



POWERHOUSE

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MODULES

ENCOURAGEMENT

LEADER LEVEL

This Module is for Leaders in Ministry Areas:

Youth

Adults



POWERHOUSE

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MODULE LEADER LEVEL

Competency: Encouragement

Encourage people in order to strengthen them and build them up in their faith and Christian walk.

The main focus of this competency:

Encouragement is an expression of support or approval through words or actions that assist or inspire someone. Our main focus in encouraging someone is to:

- strengthen them,
- build them up in their faith, and
- build them up in their Christian walk.

We want to strengthen people in every aspect of their lives, ensure that their faith is strong, and help them develop their Christian walk. This links to helping them with their spiritual growth, aspects of which are covered more explicitly in the Module *Next Steps*.

Setting the Scene:

People in any church group have widely different circumstances and needs. They may be anywhere between struggling with personal, relationship, financial, health, or spiritual problems; or being on top of the world, rejoicing in an exciting growth in faith, and experiencing care-free personal circumstances. Regardless of where they are, they each need someone to understand their situation; support them during good and bad times; challenge them if needed; and build them up to have a strong faith, and live a confident Christian life. This module will help you explore how to do this, as a group leader, in practical ways.

Opening Question and Preliminary Quiz:

Think of a time when you were going through a bad patch, or when you did something well, and someone came alongside you and encouraged you (if that wasn't your experience, jump down to the next section on the next page marked with an asterisk). What did they do or say that helped you?

Was there anything that wasn't helpful?

*If you had no one who came alongside you, how did you feel about doing the journey alone? How would having someone come alongside you have made a difference?

Self-Assessment:

How often do you currently say or do something to encourage another person? Rate yourself below:

Not so often

Quite often

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

How easy or hard do you find it to do this? Rate yourself below:

Rather hard

Very easy

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Think of some opportunities where you could step out to encourage someone. What are they?

Scriptures:

Proverbs 16:24

Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Question 1:

How would you rate yourself as an encourager?

Poor

A model for others to learn from

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

What do you think has influenced you to become this way?

Question 2:

Solomon indicates that words can provide “healing to the bones”. What impact can “encouraging” words have on others?

For You to Read

Reading 1: What is Encouragement?

Matt Perman

Source: <https://www.whatsbestnext.com/2011/07/what-is-encouragement/>

Here is a good summary from an article I came across again recently in my files:

Encouragement includes the giving of courage, hope, confidence, support and help.

The apostle Paul ties the act of encouragement to the process of building up one another: “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thess. 5:11).

We can aid our understanding of the word *encourage* by looking at the gift of encouragement (or exhortation) as stated in Romans 12:8. Students of the Greek language indicate the word comes from the same family of words used to describe the Holy Spirit as our *paraclete*, “one who comes alongside us to help.” Leslie B. Flynn wrote of encouragement as helping to strengthen the weak, steady the faltering and console the troubled. . . .

In Scripture encouragement is often closely aligned with restoration and renewal of Spirit. For example, Psalm 3 is David's reflection on the horrible experience of having his son turn against him, causing such a rift that all David's relationships were broken. Psalm 3 indicates, among other things, that God replenished David's courage (encouragement), restored his confidence (depleted by his experience) and revived his hope. Some of the same of the same results will accrue from our involvement in encouraging others.

A study of 42 NT references to the word *encourage* quickly reveals this is a ministry for all believers, though some have special ability because of God's gifting. Encouragement is coming alongside another to offer help and hope.

Question 1:

From the author's example of David, it might be tempting to say people should turn to God for encouragement. Compare this idea with what Paul said.

Reading 2: The Anatomy of Encouragement

by Mac Lake

Proverbs 10:11 *The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life.*

We've all had that moment where we were impressed with someone's performance and felt the urge to give them a word of encouragement. Then, as we open our mouth the only thing that comes out is, "Hey you did a great job tonight" or "Thanks for your leadership, that was good today." While I'm sure they appreciate the praise, think of how much more powerful it could be if we simply put some thought and intention into our encouragement.

Encouragement is powerful and has the ability to lift a spirit, shape self-esteem or galvanize an individual's resolve to continue in the face of difficulty. So think about it, do your encouraging words have power or are they just ineffectual comments? Years ago Larry Crabb wrote an entire book titled *Encouragement: the key to caring*. A whole book on encouragement! There's a lot we can learn about this simple yet influential leadership skill.

Perhaps the key to putting a punch to our praise is looking at the anatomy of effective encouragement. While there is much more to it, here are three simple ingredients to get you started.

Sincere – Before speaking words of encouragement check your motives and make sure you're doing it to lift up the other individual, not to gain something for yourself. Solomon warns us in **Proverbs 26:28**, "a flattering mouth works ruin." The Hebrew word for ruin comes from a root word meaning, "to push, drive away or cast down." If we're not careful insincere words can have an opposite effect we desire, pushing people away rather than building them up. I was having lunch with a young man one day who continued to sing my praises throughout the whole hour. While I'm always up for a dose of encouragement, I found it strange because he had never

met me. His words were pleasant yet I found myself pushed away from him rather than drawn to him. Encouragement is always best served with a spirit of sincerity.

Specific – If you want your words of praise to have more punch then be specific with your encouragement. Notice the specifics of what people do well and consider how it impacted you personally. Performance is good for a reason and if we look close enough we can find little nuances that made it special. Many evenings Cindy and I watch The Food Network, and I’m always fascinated at how much detail feedback the judges give about the look, taste and flavors of each dish. They’re able to praise or critique each chef with great detail because they’ve acquired a sensitive palate that enables them to taste flavors the average person doesn’t notice. In the same way we must look for and praise the specific detail of an individual’s work. That takes encouragement to a very deep and meaningful level. So instead of saying, “Hey you did a good job.” You can say, “When you lead the small group discussion tonight you really asked insightful questions that challenged my thinking in new ways. You have a real gift for making people think. I appreciate you using that gift to add value to my spiritual walk.” Specific encouragement is meaningful encouragement.

Strength Focused – God has gifted each of us in very specific ways. Each day we use and develop those strengths. Over time as those strengths develop they become obvious to others. Paul had been around young Timothy so much that he become very familiar with his strengths. And then in a very crucial time in Timothy’s ministry Paul told him, “Fan into flame the gifts God has given you.” By giving someone encouragement centered on their particular strength, we are in essence helping them fan the flame of their strengths. Giving someone sincere, specific encouragement that is focused on their unique strengths helps them learn something new about themselves and deepens their wisdom about using that particular strength. I’ve always said that encouragement is one of the most overlooked leadership development tools available to us.

Encouragement is one of those small investments that we can make daily that will bring a huge return. Solomon observed, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.” (**Prov. 25:11**) The right word, spoken the right way, at the right time can impact lives in ways we may never know. So what are you waiting on...give an intentional word of encouragement today!

Question 1:

The author gives three ways to provide encouragement. Which are you the best at?

Which do you need to improve in the most?

Question 2:

Why is it difficult for some leaders to give this type of encouragement?

Question 3:

What strength did the article affirm about your leadership?

Question 4:

Think of someone you know who best exemplifies the principles in this article. What makes them such a great encourager?

Practical Application:

Discuss with your developer which of the following application tasks you will do, how and when you will complete them, and when you will have the follow-up discussions once you have finished them.

1. Discuss with your developer what aspect of encouragement you need to grow in most: Sincere, Specific or Strength Focused.
2. What are two or three next steps you need to take to grow as an encouraging leader (include the aspect of encouragement from # 1 above)? Discuss with your

developer how you might take these steps to grow in encouraging others, and implement your plan.

3. In your daily prayer time, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you how to encourage others. Do this for at least one week.

Final Self-Assessment:

Over the last three weeks, how often have you said or done something to encourage another person? Rate yourself below:

Not so often

Quite often

[_____ 1 _____] [_____ 2 _____] [_____ 3 _____] [_____ 4 _____] [_____ 5 _____]

To what extent do you think you have grown in your ability to encourage others? Rate yourself below:

Not much

A lot

[_____ 1 _____] [_____ 2 _____] [_____ 3 _____] [_____ 4 _____] [_____ 5 _____]

Add any further comments here:
