

# How to Encourage Someone

## 05 - Overcoming Stress

Sunday, 27 OCT 2013 | Church on the Park

**Texts:** “A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed” (Prov. 11:25). “Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you are doing” (1 Thes. 5:11).

**Theme:** Through helping someone overcome their own stress, you yourself will be refreshed.

**Intro:** In my last message I talked about encouraging yourself using David in Ziklag as an example. This week I want to talk about encouraging someone else. In helping another brother or sister overcome their stress, it will help you overcome your own stress. Specifically, in this message we will look at the example of how Jonathan encouraged David. We will also talk about ten specific ways we can encourage our fellow friends in the faith.

### 1) Watch out that you don't become a black hole believer.

- This is a **pitfall** that anyone of us can fall into. Black hole believers are **self-focused**—they take in light, but give no light in return. They receive without reflecting.
- Right off the bat, we need to remember what Paul said, “It is **more** blessed to **give** than to receive” (Acts 20:35).
- Interesting facts about black holes (see notes)
- We can become black holes when we are **caught up** with
  1. Our own **problems**
  2. Our own **pleasure**
  3. Our own **progress**
    - We can get too focused on our own spiritual growth and fall into a **self-indulgent spirituality**
- The key to overcome the **black hole syndrome** is to **focus** on God and his purposes, to look **outside** yourself instead constantly within.
  - Don't become someone who is constantly looking in the **mirror**, living in your own spiritual **bathroom**, continually cleaning and pampering yourself, but not stepping out into the world.
  - Mythology: **Narcissus** & Nemesis (see endnotes)
- **Abraham's Blessing** (Gen. 12:1-3)
  - God blesses us so that we can be a **blessing**. He wants all the nations of the earth (every ethnic group) blessed **through** us.
  - God blesses us to be a blessing
  - We thrive in **relationships**, not alone. Whether your an introvert or extrovert, you need God and others.

## 2) Jonathan's encouragement of David is a great example for us to follow.

- David & Jonathan - 1 Sam 23:16
  - “And Saul’s son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and **helped** him **find strength** in God” (1 Sam. 23:16). [‘Helped him find strength’ can be translated as ‘encouraged’] (see endnotes)
  - To encourage is to **inwardly strengthen** someone. In a Biblical context it means to strengthen someone to have **faith** in and **obey** God.
- I want us to **imagine** how **David** is **feeling**. (1 Sam. 23:1-6)
  - He just **saved** Keilah, a city that would have been destroyed by the Philistines.
  - David just learned that **Saul** knows his whereabouts and is coming to kill him
  - However, he **suspects** that he will be kept safe because he just saved Keilah. (1 Sam. 23:7-13)
  - Yet, instead of taking his safety for **granted** he **inquires** of the Lord.
    - God shows him that Keilah will **betray** him, even though he saved them.
    - Side note: **Seeking** the Lord can **save** your life. Don’t just take major things for granted.
  - Consequently, he has to **keep moving** from place to place
    - Being constantly on the **run**, moving place to place, is very **discouraging**.
    - Knowing the king wants to kill you is very **disheartening**.
    - Though he is **anointed**, he is being **assaulted**.
    - Finally, David is hiding in the **wilderness** with his men.
- **Jonathan** soon realizes that his father wants to kill David. So Jonathan **risks** his life to go to David and **encourage** him in the Lord. (cf. Rom. 16:4; Phil. 2:30)
  - Let’s look at the story from **Jonathan’s** perspective
    - Jonathan is Saul’s son and thus the next in line for the **throne**.
    - Jonathan’s help of David would have been seen by his father as **disloyalty** and **treason**, worthy of **death**.
    - Yet, though it Jonathan is risking his life and future, he is willing to **travel** a long way to encourage his brother.
    - This is the very **Spirit of Christ** that is **in** us!
  - Jonathan went out of his **comfort zone** and to go to his brother in the wilderness.
    - I worked it out on **Google Maps** that it was about **a twelve to fifteen hour walk** (from Gibeah) or over two hours and half hours if he caught public transport :-). Two and a half hours on bus to Hebron and then another two hour journey into the wilderness.
- Like David, our **brothers and sisters** in Christ need **encouragement** as they face the **wildernesses** of life.
- Jonathan is a **good example** to follow—we should go **out of our way** to encourage one another.
  - Not everyday can we travel fourteen hours to meet with a brother, but **everyday** we can look for ways to encourage the people God has put into our lives (Heb 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” (Heb. 3:13).

### 3) Here's ten specific ways you can encourage someone in Jesus:

- 1) First and most importantly, **ask** the Father who you can encourage and how you can encourage them
  - Ask the **Holy Spirit** to guide you. He may have some creative and out-of-the-box ways to encourage someone.
- 2) The Bible is the greatest **book of encouragement**. Share with them encouraging words from **Scripture**. (Rom. 15:4)
- 3) **Go** to them. There's a time to send messages to encourage, but nothing beats **face-to-face** encouragement. (Make sure it's a blessing though). (Col. 4:8; 1 Thes. 3:2)
- 4) **Worship** with them and **pray** for them (James 5:16)
- 5) Share an encouraging **prophetic word** (1 Cor. 14:3, 31)
- 6) Let someone **know** that your thinking about them and praying for them.
  - **Paul** put this into practice through his letters. He couldn't see them face to face, but he let them know that they were in his heart and prayers. (Phil 1:3, Col. 1:3, 1 Thes. 1:2, 2 Thes. 1:11)
- 7) **Remind** your friend of how God has used them and what God said he would do through them (1 Tim. 1:18-20).
- 8) Tell them of your **commitment** and support of them (1 Thes. 2:8)
- 9) Ask how you can **help**. **Serve** them in a specific area.
- 10) Give a **gift** motivated by love (Phil. 4:10-20)

**Conclusion:** The spiritual health and well being of the church is everyone's responsibility, not merely the pastor's. By encouraging one another, we strengthen each other to fulfill God's purpose and will.

### END NOTES

"Narcissus is another example among several of a beautiful young man who spurned sex and died as a result. As such, his myth has much in common with those of [Adonis](#) and [Hippolytus](#). In the Roman poet Ovid's retelling of the myth, Narcissus is the son of the river god [Cepheissus](#) and the nymph [Liriope](#). [Tiresias](#), the seer, told his parents that the child "would live to an old age if it did not look at itself." Many nymphs and girls fell in love with him but he rejected them. One of these nymphs, [Echo](#), was so distraught over this rejection that she withdrew into a lonely spot and faded until all that was left was a plaintive whisper. The goddess [Nemesis](#) heard the rejected girls prayers for vengeance and arranged for Narcissus to fall in love with his own reflection. He stayed watching his reflection and let himself die. It is quite possible, however, that the connection between Echo and Narcissus was entirely Ovid's own invention, for there is no earlier witness to it." (Encyclopedia Mythica)

Aaron & Hurr with Moses

What does encourage mean? (To strengthen another; inward strength)

Scriptural usage has a different emphasis than secular usage. In Scripture it means to put strength into someone so that they can fulfill God's Word and will.

Joshua - Deu. 1:38; 3:28

You don't need an army to encourage you, just one or two people.

Hezekiah 2 Chron. 30:22 (32:6, 35:2)

Ezra 1:6 - The returning captives - encouraging through material giving  
Ezra 6:22

Isa. 35:3

How did Paul become a mighty man of God and write most of the books of the New Testament? He had a brother that came alongside of him - Barnabas (Acts 4:36)

Acts 11:23; 14:22

Encouragement through prophesy - What the New Testament says

"The wilderness and the desert will be glad, And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom; Like the crocus It will blossom profusely And rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, The majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the Lord, The majesty of our God. **Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble.** Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you." Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah. The scorched land will become a pool And the thirsty ground springs of water; In the haunt of jackals, its resting place, Grass becomes reeds and rushes. A highway will be there, a roadway, And it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, But it will be for him who walks that way, And fools will not wander on it. No lion will be there, Nor will any vicious beast go up on it; These will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk there, And the ransomed of the Lord will return And come with joyful shouting to Zion, With everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, And sorrow and sighing will flee away." (Isa. 35:1-10)

Examples: David & Jonathan, Moses, Aaron & Hur, Paul & Barnabas

Practical Ways to Do It

chazaq /khaw·zak/] v. A primitive root; TWOT 636; GK 2616; 290] 2388 occurrences; AV translates as “strong” 48 times, “repair” 47 times, “hold” 37 times, “strengthened” 28 times, “strengthen” 14 times, “harden” 13 times, “prevail” 10 times, “encourage” nine times, “take” nine times, “courage” eight times, “caught” five times, “stronger” five times, “hold” five times, and translated miscellaneous 52 times. 1 to strengthen, prevail, harden, be strong, become strong, be courageous, be firm, grow firm, be resolute, be sore. 1a (Qal). 1a1 to be strong, grow strong. 1a1a to prevail, prevail upon. 1a1b to be firm, be caught fast, be secure. 1a1c to press, be urgent. 1a1d to grow stout, grow rigid, grow hard (bad sense). 1a1e to be severe, be grievous. 1a2 to strengthen. 1b (Piel). 1b1 to make strong. 1b2 to restore to strength, give strength. 1b3 to strengthen, sustain, encourage. 1b4 to make strong, make bold, encourage. 1b5 to make firm. 1b6 to make rigid, make hard. 1c (Hiphil). 1c1 to make strong, strengthen. 1c2 to make firm. 1c3 to display strength. 1c4 to make severe. 1c5 to support. 1c6 to repair. 1c7 to prevail, prevail upon. 1c8 to have or take or keep hold of, retain, hold up, sustain, support. 1c9 to hold, contain. 1d (Hithpael). 1d1 to strengthen oneself. 1d2 to put forth strength, use one’s strength. 1d3 to withstand. 1d4 to hold strongly with.<sup>1</sup>

**ḥāzaq be(come) strong, strengthen, prevail, harden, be courageous, be) 636**  
(.sore (meaning be severe). (ASV and RSV similar

#### Derivatives

**636a** ḥāzāq (ḥāzāq) **strong**.

**636b** ḥezqâ (hezqâ) **strength** (once in the masc. form ḥēzeq).

**636c** ḥōzeq (hōzeq) **strength**.

**636d** ḥōzqâ (hōzqâ) **force**.

The basic meaning of this word in the Qal stem is “be(come) strong.” In general, the Piel is causative of the Qal, “make strong,” “strengthen.” The Hiphil is “take hold of,” “seize,” while the Hithpael stem is “strengthen oneself,” hence, “take courage.” The use of ḥāzaq is similar to ’āmēš and ’āzaz except for the Hiphil which is more like the Qal of ’āḥaz. This verb is used 291 times.

The Qal form, used eighty-two times, means to “be strong” or “become strong.” In most cases it can be so translated, but often the variety of contexts encourages or necessitates a variety of renditions. Most often the word is used for strength in battle (I Kgs 20:23). The admonition to be strong in combat may simply be an exhortation to be of good courage (and is so translated in II Sam 10:12).

In Gen 41:56 “strong” is used in the sense of “severe” (RSV; KJV and ASV “sore”) in reference to a famine. Similarly a battle may be “severe” (II Kgs 3:26). “To be stronger than” in context comes to mean “prevail,” as the word of David “prevailed” against Joab (II Sam 24:4), David against the Philistine (I Sam 17:50), and Jotham over the Ammonites (II Chr 27:5). When used of Pharaoh’s heart the meaning is “harden” (Ex 7:13f.).

[The hardening of Pharaoh’s heart is an old problem, one that is more theological than linguistic. The verb ḥāzaq is used twelve times in the narrative (Ex 4–14), mostly with

<sup>1</sup> Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

the Lord as the agent, but four times in the passive or stative sense (“Pharaoh’s heart was hardened”). Also, the verb *kāhēd* is used five times, both with the Lord as the agent, with Pharaoh as the agent, and in the passive sense. The verb *qāšâ* is used once with the Lord as the agent. There is no discernible difference here in the usage of these words. It is clear that Pharaoh was an unrepentant sinner at the start (chapter 5). It is perhaps enough to point this out and remark that all of God’s hardening of an obstinate sinner was judicial and done that God’s deliverance should be the more memorable. And this, too, was in God’s plan (Ex 9:16), though it is also inexplicably true that Pharaoh sinned freely and was therefore terribly guilty (cf. Acts 4:25–28). r.l.h.] Other resultant meanings include “be sure” (Deut 12:23), “be steadfast” (Josh 23:6, RSV), “catch hold” (II Sam 18:9, Absalom’s head in the oak; the causative of this is common usage in the Hiphil), “recover” (Isa 39:1, Hezekiah from sickness), “stout,” (of peoples’ words against God, Mal 3:13).

The Qal form of the verb is used twice (II Chr 28:20; Isa 28:22) in the Piel sense of “strengthen.”

The basic meaning of the Piel stem (used sixty-four times) is causative of the Qal, to “make strong,” “strengthen.” As with the Qal it is used often in the context of battle or combat. Often the object of the verb is the hands or the arms of an individual. “To strengthen the hands” may mean “to aid” (Ezra 1:6), or, more often, “to encourage” (I Sam 23:16). The person encouraged may be the object of the verb (II Sam 11:25; Isa 41:7). Strengthen may be translated simply “help” (II Chr 29:34).

The Piel is used sixteen times in the sense of “repair” (II Kgs 12:5f.). As in the Qal, when the object of the verb is the heart (ten times), the verb is translated “harden” (Ex 4:21f.). It is used twice in the sense of “fasten” (or “support”) as with nails (Isa 41:7; Jer 10:4). The Hiphil frequently (sixty-three times) means “take hold,” i.e. “grasp,” “seize.” It is used thirty-four times in Neh in the sense of “repair,” referring to the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. Other uses are varied: “prevail” (Dan 11:7), “support” (Lev 25:35), “receive” (II Chr 4:5), “retain” (Jud 7:8), “constrain” or “urge” (II Kgs 4:8), “confirm” (Dan 11:1), “strengthen” (II Sam 11:25), “aid”, i.e. “strengthen the hand” (Ezk 16:49), “join” (Neh 10:29), “hold” (Neh 5:16).

The Hithpael (used twenty-seven times) is translated in a variety of ways but is usually reflexive of some use of the Qal stem, i.e. “strengthen oneself,” “encourage oneself.”

*ḥāzāq*). Strong, mighty, hard. This adjective means “strong” in the sense of) “powerful” (including the power to resist). Of its fifty-seven occurrences, twenty-three refer to a “strong hand,” most often to God’s power, as in the Exodus. The word refers also to the strength of a man (Caleb, Josh 14:11), the wind (Ex 10:19; I Kgs 19:11), and a sword (figurative, Isa 27:1). Although the word often refers to God’s powerful hand it .(does not seem to be used as a substitute for deity (as *‘elyôn* is

It is translated variously because it occurs in many different contexts. Applied to the blast of a trumpet the word is translated “loud” (Ex 19:16). When applied to sickness (I Kgs 17:17) or famine (I Kgs 18:2), it is appropriately translated “severe” (RSV; the ASV reads “sore”). The KJV also refers to “sore war” (I Sam 14:52), but translates a similar phrase “hottest battle” (II Sam 11:15). The RSV uses “hard(est) fighting” in both references.

When referring the face, forehead, or heart *ḥāzāq* implies an unyielding stubbornness or strong resistance (Ezk 2:4; 3:7–8, variously translated: “stiffhearted,” “stubborn,”

“impudent,” etc.). It is also used as a substantive, “mighty one,” “strong one” (Ezk 34:16; Job 5:15).

ḥēzqâ). Strength, strengthen self, strong, was strong. (ASV and RSV) ḥ - similar.) A noun, used four times meaning “strength,” but translated as a verb in some contexts

ḥōzeq). Strength. (ASV and RSV the same.) The noun, used five times, means, “strength,” always in the sense of “military prowess

(”ḥōzqâ). Force, mightily, repair, sharply. (ASV similar, but RSV “violently) ḥ - C.P.W.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Weber, C. P. (1999). 636 ḥזק. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. & B. K. Waltke, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (276–277). Chicago: Moody Press.