Encourage (exhort, comfort, implore) (3870) parakaleo

Greek Word Studies:

Implore (3870) (parakaleo from para = side of, alongside, beside + kaleo [word study] = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. Parakaleo can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action. Sometimes the word means convey the idea of comfort, sometimes of exhortation but always at the root there is the idea of enabling a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence and with gallantry. See the following discussion for elaboration on the nuances of this great Greek verb.

One writer has said that Paul's use of parakaleo in verses like Eph 4:1, Ro 12:1, 1Th 4:1 is â€œone of the tenderest expressions in all the Bible.â€

Kent Hughes illustrates the root idea of parakaleo "to come alongside and encourage" with the following example

I see this exemplified every time my church has a roller skating party, and the parents put their little ones on skates for the first time. Mom and Dad skate with their child, holding on to his or her hands, sometimes with the childâ€™s feet on the ground and sometimes in the air. But all the time the parents are alongside encouraging....[exhortation] is a wonderful gift, and we are to place it at Christâ€™s feet and be willing to be worn out in its use.

Encourage one another - Study the "one anothers" - most positive, some negative

Our English word "encourage" means literally â€œwith heart.â€ To encourage in a sense is to give them new heart. Shallow sympathy makes people feel worse --- true spiritual encouragement makes them feel better. It brings out the best in people.

It is worth noting that parakaleo is the verb root of parakletos, our Helper (Comforter = The Holy Spirit) in Jn 14:16;26;15:26;16:7 and our â€œAdvocateâ€ (Jesus)1Jn 2:1,. Kenneth Wuest adds that...

The verb parakaleo refers to the act of calling someone to oneâ€™s side in order to help one. The noun parakletos refers to the one who is called upon to render aid. It was used in the law courts of one who pleads anotherâ€™s cause before a judge, a counsel for the defence, an advocate. In the widest sense it means â€œa helper, a succorer, one who aids another.â€ In the three passages in the Gospel noted above, the Holy Spirit is the Comforter to the saint, not that He comforts him in the sense of consoling him merely, but that He is sent to be the One to come to the aid of the Christian in the sense of ministering to him in his spiritual life. In the first epistle of John (1Jn 2:1), the Lord Jesus is the parakletos of the believer in the sense that He pleads our cause before our heavenly Father in relation to sin in the life of the Christian, praying us back into fellowship with God by the way of our confession and the cleansing blood. (Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans or Logos or Wordsearch)

In the context of Ephesians 4:1, parakaleo is not simply a request but a plea, an imploring or begging. The idea of implore is to beg earnestly or even desperately. Interestingly, the English word implore is from the Latin implorare meaning to "invoke with tears"! Clearly, Paul wants the Gentile believers in Ephesus to be all they can be in Christ (cp one of Paul's life goals for all disciples - Col 1:28-note, Col 1:29-note, which is a good goal for all believers to pursue given the fact that we have all been commissioned by our Lord to go and make disciples. Mt 28:18, 19, 20)

The present tense indicates that it was Paul's practice (even though separated from them physically in prison) to continually come alongside the believers (via this epistle, and surely also via his prayers for them). It is notable that Paul does not issue a command to walk worthy (even as he did not make Ro 12:1 a command-see below). Instead Paul based his call upon the glorious truths that had brought his readers from far away to near (to God), and in so doing was gently and tenderly appealing to them in the "language of grace" (cp Ep 4:29-note). Similarly at the beginning of his practical section in the letter to the saints at Rome Paul wrote...

I urge (parakaleo) you therefore (Paul uses "therefore" as in Eph 4:1 to draw his reader's attention back to the preceding glorious truths, including the mercies of God, cp Ro 11:30, 31), brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Ro 12:1-note; Ro 12:2-note)
Regarding implore (beseech) Ruth Paxson writes...

Oh! the intensity of desire and the deep sense of responsibility which the aged apostle writes into that word "beseech!" He has already given them a marvellous revelation of their heavenly calling. Now with equal clarity he would show their responsibility for a corresponding conduct. It would well repay you to make a study of such words and phrases as "therefore," "wherefore," "for," "that," "as," "so," "let," "be ye," "be not ye," "see then," in Ephesians to see how Paul's appeals are always made on the ground of one's condition corresponding with one's position. "Ye are" -- "therefore be ye" -- is invariably the basis of Paul's appeal. (Ibid. Page 86)

Since a person can be called alongside for many purposes, the Greek word parakaleo has a wide range of meanings as evidenced by the many ways it is translated into English in the NAS version (kaleo). The meanings of parakaleo include to entreat, to appeal to, to summon, to comfort, to exhort, or to encourage.

The familiar English word paraclete (transliteration of the Greek term parakletos) is derived from parakaleo. Webster's 1828 dictionary defines paraclete as "Properly, an advocate; one called to aid or support; hence, the consoler, comforter or intercessor, a term applied to the Holy Spirit." Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary adds that paraclete is αειωνε one who speaks in favor of as an intercessor, advocate, or legal assistant. The word, translated as αειωνεComforter or αειωνCounselor, appears only in the Gospel of John. Jesus applied the term to the Holy Spirit, who would be an advocate on behalf of Jesus™ followers after His ascension; the Spirit would plead their cause before God (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7)." In sum, the idea of paraclete is one who speaks or intercedes for someone in the presence of another, often with a legal connotation in the ancient world.

Our Daily Bread Devotionals Related to Encouragement and Comfort: Encouraging Words; Ongoing Encouragement; Dying For Encouragement; Encourage The Faithful; Encouraging Words; Encouraging People; Encouraging Examples; Encourage Yourself; Help Them To Achieve; Teamwork; It Takes Just One (The "Antonym of Encouragement"); A Kind Word; The Gifted Church; Ring The Bell; Life Words; A Good Word; A Letter From Dad; The Value Of Friends; Comforted To Comfort; I Was Wrong!; Booster Words; Seize The Day; Cheering Each Other On; Truth And Tenderness

Devotionals from Bible.org; Light-Weight Championship; Car Accident; The Pianist; Playing Darts; A Complimentâ€”great-motivator; Photographer Nothing Like a Hug.

Here's a great example of an encouraging illustration called "Helpful Honks"...

Each fall we are visited by flocks of migrating geese who stop off at a meadow near our home. For several weeks those birds fly in long, wavy V-formations over our house, honking as they go. But then, as winter approaches, they are off again on their long flight south.

A student of mine furthered my education and my appreciation for these visitors from the north. I learned that geese fly at speeds of 40 to 50 miles per hour. They travel in formation because as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an updraft for the bird behind it. They can go 70 percent farther in a group than they could if they flew alone.

Christians are like that in a way. When we have a common purpose, we are propelled by the thrust of others who share those same goals. We can get a lot further together than we can alone.

Geese also honk at one another. They are not critics but encouragers. Those in the rear sound off to exhort those up front to stay on course and keep going.

We too move ahead much more easily if there is someone behind us encouraging us to stay on track and keep going.

Is there someone flying in formation with you today to whom you might give some αειωνhelpful honks? αειων--by Haddon W. Robinson (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved) (Bolding and color added)

Letâ€™s encourage one another
As we seek to stay on track;
If we keep our goal before us, We will not be looking back. "Sper

We can go a lot farther together than we can alone.

Correction may mold us, but encouragement will motivate us.

(See Six Ways You Can Encourage Someone Today)

Someone has written that more people fail for lack of encouragement than for any other reason. Chuck Swindoll rightly remarked "How many people stop because so few say, 'Go!'" Even in the secular world encouragement is a powerful motivator. How much more so when Spirit controlled believers let their light shine by giving encouragement that brings glory to their Father in heaven (Mt 5:16)! Spurgeon once said "It does people good to be told how highly we value them. There is many a Christian man and woman who would do better if now and then someone would speak a kindly word to them, and let them know that they had done well." Encouragement is like a peanut butter sandwich: the more you spread it around, the better things stick together.

Flatter me, and I may not believe you.
Criticize me, and I may not like you.
Ignore me, and I may not forgive you.
Encourage me, and I will not forget you.
- William Arthur Ward

The meanings of parakaleo include the following nuances, with the context determining which is the most appropriate in a given verse. One often encounters different English words when comparing translations of parakaleo on the same verse, and this simply reflects the overlap of these various meanings. For example, to make this point notice that parakaleo in Mt 8:5 is translated with almost every one of the possible English words -- imploring = NAS, asking for help = NIV, NET, beseeching = KJV, Geneva, ASV, RSV, pleading with = NKJV, calling upon = Young's Literal, plead with = Living Bible, begged = Good News Translation, with a request = Bible in Basic English, begging = Amplified, entreated = Weymouth, appealed to = New American Bible, appealing to = NRSV, ESV, begged him repeatedly = International Std Version, Take a moment and read through the NT occurrences of parakaleo below (click) to give you a better sense of how this word is used by the NT writers.

(1) To exhort: (Related Resource: See Brief Discussion of the Spiritual Gift of Exhortation)

Our English word is derived from Latin exhortari, from ex = out + hortari = to excite. Exhort = to incite or stimulate to exertion or action by argument or advice, to strongly urge, to persuade someone strongly, to make urgent appeal to someone. Some synonyms for exhort = egg on, goad, prick, prod, prompt, spur. The idea of exhort (giving exhortation) is to motivate someone to action, to rouse them (eg, out of there "spiritual stupor") to their godly duty by virtue of proposing suitable motives (eg, see Ro 12:8-note). Do you have the "gift" of exhortation? Are you using your gift in the body in which God has placed you? Does your exhortation sound more like a goad or an appealing appeal? Remember also that it's difficult for "spiritual hermits" to come alongside other believers unless they come out of their isolation. Like the old secular commercial said "Reach out and touch someone". Good advice for believers!

Closely related to the meaning "to exhort" is the meaning "to urge" (Urge from Latin urgere = to press, push) which means to press, to push, to drive, to impel, to apply force to, to press the mind or will, to press by motives, arguments, persuasion or importunity.

The New Unger's Bible Dictionary says that exhortation has been defined as "the act of presenting such motives before a person as may excite him to the performance of duty." (E.g., a good example of motivating one to action is seen in use of parakaleo in the LXX of Dt 3:28)

(2) To implore, to beg, to beseech, to entreat, to earnestly ask for, to appeal to (Mt 8:5, 18:32, Mk 1:40, Acts 9:38, 16:9, Phil 1:10. In Lk 8:41 clearly parakaleo conveys the sense of to help or bring aid.) - The idea here in part is that one is speaking with persistence to another person, making a strong request.

The demons entreat Jesus in Mt 8:31, 18:29, Mk 5:12, Lk 7:4. How sad that men entreated Jesus to depart (Mk 5:17, Mt 8:34). On the other hand those who were suffering entreated Him for healing and relief (Mt 14:36, Mk 5:18, 6:56, 7:32, 8:22)

Entreat means ask earnestly: to beseech, to petition or plead with urgency and especially in order to persuade,
to solicit pressingly, to beg, to importune.

Implore (see above)

Beseech means to ask urgently and fervently for something.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Co 5:20).

(3) To console, to comfort (Ep 6:22-note, 2Th 2:17, In the Greek or LXX of Ps 23:4-note [where God parakaleo's David] and Ru 2:13-note, where Ruth is referring to the comfort Boaz had shown her. Men, do you “comfort” your wives or “combat” with your wives? cp Pr 31:28) Notice how the literal meaning of parakaleo (to come alongside) comes into play when comforting someone. We can hardly comfort them if we don’t draw near (which can be physically, by phone, email, etc).

Comfort (from Late Latin confortāre to strengthen very much, from Latin con- = intensives meaning + fortis = strong = to strengthen much) means to ease the pain of, to strengthen, to invigorate, to cheer, to enliven, to soothe. Webster’s 1828 definition says that to comfort is “To strengthen the mind when depressed or enfeebled; to console; to give new vigor to the spirits; to cheer, or relieve from depression, or trouble.”

Note the source of the Psalmist's comfort in the following verse which uses parakaleo...in each case in some way connected with the Word of God (Are you going to the Word to be comforted? Or are you looking for comfort in all the wrong places, to make a play on an old country and western song?)

Psalm 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction, that Your word has revived me.

Spurgeon comments: it is clear that the Psalmist had affliction - affliction peculiar to himself, which he calls "my affliction"; that he had comfort in it, -- comfort specially his own, for he styles it "my comfort"; and that he knew what the comfort was, and where it came from, for exclaims -- "this is my comfort". The worldling clutches his money bag and says, "this is my comfort"; the spendthrift points to his gaiety, shouts, "this is my comfort"; but the man whose hope comes from God feels the giving power of the word of the Lord, and he testifies, "this is my fort." Paul said, "I know whom I have believed." Comfort is desirable all times; but comfort in affliction is like a lamp in a dark place. Some unable to find comfort at such times; but it is not so with believers, their Saviour has said to them, "I will not leave you comfortless." have comfort and no affliction, others have affliction and no comfort; the saints have comfort in their affliction.

The word frequently comforts us by increasing the force of our inner "this is my comfort; thy word hath quickened me." To quicken the is to cheer the whole man. Often the near way to consolation is sanctification and invigoration. If we cannot clear away the fog, it may be to rise to a higher level, and so to get above it. Troubles which weigh down while we are half dead become mere trifles when we are full of Thus have we often been raised in spirit by quickening grace, and the thing will happen again, for the Comforter is still with us, the Consolation of Israel ever liveth, and the very God of peace is evermore our Father. Looking back upon our past life there is one ground of comfort as to state -- the word of God has made us alive, and kept us so. We were but we are dead no longer. From this we gladly infer that if the had meant to destroy he would not have quickened us. If we were only hypocrites worthy of derision, as the proud ones say, he would not revived us by his grace. An experience of quickening is a fountain of cheer.

Psalm 119:52 I have remembered Your ordinances from of old, O LORD, and comfort (LXX = parakaleo) myself.

When we see no present display of the divine power it is wise to fall back upon the records of former ages, since they are just as available as if the transactions were of yesterday, seeing the Lord is always the same. Our true comfort must be found in what our God works on behalf of truth and right, and as the histories of the olden times are full of divine interpositions it is well to be thoroughly acquainted with them (Ed: In other words, make sure you spend some time in the Old Testament. It is very "modern" when it comes to its salutary effects to one's soul!). Moreover, if we are advanced in years we have the providence of our early days to review, and these should by no means be forgotten or left out of our thoughts. The argument is good and solid: He who has shown Himself strong on behalf of His believing people is the immutable God, and therefore we may expect deliverance at His hands. The grinning of the proud will not trouble us when we remember how the Lord dealt with their predecessors in by gone periods; He destroyed them at the deluge, He confounded them at Babel, He drowned them at the Red Sea, He drove them out of Canaan: He has in all ages bared His arm against the
haughty, and broken them as potters' vessels. While in our own hearts we humbly drink of the mercy of God in quietude, we are not without comfort in seasons of turmoil and derision; for then we resort to God's justice, and remember how He scoffs at the scoffers: "He that sitteth in the heavens doth laugh, the Lord doth have them in derision." (Ps 2:4-note)

When he was greatly derided the Psalmist did not sit down in despair, but rallied his spirits. He knew that comfort is needful for strength in service, and for the endurance of persecution, and therefore he comforted himself. In doing this he resorted not so much to the sweet as to the stern side of the Lord's dealings, and dwelt upon His judgments. If we can find sweetness in the divine justice, how much more shall we perceive it in divine love and grace. How thoroughly must that man be at peace with God who can find comfort, not only in His promises, but in His judgments. Even the terrible things of God are cheering to believers. They know that nothing is more to the advantage of all God's creatures than to be ruled by a strong hand which will deal out justice. The righteous man, has no fear of the ruler's sword, which is only a terror to evil doers. When the godly man is unjustly treated he finds comfort in the fact that there is a Judge of all the earth who will avenge his own elect, and redress the ills of these disordered times.

Psalm 119:76-note O may Your lovingkindness comfort (LXX = parakaleo) me, According to Your word to Your servant.

Verse 76. -- Comfort
1) May be a matter of prayer.
2) Is provided for in the Lord.
3) Is promised in the word.
4) Is of great value to the believer.

Verse 76. --
1) The need of comfort.
2) The source of comfort: "Thy merciful kindness."
3) The rule of comfort: "According to thy word." --G.R.

Psalm 119:82-note My eyes fail with longing for Your word, while I say, "When will You comfort (LXX = parakaleo) me?"

(4) To encourage (Col 2:2-note; Col 4:8-note, LXX = Isa 35:3) This sense is often very difficult for me to separate from the idea of exhorting as discussed in #1 above.

MacArthur notes that the "the ministry of exhortation has several elements. It involves persuasion (;Acts 2:14;14:22;Titus 1:9), pleading (2Co 8:17), comforting (1Th 2:11), encouraging (1Th 4:1), and patient reiterating of important doctrine (;2Ti 4:2;)."

Encourage (From French = encourager in turn from en- + courage, which is from coeur, = the heart) from it's derivation means àcœuwith heartâ€-. To encourage means to (in a sense) give another person "new heart". Webster's 1828 dictionary says encourage means "To give courage to; to give or increase confidence of success; to inspire with courage, spirit, or strength of mind; to embolden; to animate; to incite; to inspirit." To encourage means to fill with courage or strength of purpose especially in preparation for a hard task. Synonyms include to animate, buoy up, cheer, embolden, enhearten, hearten, inspire, inspirit, nerve, reassure, rouse, steel, strengthen. Shallow sympathy makes people feel worse- genuine spiritual encouragement makes them not just feel better but most importantly brings out the best in them. It is instructive to study the antonyms of encourage including words like "daunt, depress, deter, discourage, dishearten, dispirit, dissuade, hinder, inhibit, intimidate, prevent, retard, scare, throw cold water on" (from Collins Thesaurus. Glasgow: HarperCollins) Dearly beloved of God, would you place yourself in the "synonym" or the "antonym" group?

Note that this sense of parakaleo is found especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which the author even refers to as a "word of exhortation (or encouragement)" (He 13:22-note)

But (see context He 3:12-note) encourage (present imperative = not a suggestion but a command for these Hebrew Christians to make this a continual practice in light of the ever present danger he goes on to explain (by way of application there is a continual need for this genre of encouragement in our churches for the same reason - so they do not become hardened!)) one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Heb 3:13-note including in depth discussion about the "deceitful" nature of sin.)
He 10:25-note (context = He 10:24) not forsaking our own assembling together (Note how forsaking impedes "coming alongside"! You cannot truly "do church" unless you are mingling with the members!), as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; (What should motivate all believers to be encouragers? What "time" is it? What "day" is "drawing near"?) and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

(5) With the nuance of to teach or to instruct (Titus 1:9)

(6) To summon (as to one's aid - Mt 26:53), to call for, to call to one's side (Acts 28:20).

(7) To invite (Acts 28:14)

William Barclay has a very insightful note on some of the secular uses of parakaleo and the derivative word parakletos...

(i) At its most general parakalein (parakaleo) means to call in, to summon. So a man is said to call in an ally (summachos) (Herodotus, 7.158); to call in a counselor to give advice (sumboulos) (Xenophon, Anabasis 1.6.5); to call in an advocate to plead a case in the law courts (sunegoros) (Aeschines, 2.184).

It is also used of calling upon a man to undertake a public duty such as the duty of gymnasiarch, whose duty it was to maintain and train a team at his own expense to run in the torch race.

Finally, it is used of calling in the gods as helpers (boethoi) (Epictetus, 3.21.12).

It is clear that in every case the summons is to help, to service, to assistance. Therefore at its widest a parakletos (derived from parakaleo - used of the Holy Spirit in Jn 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7, and Jesus in 1Jn 2:1) is a person who is called in to help in a situation with which a man by himself cannot cope. It is true that the basic meaning of parakletos is helper, but we must now try to put some more definite content into the meaning of the help which is sought and given.

(ii) Let us look next at one of the rare meanings of the word parakalein (parakaleo). In ordinary secular Greek the word parakalein very rarely means to comfort, in the sense of to console. But it does have that meaning in the Septuagint. It is so used in Ps 71.21, `Thou shalt increase my greatness and comfort me on every side.' It is the word which is used in the great passage in Isa 40.1, 2, `Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God.' In the two later versions of the Septuagint, those of Aquila and Theodotion, parakletos is the word used in Job 16.2, `Miserable comforters are ye all.' It is then possible to take parakletos to mean one called in to comfort and to console; but two things have to be noted. First, it is by far the rarest meaning of the word. Second, even if it be taken in that sense, it still has the background of a comfort which makes a man able to stand on his two feet and face life. In Job 4.4 the Moffatt translation is, 'Your words have kept men on their feet,' and that is a description of the effect of the comfort which parakalein describes.

(iii) In ordinary secular Greek by far the most characteristic usage both of parakalein (parakaleo) and parakletos is in connexion with help given in some kind of legal trial. In Greece the parakletos was the friend of the accused person, called in to speak in support of his character, in order to enlist the sympathy of the judges in his favour. In Demosthenes it can be used for the counsel for the defence. It means someone who will present someone else's case to some other person or to some other authority in the most favourable light. Diogenes Laertius (4.50) tells about the answer of the philosopher Bion to a man who was a talkative nuisance. Bion said: 'I will do my of the Law gains for himself one parakletos, advocate; he who commits one transgression gains to himself one kategoros, accuser.'In the heavenly judgment a man's parakletoi, advocates, are repentance and good works.'All the righteousness and mercy which an Israelite doeth in the world, are great peace and great parakletoi, advocates, between him and his Father in heaven.'...

But above all parakalein (parakaleo) is used of exhorting troops who are about to go into battle. Aeschylus (Persae 380) says of the ships sailing into battle;

'The long galleys cheered (parakalein) each other, line by line.'

Euripides (Phoenissae 1254) describing the plans for battle says:

'So did they hail them, cheering them to fight.'

Xenophon uses it of urging the soldiers to embark upon the ships and to set out on an adventurous voyage...
Polybius uses it of Lutatius addressing his troops before a naval battle with the Carthaginians (1.60.5). He uses it of Demetrius rallying his men and addressing the ranks before they embarked upon battle (3.19.4). And the word he uses of embarking upon battle is diakinduneuein, which means to accept the risk of battle.

Again and again we find that parakalein (parakaleo) is the word of the rallying-call; it is the word used of the speeches of leaders and of soldiers who urge each other on. It is the word used of words which send fearful and timorous and hesitant soldiers and sailors courageously into battle. (Ed comment: Brethren, does this not have an excellent application!? Believers are engaged in a continual war with the world, the flesh and the devil -- how important are our encouragements/exhortations to fellow soldiers of the Cross, that they might be thereby strengthened to persevere in the fight, to finish the course, to keep the faith! Who have you encouraged today? this week? Do it while today is still called today [cp Heb 3:13-note].)

A parakletos is therefore an encourager, one who puts courage into the faint-hearted, one who nerves the feeble arm for fight, one who makes a very ordinary man cope gallantly with a perilous and a dangerous situation. Here then we have the great work of the Holy Spirit. To put it in modern language, the Holy Spirit makes men able to cope with life. The Holy Spirit is in fact the fulfilment of the promise, 'Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world' (Matt. 28:20).

It is quite clear that the translation comforted which in the days of Wycliffe was perfectly adequate and correct for parakletos has now become much too narrow and much too limited. To limit, even by suggestion, the work of the Holy Spirit to consolation and to comfort is sadly to belittle the work of the Spirit. By the study of the word parakletos we have come to see the wide scope in time and eternity of the parakletos.

(i) The word parakletos always means someone called in to help and to render some service; therefore the Holy Spirit is essentially the helper of men.

(ii) The word parakletos has a great Septuagint background to that kind of comfort and consolation in distress which keeps a man on his feet, when, left to himself, he would collapse. It is the comfort which enables a man to pass the breaking-point and not to break.

(iii) The word parakletos has a great background in Greek law. The parakletos was the prisoner's friend, the advocate and counsel for the defence, the man who bore witness to his friend's character when he most needed it, and when others wished to condemn him; therefore when we describe the glorified Christ as our parakletos we mean that he is there to speak for us before God.

(iv) The word parakalein (parakaleo) is the word for exhorting men to noble deeds and high thoughts; it is especially the word of courage before battle. Life is always calling us into battle and the one who makes us able to stand up to the opposing forces, to cope with life and to conquer life is the parakletos, the Holy Spirit, who is none other than the presence and the power of the risen Christ. (Barclay, William: New Testament Words:. Westminster John Know Press, 1964)

**PARAKALEO**

109x in 105v in NAS


**Pauline Uses of Parakaleo =** Ro 12:1-note, Ro 12:8-note; Ro 15:30-note; Ro 16:17-note; 1Cor 1:10; 4:13, 16; 14:31; 16:12, 15; 2Co 1:4, 6; 2:7, 8; 5:20; 6:1; 7:6, 7, 13; 8:6; 9:5; 10:1; 12:8, 18; 13:11; Ep 4:1-note; Ep 6:22-note; Php 4:2-note; Col 2:2-note; Col 4:8-note; 1Th 2:12-note; 1Th 3:7-note; 1Th 4:1-note, 1Th 4:10-note, 1Th 4:18-note; 1Th 5:11-note, 1Th 5:14-note; 2Th 2:17; 3:12; 1Ti 1:3; 2:1; 5:1; 6:2; 2Ti 4:2-note; Titus 1:9-note; Titus 2:6-note, Titus 2:15-note; Philemon 1:9, 10;


Parakaleo has a host of renderings in the English (NAS) reflecting the various nuances of meaning of this major NT verb = appeal(4), appealed(1), appealing(2), beg(1), begging(2), beseeching(1), comfort(5), comforted(11), comforts(2), conciliate(1), encourage(6), encouraged(4), encouraging(3), entreat(1), exhorted(8), exhortation*(1),
Encourage (exhort, comfort, implore) (3870) parakaleo

Parakaleo - 82v in the non-apocryphal Septuagint (LXX) - Ge 24:67 (comforted); Ge 37:35 (comforted); Ge 38:12; 50:21; Ex 15:13; Dt 3:28; 13:6; 32:36; Jdg 2:18; 21:6; 15; Ru 2:13; 1Sa 15:11; 22:4; 2Sa 10:2; 3; 12:24; 13:39; 24:16; 1Chr 7:22; 19:22; Es 5:1; 2; Job 2:11; 4:3; 7:13; 31:24; 29:25; 41:12; Ps 23:4; 69:20; 71:21; 77:2; 86:17; 90:13; 119:50, 52, 76, 82; 126:1; 135:14; Pr 1:10; 8:4; Ec 4:1; Is 10:31, 32; 13:2; 21:2; 22:4; 33:7; 35:4; 38:16; 40:12; 49:1; 49:10, 13; 51:3, 12, 18, 19; 54:11; 57:5, 18; 61:2; 66:12, 13; Lam 1:2, 9, 16, 21; 2:13; Ezek 14:23; 24:17, 22, 23, 31:16; 32:31; Zech 10:2. Notice especially the 16 uses in Isaiah 40-66, chapters in which deliverance is promised to the people, truth which would bring comfort to those (who had ears to hear) who were in Babylonian captivity.

Isaiah 35:4 Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage (a command in Hebrew) (LXX = parakaleo; Brenton's English translation = "Comfort [parakaleo] one another" = a command in the aorist imperative calling for immediate attention!), fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you."

Comment: God is speaking to Israel, but the principle is applicable to any believer who is suffering from an "anxious heart" condition.

Isaiah 40:1 "Comfort (LXX = parakaleo in the present imperative = continually comfort is the idea!), O comfort (see prior comment) My people," says your God. (Listen to Handel's beautiful 'Comfort Ye My People' and ponder His comfort for you as His child by grace through faith')

Isaiah 51:12 "I, even I, am He who comforts (LXX = parakaleo) you. Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies And of the son of man who is made like grass,

Isaiah 61:2 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD (The first part of the verse is quoted by Jesus in Lk 4:19 but not the second part of the verse and he declared these prophecies as fulfilled in Lk 4:20, 21. There is a clear gap of time [See discussion of Prophectic Time Gaps] between the first part of Isa 61:2 fulfilled in Messiah's First Coming and the second part which is yet to be fulfilled at His Second Coming - notice that although there will be vengeance when Messiah returns, there will be comfort for those who mourn - see Zech 12:10 for those Jews who will mourn) and the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn.

Here are all the uses of parakaleo in the NT...

Matthew 2:18 "A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE."

Matthew 5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Matthew 8:5 And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring (present tense = continually) Him,

Matthew 8:31 The demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine."

Matthew 8:34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region.

Matthew 14:36 and they implored Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were cured.

Matthew 18:29 "So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.'

Matthew 18:32 "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me."
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Matthew 26:53 "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

Mark 1:40 And a leper came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

Mark 5:10 And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

Mark 5:12 The demonsimplored Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them."

Mark 5:17 And they began to implore Him to leave their region.

Mark 5:18 As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him.

Mark 5:23 and implored Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, so that she will get well and live."

Mark 6:56 Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.

Mark 7:32 They brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored Him to lay His hand on him.

Mark 8:22 And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Jesus and implored Him to touch him.

Luke 3:18 So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people.

Luke 7:4 When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him;"

Luke 8:31 They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss. 32 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission.

Luke 8:41 And there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue; and he fell at Jesus' feet, and began to implore Him to come to his house;

Luke 15:28 "But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him.

Luke 16:25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

Acts 2:40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"

Acts 8:31 And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Acts 9:38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring (KJV = desiring) him, "Do not delay in coming to us."

Acts 11:23 Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord;

Comment: As an aside the call or encouragement to remain faithful is common in Acts - Acts 2:40, 14:22, 15:32, 16:39, 20:1,2.

Acts 13:42 As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to
them the next Sabbath.

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

Acts 15:32 Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message.

Acts 16:9 A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

Acts 16:15 And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

Acts 16:39 and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city. 40 They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

Acts 19:31 Also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater.

Acts 20:1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia. 2 When he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece.

Acts 20:12 They took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.

Acts 21:12 When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Acts 24:4 "But, that I may not weary you any further, I beg you to grant us, by your kindness, a brief hearing.

Acts 25:2 And the chief priests and the leading men of the Jews brought charges against Paul, and they were urging him,

Acts 27:33 Until the day was about to dawn, Paul was encouraging them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have been constantly watching and going without eating, having taken nothing. 34 "Therefore I encourage you to take some food, for this is for your preservation, for not a hair from the head of any of you will perish."

Acts 28:14 There we found some brethren, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and thus we came to Rome.

Acts 28:20 "For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel."

Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Romans 12:8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Romans 15:30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.
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1 Corinthians 4:13 when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.

1 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.

1 Corinthians 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted;

1 Corinthians 16:12 But concerning Apollos our brother, I encouraged him greatly to come to you with the brethren; and it was not at all his desire to come now, but he will come when he has opportunity.

1 Corinthians 16:15 Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints),

2 Corinthians 1:4 who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort (paraklesis = act of emboldening another in belief or course of action) with which we ourselves are comforted by God....6 But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer;

2 Corinthians 2:7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

The believers at Corinth were to come alongside a repentant sinner and strengthen him (cp Gal 6:1), to lift him up and to give him aid so that he is able to walk worthy of his calling henceforth.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg (deomai = to ask for with pleading) you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 6:1 And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain--

2 Corinthians 7:6 But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more.

2 Corinthians 7:13 For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

2 Corinthians 8:6 So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.

2 Corinthians 9:5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness.

2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ-- I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!

2 Corinthians 12:8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.

Compare uses of parakaleo in the Gospels which also convey the sense of implore ((Matt. 8:5; 14:36; Mark 1:40; 5:23; 6:56; 7:32; 8:22; Luke 7:4; 8:41).

2 Corinthians 12:18 I urged Titus to go, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit and walk in the same steps?

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Ephesians 4:1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,
Encourage (exhort, comfort, implore) (3870) parakaleo

In context Paul uses parakaleo to convey an intense feeling, strong desire, not simply a request but a plea or a begging.

Ephesians 6:22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

Philippians 4:2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

Colossians 2:2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself,

Vine: (Parakaleo) denotes either to comfort or encourage or exhort. Here the context points to the meaning to encourage, to kindle spiritual activity

Barclay: It should be a Church of courageous hearts. Paul prays that their hearts may be encouraged. The word which he uses is parakalein (parakaleo). Sometimes that word means to comfort, sometimes to exhort, but always at the back of it there is the idea of enabling a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence and with gallantry. One of the Greek historians uses it in a most interesting and suggestive way. There was a Greek regiment which had lost heart and was utterly dejected. The general sent a leader to talk to it to such purpose that courage was reborn and a body of dispirited men became fit again for heroic action. That is what parakalein means here. It is Paulâ€™s prayer that the Church may be filled with that courage which can cope with any situation.

Colossians 4:8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;

1 Thessalonians 2:11 (Note some versions have this in 1Th 2:12ESV) just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging (paramutheomai = console, cheer up) and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,

1 Thessalonians 3:2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,

What is the potential effect of encouragement? What will be impacted according to this verse? Beloved, we are all involved in a "good fight of faith" and it behooves each of us to seek to intentional encouragers of one another (not flatters, but encouragers).

1 Thessalonians 3:7 for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith;

1 Thessalonians 4:1 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more.

Notice this exhortation parallels that found in Eph 4:1 and Ro 12:1.

1 Thessalonians 4:10 for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more,

Paul does not command them to excel but urges or pleads with them.

1 Thessalonians 4:18 Therefore comfort (come alongside) one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

2 Thessalonians 2:17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.
2 Thessalonians 3:12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

1 Timothy 1:3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,

Here parakaleo has the sense of Paul pleading with Timothy to stay on at Ephesus.

1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,

1 Timothy 5:1 Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers,

The idea of parakaleo in this context is "I beg of you".

1 Timothy 6:2 Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.

2 Timothy 4:2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. (All verbs in red are aorist imperative = command to do this now. The need is urgent!)

John MacArthur comments that the meaning of parakaleo ranges "from simply calling out to someone to admonishing, which is clearly the meaning in this context. It also carries the idea of encouragement. After having reproved and rebuked disobedient believers under his care, the faithful preacher is then to come alongside them in love and encourage them to spiritual change."

Titus 1:9 holding fast (continually clinging strong to) the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

How can one (context refers primarily to elders, but applicable to all saints) best exhort? Clearly he needs to be holding fast the trustworthy Word, which is the source of sound doctrine and doctrine that counters erroneous teaching.

MacArthur writes: "It is failure in the area of holding fast the faithful word that is largely responsible for the superficial, self-elevating preaching and teaching in many evangelical churches. Here is the real culprit in the weak, shallow, insipid sermonettes for Christianettes that are such common church fare today. Here is the real villain that has led so many to be converted to what they consider relevancy and therefore to preach a pampering psychology or become stand-up comics, storytellers, clever speechmakers or entertainers who turn churches into what John Piper in his most excellent book The Supremacy of God in Preaching has called the slapstick of evangelical worship."

William Barclay emphasizes that pastors, elders and overseers "must be able to encourage the (saints)...The navy has a rule which says that no officer shall speak discouragingly to any other officer in the performance of his duties. There is always something wrong with preaching or teaching whose effect is to discourage others. The function of the true Christian preacher and teacher is not to drive a man to despair, but to lift him up to hope." (Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press)

Titus 2:6 Likewise urge the young men to be sensible

The idea of parakaleo in this verse is to strongly entreat or admonish.

Titus 2:15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

Philemon 1:9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you-- since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus--10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment,

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
Hebrews 10:25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Hebrews 13:19 And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Hebrews 13:22 But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

1 Peter 5:1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

1 Peter 5:12 Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!

Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

EVEN THE "GREATEST" SAINT NEEDS ENCOURAGEMENT - For years William Wilberforce pushed Britain's Parliament to abolish slavery. Discouraged, he was about to give up. In 1791, his elderly friend, John Wesley, heard of it and from his deathbed called for pen and paper.

With trembling hand, Wesley wrote: "Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them stronger than God? Oh be not weary of well-doing! Go on, in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery shall vanish away before it."

Though Wesley died less than a week after writing that letter, it remained an inspiration to Wilberforce through years of disappointment after disappointment. Wilberforce fought for forty-five more years and in 1833, three days before his own death, saw slavery abolished in Britain. Wilberforce might not have prevailed if it had not been for the encouragement of his friend who strengthened him in the Lord. Before you pray, "Lord, give me a friend like that," try praying: "Lord, make me a friend like that." Remember, even the greatest ones need encouragement.

A doctor wrote a letter of thanks to a schoolteacher for having given him so much encouragement when he had been in her class 30 years before. He later received this reply: "I want you to know what your note meant to me. I am an old lady in my eighties, living alone in a small room, cooking my own meals, lonely, and seeming like the last leaf on the tree. You will be interested to know that I taught school for 50 years, and yours is the first letter of appreciation I have ever received. It came on a cold, blue morning and cheered my lonely old heart as nothing has cheered me in many years." â€“ A Treasury of Bible Illustrations.

On the cold days of winter, one often finds that the car battery has lost its charge during the night. The engine will not turn over because the battery is too weak. The ministry of encouragement is like a car that comes alongside ours and gives us a jump start. The strength of the operative car is transferred into the weak battery, and the inoperative car is rejuvenated to action. When we see people who are discouraged, saddened by the trials and afflictions, or straying from the path of obedience, we need to recognize these moments as opportunities (see study of kairos, the Greek word for opportunity) and come alongside to give them a spiritual jump start. Has God placed a someone in your path who is need of a spiritual "jump start"?

ILLUSTRATION OF OUR NEED FOR ENCOURAGEMENT - Years ago, a Dear Abby column ran a story by a retired schoolteacher. One day she had her students take out two sheets of paper and list the names of the
Encourage (exhort, comfort, implore) (3870) parakaleo

other students in the room. Then she told them to think of the nicest thing they could say about each of their classmates and write it down by their names. She took the papers home that weekend and compiled a list for each student of what the others had said about him or her. On Monday she gave each student his or her list. Before long, everyone was smiling. Really? one whispered. I never knew that meant anything to anyone. I didn’t know anyone liked me that much! Years later, the teacher went to the funeral of one of her former students, who had been killed in Vietnam. Many who had been in that class years before were there. After the service, the young man’s parents approached the teacher and said, We want to show you something. Mark was carrying this when he was killed. The father pulled out of a wallet the list of all the good things Marks classmates had said about him. Thank you so much for doing that, Marks mother said. As you can see, Mark treasured it. A group of Marks classmates overheard the exchange. One smiled sheepishly and said, I still have my list. Its in my top desk drawer at home. Another said, I have mine, too. Its in my diâry. I put mine in our wedding album, said a third. I bet we all saved them, said a fourth. I carry mine with me at all times. At that point, the teacher sat down and cried. And, she used that assignment in every class for the rest of her teaching career. Robert Orben said it well "A compliment is verbal sunshine." THE LESSON: We all need encouragement, which is "like oxygen" to our soul. Nothing succeeds like encouragement. Who have you encouraged this week?

GROW IN GROVES- If we are going to be spiritually healthy, we need all the encouragement and support we can get. And in this section our “trainer” is telling us that spiritual fitness calls for team effort. Yes, we are to be oaks of righteousness, but God desires us not to be isolated oaks but growing "groves" of oaks, as is so well illustrated in nature by the giant sequoia trees of California that tower up to 300 feet. These beautiful behemoths belle their unusually shallow root systems that reach out in all directions to capture the greatest amount of surface moisture. As their roots extend horizontally, the intertwining roots of the juxtaposed trees weave a network of support which provides stability against violent storms (think "storms of life"). In short, these gentle giants are so constructed by their Creator that they need each other, which explains why you virtually always see them growing assembled together in clusters ("not forsaking their assembling together"). Seldom do you see a Giant Redwood standing alone, because the high winds would quickly uproot the shallow root system of these "loners". Because of the opposition to "The Way", the believers of the first century desperately needed to grow in groves and we of the 21st century are no different!

Christian fellowship provides us
With encouragement and love;
It will help us in our journey,
Till we reach our home above. --Sper

Mark Dever has this note especially for pastors - Giving and receiving godly encouragement and criticism. This is a skill set that too few pastors have deliberately developed among local church leaders. Improving the mechanics and underpinnings of your church comes only through constructive criticism and encouragement. Provide a periodic time for trusted leaders to give godly, gentle, but forthright feedback on the weekly services, your sermons, the prayers or Scripture readings of other leaders, the business/membersâ€™ meetings, and even the eldersâ€™ meetings. Providing that periodic timeâ€”whether weekly, twice a month, or monthlyâ€”will help sharpen the spiritual senses of your leaders, give them practice at encouraging and sharpening you, and give you practice at receiving godly encouragement and criticism. (The Deliberate Church- Building Your Ministry on the Gospel or Doxadigital Version)

SIX WAYS TO BE
A MODERN DAY "BARNABAS"
("Son of Encouragement" - Acts 4:36)

Below are six ways to encourage someone - When was the last time you encouraged someone in any of the following ways? Have you ignored some gentle promptings by the Spirit to encourage someone? Perhaps today you might ask God to whom you might send a note or make a call? Yes, dear brother or sister in Christ, it does cost to encourage another (eg, it always costs our time, our "agenda", etc), but it might just be the most wisely invested moment of your day!

1) Provide materially - meet their material needs.
2) Drop a line - send notes of encouragement.
3) Reach out and touch “give an appropriate touch such as a pat, hug, etc.

4) Listen up “listen actively. (Oh my, I need to heed this one!)

5) Empathize “comfort others in their pain.

6) Give of your time “give your undivided attention.

Debora Coty summarizes her article encouraging us all to become active, intentional encouragers...

The encouragement we pour into the lives of those around us will spill over into the lives of countless others, even as it buoy's our own spirits. Proverbs 11:25 states, "A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." When we encourage others, we cannot help but be encouraged ourselves. (Debora M Coty: "Just What They Need - 6 Ways to Encourage Others": Discipleship Journal: Issue 147 - May/June 2005)

To whom can you be a "Barnabas" today?

Being an encourager requires thought, time, and energy. Most of us live such fast paced, self-centered lives that it can be very difficult to even see another person's need for encouragement. We need to remember that God commands us to be encouragers (Heb 3:13 encourage is present imperative = command to make it our lifestyle), to build each other up (1Th 5:11-note - present imperative), to bear (present imperative) one another's burdens (Gal 6:2, cp Pr 17:17), to regard one another as more important than our self (Php 2:3-note) and to look out for the interests of others (Php 2:4-note). In short, being an encourager requires (supernatural) intentionality. Encouragement is not doing for someone what they can do for themselves and is not removing pain from their lives, but instead is noticing them, feeling with them, and reminding them of the great hope (absolute assurance of future good) we have in Christ as we persevere in our walk with Him.

It is difficult to improve on God's charge in Isaiah...

Encourage the exhausted,
and strengthen the feeble.
Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage (parakaleo), fear not." (Isaiah 35:3, 4)

TO WALK IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED: axios peripatesai (AAN) tes kleseos es eklethete, (2PAPI): (Ep 4:17; 5:2; Ge 5:24; 17:1; Acts 9:31; Php 1:27; 3:17,18; Col 1:10; 4:12; 1Th 2:12; 4:1,2; Titus 2:10; He 13:21) (Ep 4:4; Ro 8:28, 29, 30; Php 3:14; 2Th 1:11; 2Ti 1:9; He 3:1; 1Pe 3:9; 5:10; 2Pe 1:3)

Earlier Paul had taught that our "walk" has in one sense been prepared for us even before we were created writing that...

we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:10-note)

John Eadie writes that...

It is a stroke of very miserable wit which Adam Clarke ascribes to the apostle, when he represents him as saying, "Ye have your liberty and may walk, I am deprived of mine and cannot." Their calling, so high, so holy, and so authoritative, and which had come to them in such power, was to be honored by a walk in perfect correspondence with its origin and spirit, its claims and destiny. (A commentary on the Greek-Page 267)

Moule on the metaphor of "walk"...

The distinctive notion of the word is that of the moral action and conduct of life....Ideally, of course, no human walk is worthy of the Gospel, the Call, or the Divine Caller. But practically it can and should be so, in the sense of being governed at every step by the Divine motives (Ed: In other words, only as enabled by the Holy Spirit!), applied by grace, and so presenting a true correspondence to those motives. (The Cambridge Bible...
Commentary

Walk worthy - Paul is not asking too much of the saints (set apart ones) at Ephesus. Indeed, this