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Perry Hill Road Bulletin

Encouragement

The story is told of a soldier facing court martial for an unusual reason. He was charged with being "a discourager of men." Several factors were, no doubt, involved in the matter. However, the bottom line was that he was not a good soldier because he discouraged instead of encouraged his comrades.

An entire generation of Israelite males fell in the wilderness because of discouragement spawned by the evil report by the majority of the twelve spies. (See Deut. 1:22-36). The notable exceptions were Caleb and Joshua, who along with Moses, sought to encourage the people to go up and possess the land.

Everyone needs encouragement in the pursuit of what is good and right. Shepherds (bishops, elders, pastors) in the church need encouragement in their work of overseeing, feeding, and keeping the flock safe and pure from corruption, doctrinally, and morally. (Acts 20:27-28; I Peter 5:1-4).

Deacons who faithfully serve for years, often with little fanfare, need words of encouragement. They deal with situations that can be quite discouraging.

Preachers and teachers of God's word, whether in the pulpit, the classroom, or in the mission field, need to hear words of encouragement. Paul often spoke of those who "refreshed" him. (See I Cor. 17:18; II Timothy 1:16).

Christian couples need encouragement as they work hard to support and rear a good family in a bad world. The temptation to become discouraged due to daily routines and responsibilities and to become like the world is great.

Christian young people need encouragement to refrain from youthful lusts and to keep themselves pure (II Timothy 2:22; I Timothy 5:22).

The elderly need encouragement as they face health problems and other concerns of aging. The isolation and loneliness can be very discouraging.

We all have a duty to encourage ourselves in the Lord (See I Sam. 30:6). But, we also need to exhort and encourage one another (Heb. 3:13) as fellow soldiers in the Lord's Army.

By Edward L. Anderson

