

Encouragement!

Life gets real. Reality sometimes steals your rejoicing and circumstances creep in to chip away at your peace. Worries about war and concern for church or community wrinkle your brow and bump your blood pressure. The list of what you can't control expands and your faith shrinks. What now? Where to go? What to do?

Withdrawal is a natural response. Hiding is a common temptation. And shrinking back from the daily delirium seems the only sensible choice to save your sanity. Even Paul said he worried about the churches (2 Corinthians 11:28).

You need an antidote for the serpent's venom of worry. God gave us several personal items, but there is one that others can actually administer: **ENCOURAGEMENT!** We can actually inject this antivenin for worry into one another's hearts by the means of encouragement. Consider the partial list of commands to encourage:

"Encourage one another day after day...." - Hebrews 3:13

"Encourage one another, build up one another...." I Thess. 5:11

"Encourage the fainthearted...." I Thess. 5:14

"Encourage the exhausted and strengthen the feeble." Isa. 35:3

"Encourage them in the work of the house of God...." Ezra 6:22

Our God is an awesome God (Neh. 9:32). He knows how to overcome worry and depression. The answer? Encouragement. It is more than a nice gesture; it is the specific antidote to Satan's venom of anxiety. It is the tool we use to lift up others even when life's circumstances cannot be changed. It is the anvil that wears out the hammers of evil that try to beat us into submission.

Encourage someone today. It is strong medicine. Take it seriously. In fact, take two, and call the Great Physician in the morning.

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