:

- 1) Bold confidence in God
- 2) Infectious hope in God's work in you

Some people who sympathize with you will actually leave you more anxious by not challenging your fear-based mind set. That won't help. They make you feel like you are justified in your perspective whether it's based on God's truth or not! Find some people who refuse to agree with your panic posture. And find some people who understand heavenly logic. They challenge you to discover your calling and the deeper redemptive purposes of God in life's challenges.

**3.) Encourage each other with the testimonies of what God has done.**

[Graham Cooke Testimony](#)

**4.) Lift your heart to the Lord in worship until the fear passes.**

**Lament.** I am definitely NOT an advocate of forgetting your troubles when you come to church. That's not how the Psalms model worship in times of trouble. Rather, we move from lament – which is grieving in a God-ward direction, through reasoning with our souls, to finally declaring that God in fact is good, that He will save us yet again, and we for our part will rejoice in Him. But moving from lament to praise is a process. It involves arguing with yourself in God's presence...

So bring the trouble to church. Bring it to the singing time. Bring it to the praying. Bring it to the preaching. Lift your hearts up to the Lord. Let your earthly limited perspective be put into heaven's big picture. "Until" might be a season rather than 15 minutes.

[Love Came Down, Brian Johnson](#)