

Hebrews 10 Part 3

“Encourage God’s People”

In light of what Jesus accomplished for us through the voluntary offering of His life, the writer of Hebrews assigned three continuous actions or life pursuits. Why do I call them life pursuits? Mainly because the command is to continuously pursue these things. Because we have been granted full access to God’s holy throne and presence, it follows that we should give attention to three core pursuits in life. We previously explored the first.

- **Continuously and confidently pursue God’s presence**

Due to unforeseen circumstances and an unscheduled appointment with needles, x-rays, burning liquids, nuclear material and scary machines we missed the second.

- **Continuously and steadfastly hold on to God’s promises.**

Because much of today’s music was previously chosen to complement the third pursuit, I opted to address that today and cover the second pursuit next week.

So today we will explore God’s command to...

- **Continuously and thoughtfully encourage God’s people.**

The writer attached three inspiring motivations to embrace three powerful life pursuits.

We have confident access to the Holy Place...

Through the blood of Jesus

Through the intercession of Christ

Through the cleansing of Christ

Because Jesus provided access by His sacrifice...

Because Jesus intercedes for us when we enter...

Because Jesus initiates the heart change necessary for unhindered communion with God...

LIFE PURSUIT ONE

Let us Continuously and confidently pursue God’s presence

“Let us all continuously draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith”

LIFE PURSUIT TWO

Let us Continuously and steadfastly hold fast to God’s promises.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for faithful is the one who promised. Hebrews 10:23

Let us continually hold fast the hope we profess without wavering.

LIFE PURSUIT THREE

Let us Continuously and thoughtfully encourage God’s people.

and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 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 10:24-25

This passage provides a continuous action to practice, a context in which to practice it and a time reference or gage.

The Life pursuit

This life goal includes both thinking and acting.

“Let us carefully and fully consider”

The term “consider” is a term indicating careful observation or thought leading to perception and discovery. Let your mind continuously mull over something. We use the phrase “It is always in the back of my mind.” The writer of Hebrews urges us to keep this particular subject in the front of our mind. Earlier in the book he encouraged them to “consider” Jesus.

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession Hebrews 3:1
Carefully consider how to tell your spouse you just wrecked the car.
Carefully consider how to get out of debt.

What does God tell us to carefully and continually consider?

“how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds”

The term “stimulate” is a very strong word. It means “to jab or goad or poke in order to illicit a response”. It was used to herd animals. It is only used twice in the New Testament; once here and the other in Acts. One carries a negative result, the other a positive one. Luke described a “sharp” disagreement between Paul and Barnabas concerning John Mark. It would at times be used in with the sense to stir to anger, or irritate. In this case, God instructs us to give careful consideration how we could strongly stimulate one another to love and good deeds. He calls each follower of Jesus to give careful thought about how we might stimulate others to better love each other and to live godly. These are two indispensable values in a hostile dark world; divinely inspired love and godly living. This stimulating one another to love and to live like Jesus is synonymous to his later admonition to encourage one another”. The writer intends the encouragement focuses on the same as the stimulation; to love and good deeds. In just these verses we encounter the foundational triad of life; faith, hope and love.

The action is to contemplate how to simulate and encourage one another to love and live like Jesus. The context of this encouragement is in the “assembling of yourselves together.” In order to do the one, you have to do the others. In order to encourage one another you have to meet with one another. It seems many had abandoned gathering together. It had become a habit to not meet together. The reason for neglecting to assemble may have been fear of persecution and rejection. This instruction ties to the first “let us” only from a negative perspective.

Let us carefully consider how to stimulate and encourage one another to love and good deeds.

Let us stop forsaking or abandoning the practice of gathering with other believers.

Stop neglecting to get together, but keep getting together to encourage one another.

Kitsap County comes in at the number one in church attendance in Washington and falls seventh in the entire nation. Church attendance nationwide continues to decline and is not keeping up with population growth. It seems that the closer we come to the last days, fewer feel the necessity to assemble. It is interesting that the write calls for an opposite response here.

and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

God tells us the closer we come to the end times, the more we should assemble. The reality is that we gather less and less. When I grew up, we gathered a minimum of four times a week; Sunday School, Sunday worship, Sunday night and midweek Bible study and prayer. It follows that since God designed us to grow by the mutual encouragement to love and live like Jesus, then the less we gather the less we love and live like Jesus.

This regular encouragement is necessary not only to stimulate growth but to avoid sin.

*Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. 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. Heb 3:12-13*

This encouragement is necessary every day not just Sundays. If we are not encouraging one another "day after day" it follows that we are becoming hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. There you have it. Because of Jesus, we can confidently enter the Holy Place of God's presence.

His blood paved the way.

His intercession as our High Priest facilitates connection.

His cleansing of our hearts enables true communion.

Since we have such confident access, it follows that we should make it our life ambition to...

Continuously and confidently pursue God's presence

Continuously and steadfastly hold fast to God's promises

Continuously and thoughtful encourage God's people

Let us consider this last life pursuit a bit more.

First we must make gathering together a priority.

Yes, you don't need to attend a church to worship God.

You can worship God in nature or at home.

You can "watch church" on television.

You can listen to Christian Radio.

But none of the many "one another commands" in the Bible can effectively be done in isolation. They can only be done when assembled. Now that doesn't necessarily require Sunday service attendance but at least some kind of gathering with other members of the church family. In fact, it is in the context of the assembly that so many issues of selfishness get stirred up and require us to honestly deal with our connection with God. John clearly asserted that if you don't love you brother you don't really love God.

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. 1 John 4:20-21

Gathering with other struggling pilgrims keeps us honest. Anyone who never interacts with people can claim they love people. It is quite another thing to prove it by wrestling with the difficult issues stimulated by people interaction. Some say you don't get anything out of "church". This passage indicates that gathering with other people has less to do with what you get out of it and more to do with what you give to it.

Second, when we do gather, we need to carefully consider just how we can encourage one another in our mutual mandate to love and live like Jesus. God assigns every follow of Jesus to a ministry of encouragement. Paul told the Romans to make it a contest.

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor or outdo one another in showing honor. Romans 12:10

Just what does this ministry of encouragement look like? The term "encourage or encouragement" comes from two Greek words. It is the word "to call" linked to the preposition "alongside or beside." You end up with the idea of to "call alongside" to help. It is translated "comfort, encourage, help". Come along side of one another. In this case it is to stimulate one another to love and live like Jesus.

The English word is equally expressive. It means to en-courage or to put courage into. The opposite is to dis-courage or dampens ones courage. It was the main focus of Jesus' ministry. He hung out with His disciples and patiently provided the necessary tools to grow and minister. When He prepared to leave them He promised "another helper". He used the word which meant another just like me, another of the same kind. He used the word another "encourager" from the same root as our word to encourage. Jesus commissioned the Holy Spirit as our divine encourager and we are called to be encouragers to one another in the same way as the Holy Spirit encourages.

It carries broad range of activity. We encourage by words, actions, example, loving correction, prayer. You find the verb form "encourage" 109 times in the New Testament. The noun "encouragement" appears another 29 times.

Barnabas was known as the "son of encouragement".

Then the report about them was heard by the church that was at Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to travel as far as Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged all of them to remain true to the Lord with a firm resolve of the heart, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And large numbers of people were added to the Lord. Acts 11:22-24

After they (including Barnabas) had evangelized that town and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch, strengthening the disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith and by telling them, "It is necessary to pass through many troubles on our way into the kingdom of God." Acts 14:21-22

Then, being sent off, they went down to Antioch, and after gathering the assembly, they delivered the letter. When they read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. Both Judas and Silas, who were also prophets themselves, encouraged the brothers and strengthened them with a long message. Acts 15:30-32

I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and so that he may encourage your hearts. Colossians 4:8

Encouragement is so important to the growth of the church that God specially gifts individuals with that ministry. Just because you don't have the specific gift of encouragement does not mean you're off the hook. God instructs every Christian to encourage.

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all encouragement. He encourages us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any kind of affliction, through the encouragement we ourselves receive from God. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Here is an example of partnership with God in the ministry of encouragement.

In fact, when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest. Instead, we were troubled in every way: conflicts on the outside, fears inside. But God, who encourages the humble, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus, and not only by his arrival, but also by the encouragement he received from you. He told us about your deep longing, your sorrow, and your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more. 2 Cor 7:5-7

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Become mature, be encouraged, be of the same mind, be at peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:11

Therefore encourage one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:18

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11

May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal encouragement and good hope by grace, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good work and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Let no worthless words come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to (energize, empower) those who hear. Ephesians 4:29

Never underestimate the power of words.

Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. Proverbs 18:21

The power of words runs both ways. You can energize or de-energize with words. You can build up or tear down. You can strengthen or cripple. God calls us to build up with our words. Nearly half of the spiritual gifts deal with words. Peter references speaking gifts and serving gifts.

Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:11

We demonstrate love by both words and actions. John instructed the readers to make sure you do both. The two men on the way to Emmaus recalled both in Jesus.

The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people Luke 24:19

Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 1 John 3:18

May we be known as a church that encourages one another! Let us continually and thoughtfully encourage God's people in word and deed. Be sure to take some time to start with your father today.