

I. ME

- A. Welcome/Online
- B. Series
- C. Great to have people you like and enjoy, parties, celebrations, hanging out
- D. But life gets hard
- E. Easy to get discouraged
 - 1. **My past work stuff**
 - 2. **My current house stuff**

II. WE

- A. You've been there
 - 1. Job / Kids / Marriage
 - 2. Lack of all 3 of those
- B. Discouragement sucks the life out of life.**
 - 1. It feels like life can be a cycle of discouragement
 - 2. Something starts going well another thing falls apart
- C. That's why Solomon said... Eccl 4:9-10**
- D. When you are in a pit of discouragement you need someone to help pull you out.
 - 1. **Me-** Past work (Nate)/Current house (Liz)
 - 2. **Encouragement is life giving**
- E. Brings hope/optimism/will to fight for better.
 - 1. Tell the boys about finding the right woman
- F. So important it's one of the ways Paul says we can live out the Law of Love. - **1 Thessalonians 5:11**

- G. So I googled "How to encourage someone"
 - 1. Found nice ideas with creepy pictures... here are 6
 - 2. <https://www.wikihow.com/Encourage-People>
 - 3. #'s 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11 (Just pictures and bold captions)
 - 4. That's nice... but that's really all it is- nice.
- H. **What about real life stuff?**
 - 1. Cancer/Death/rebellious kids/financial issues/etc.?
 - 2. A sticker and a "good job sport" isn't going to cut it.
 - 3. So sometimes we try to do more... like lie.
 - 4. "Oh things will get better..." "it's going to be ok..."
 - 5. How do you know? Things might get worse!
 - 6. But what if you did know, for sure, that things would get better... that it all would work out?
- I. There is something deeper/better and more real than simply writing encouraging notes or vague ideas of assurance
 - 1. It's actual one of the core beliefs Xians have had since before they were called xians.
 - 2. It's one of the things xians have been mocked for for 2000 yrs.
 - 3. Might be one of the reasons you think Xianity is so dumb and mythological.
 - 4. It all has to do with the END OF THE WORLD...
 - 5. But it's the secret to true encouragement
 - 6. **Not JF-** Get a peek behind the curtain... at one of the foundational beliefs of JF's.
- J. Paul explains how this end of the world idea and encouraging each other go hand in hand.
 - 1. **Historical/Context-** Thessalonica, Greece, Paul started church there. Writing around 51 AD to encourage them.
 - 2. **Truth destroys the power of discouragement**

III. GOD

A. Look at **V. 10-11** again...

1. What's the **therefore**...?
2. Why encourage each other / how?

B. Gospel

C. Jesus died for you.

1. He is FOR you
2. When everything seems against you... Jesus died for you.
3. JESUS – DIED – FOR -- YOU

D. Paul says Jesus died for you so that you can live with him.

1. Reminding them of Jesus' Promise... **John 14:1-3**
2. Jesus had just predicted his death and resurrection...
Sooo, I believe him.

E. Paul says... "When things get impossibly hard and discouraging... remind each other that Jesus died for you and is coming back for you."

1. He will set everything right, undo every hurt... there is a happy ending... everything WILL BE OK

F. But what if the pain I'm in is my own doing? What if I have screwed up so bad that he wants nothing to do with me?

1. **V. 10** (Highlight "Whether awake or asleep.")
2. Many take that as alive or dead you'll be with Jesus when he comes back.
3. Not what the context is saying.
4. Paul has been encouraging the JF's to be alert ready for Jesus to come back... be awake/active... not asleep/inactive/not-caring/not obeying.

5. But he makes it clear... if you have chosen to follow Jesus... even if you screw up, turn your back, "fall asleep," you will still live with him.

6. You can't ruin it. - **Romans 8:35; 38-39**

7. Jesus died for you. He's coming back for you. And you can't ruin it.

G. But isn't that just sticking your head in the sand and wishful thinking...

1. "Lalala I'm pretending this isn't bad..."
2. Ignoring the reality of right now?
3. How does that help anything?

4. Real encouragement admits reality.

H. Admiral Jim Stockdale- Jim Collins Good to Great

1. Vietnam POW for 8 years. Tortured over 20 times
2. Survived while others didn't
3. Was asked in the middle of it how did he hang on?
4. "I never lost faith in the end of the story."
5. That one day he would get out... "I don't know when, might be years, did I will get out."
6. Why you and not others, who didn't make it out... "The optimists"
7. "We'll be out by xmas, easter" ... never happened... died of a broken heart.
8. Stockdale... **"You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end – which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they may be."**

I. Put all of this together...

J. Where do we find true encouragement?

K. **Encouraging Facts...**

1. Life is hard.

2. Jesus died for you.

3. He is coming back for you.

4. You can't ruin it.

IV. YOU

A. What does encouraging each other look like?

B. How to Encourage

1. Be Together

- a. Can't encourage anyone by looking at the back of their head.
- b. Have to know and be known
- c. Have to have time that you are available.
- d. Just be there... some times quietly

e. Connect Groups

2. Remember the facts

- a. Encourage each other with the truth... at the right time.
- b. Life is hard- This sucks. Its ok to feel this way
- c. Jesus died for you- You are not alone, God is for you
- d. He is coming back for you- This isn't the end. It WILL be better
- e. You can't ruin it- He will not and has not given up on you

3. Frank and his wife

C. Might be another step for you.

1. Maybe these facts aren't encouraging b/c you haven't accepted them yet.
2. Maybe this stuff sounds too good to be true.
3. But if you think about it... deep down you kind of want it to be true don't you?
4. It would be great if there were a God, who loves you, is for you,
5. That all of life has an eternal purpose
6. That your pain has a reason
7. And that there will be justice for every wrong that's ever been done.
8. Why do we all want that to be true?
 - a. A weird cruel evolutionary leftover that let our ancient ancestors survive?
 - b. Or is it possible a loving heavenly Father put that desire in us so that we would recognize our longing to be with him?

D. I know it might sound crazy... but here are the historical facts...

1. Jesus was a real person and He was crucified
2. When he was dead everyone thought it was all over...
3. His closest followers ran and hid
4. No one said "we have to keep his teachings alive and start a new religion" b/c he had based it all on himself being the way to God.

5. And then something happened.

6. Out of nowhere his followers stopped hiding and walked into the streets saying that Jesus was alive
 7. They stood before the government officials who had executed Jesus and told them it didn't work.
 8. They weren't afraid to die... they weren't afraid of anything.
 - a. People who aren't afraid of death aren't afraid of much.
 9. They didn't teach rules or rituals or religion... they said saw Jesus dead, and then they saw him alive, and everyone can have eternal life through him.
 10. Then what seemed impossible happened... the Temple of Jerusalem fell, the Roman Empire disintegrated and people are still telling stories of how the resurrected Jesus has completely changed their life.
- E. Maybe you want it to be true b/c it is true.
1. Maybe it's time to have the hope that has changed the world and countless lives for 2000 years.
 2. It would be cruel for me not to give you a chance to make that choice.

3. OFFER

- 4.** There's never been a point in your life where you said...
- a. Jesus I want to follow you
 - b. Thank you for dying for me
 - c. I trust you to forgive my sin
 - d. Give me a perfect/eternal relationship with you.

V. WE

- A. What would you try if you knew everything would be ok?
- B. What would you do if you knew in the end everything would work out?
- C. What would you be afraid of if even death didn't scare you?
- D. Lucian 170 AD- *The poor wretches have convinced themselves, first and foremost, that they are going to be immortal and live for all time, in consequence they despise death and even willingly give themselves into custody.*
- E. So encourage each other with the truth
 1. Life is hard
 2. Jesus died for you
 3. He is coming back for you
 4. And you can't ruin it
- F. This simple encouragement changed the world once and it can do it again...
 1. And maybe even more importantly it'll change you family, your work, school, and your life.
- G. Let's be better together.
 1. Let's be **devoted** to each other
 2. **Bear** one another's burdens
 3. **Forgive** each other
 4. And **encourage** each other
 5. And show the world that Jesus is alive and offers real life.

H. When we are better together the world has hope.