

Three Case Studies

A) Admonish the Idle

Sue: will not flee from temptation

- *Where is the gap in her understanding of the gospel?*
- *What would you say to Sue? What scriptures apply?*

B) Encourage the Fainthearted

Joe: dissatisfied with life and church

- *Where is the gap in his understanding of the gospel?*
- *What would you say to Joe? What scriptures apply?*

C) Help the Weak

Max: diagnosed with depression

- *Where is the gap in his understanding of the gospel?*
- *What would you say to (or do for) Max? What scriptures apply?*

Core Seminars—Living as a Church Class 10: Encouragement: Safeguarding Unity in Holiness



I. Introduction

What are the goals of encouragement?

“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”
(Colossians 1:28)

“Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”
(Hebrews 10:24-25)

“We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.”
(CHBC Church Covenant)

Encouragement: *Caring for someone else – usually including speaking biblical truth to them – with the goal of that person’s growth in godliness.*

II. The Challenge of Encouragement

A) *Our Struggle is One of the Heart (Jer 17:9, James 1:14, 4:1)*

“Heart Change, Not Behavior Change”

Implications:

1. Only God can change the heart
2. Our hearts are prone to wander too
3. The goal isn't earthly happiness and fulfillment

B) *Hollow and Deceptive Philosophy*

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col 2:8)

“**Gospel Gap:**” Where our lives are inconsistent with how the good news of Christ impacts our identity

What we put in place to fill gospel gaps:

1. Formalism
2. Legalism
3. Emotionalism
4. Activism

5. Biblicism

6. Therapeutic gospel

7. Social-ism

III. The Context for Change

“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” (James 5:16)

1. Do you share your struggles with others?
 - Embrace the “ministry of dependency”
2. Is our church welcoming toward struggling people?
 - Take their struggles seriously; strive for empathy
 - Beware trite responses

IV. How to Encourage Struggling People

“And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.” (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

1. Speak scripture to them
2. Help them meditate on the good news of Christ
3. Identify evidences of God's grace