



# STRENGTHENING OUR GRIP

A study of issues especially relevant to the lives and faith of Christian men

## Lesson 3 → Strengthening Your Grip On Encouragement:

- A. While we often do not think of encouragement as an important priority in our lives, it certainly is a priority and it is one which we often neglect to develop strongly:
  1. Think: When was the last time you said some word of encouragement to someone you barely new, maybe even a stranger you just met? How did they respond to this?
  2. Being an encourager almost seems WEIRD for men in today's society! We often leave words of praise and encouragement up to women. Many men feel strange when they do it!
- B. Encouragement is a characteristic that is often overlooked, especially by men, but it is a characteristic that plays a very important role in churches and in life in general. So let's strengthen our grip!
- C. Start off by reading **Heb 10:19-25** → **Illustration: Lessons From Geese**

## Questions For Class Discussion:

1. In your own words define what encouragement is. It will be helpful if you can use scripture and examples to help strengthen your definition.  
- What does encouragement do for others... Be specific in your answers

2. Why might it be more difficult, or at least more unnatural, for men to be strong in the area of encouragement as opposed to women?

3. Give a personal example of one who encouraged you in the past. What was it that they said or did? How did their encouragement impact you? What can you learn from this?

4. Now think in the reverse direction. What are some ways in which we can discourage others... Especially think about ways that we may do this inadvertently. Be as specific as possible.

5. Read Romans 12:4-8. How does encouragement fit into this passage? Also, this passage talks a lot about the abilities and talents we have. What special talent or ability does it take to encourage others?

**"...realistically, we also struggle, lose our balance, slip and slide, tumble, and fall flat on our faces. All of us need encouragement – someone to believe in us. To reassure and reinforce us. To help us pick up the pieces and go on. To provide us with increased determination in spite of the odds." (Swindoll, pg 29)**

One of the greatest examples of an encourager in the Bible is Barnabas. His real name is Joseph, but the apostles chose to nickname him Barnabas which means “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36)



6. On two separate occasions Barnabas stood beside men and encouraged them when it seemed no one else would. One time it was Paul (Acts 9:26-28) and one time it was John Mark (Acts 15:36-40).

- What risks did Barnabas take to be an encourager in each of these cases? What do we learn from this?
- What would have caused Barnabas to assume such risks? What was the result of his encouragement?

7. Read Acts 4:32-37 → How was Barnabas an encourager in this instance? What was the result of his attitude and actions? What lessons are there in this for us today?

8. Read Acts 11:22-26 → How was Barnabas an encourager this time? What was the result of his attitude and actions? What lessons can we learn from this to apply to our lives?

9. Read Hebrews 10:19-25 → One of the functions of worship is encouragement! How does worship play a role in encouragement? How should this impact the way we worship collectively?

10. List several passages that call us to be encouragers of others (Look for words like build up, edify, strengthen, and the numerous “one another” passages). What specifically do these scriptures call us to do?

**A CLOSER LOOK!** Look again at Hebrews 10:24 – It says, “And let us CONSIDER HOW TO stir up one another...” This verse is not just saying, “Don’t forsake the assemblies!” It is actually calling for us to be thinking, to be planning, about how we can encourage one another when we come together. List some practical ways in which you can be encouraging others. What keeps you from doing this more?