

w/b 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2016 ONE-ANOTHERING: *Encourage one another*

**LIFE APPLICATION: Encouragement: The power of a well timed word.**

**Read Hebrew 10: 19 to 25.**

Why do you think encouragement is so important?

Why do we need to be encouraged?

In his sermon, Dave challenged us to encourage 5 people this week. How did you get on in the challenge? Report back on the difficulties and the benefit.

The words we speak. Read Proverbs 18:21, 12:25, 15:4 & 16:24, James 3 5 - 6.

Unfortunately not all the words that we speak are encouraging. In his book on the subject of encouragement, Larry Crabb talks about 3 kinds of words: shallow words, death words, and life words...

**Shallow words:** a visitor from another culture once related to me the newly crushing disappointment he experienced during his first few months in a North American church. After an evening service... a number of people went out of their way to greet him. Several added to their welcome an implied invitation: "we'd love to have you over for dinner sometime soon." the young man was delighted. He spent the next week eagerly waiting for the phone to ring, sometimes rushing home from work in order not to miss the call he knew would come. It did not come - not until 3 months later. He told me that to adjust to American culture; he had to learn many words were spoken without meaning"

**Death words:** "I was once teaching a Sunday school class when a particularly conscientious young man asked a question. My mind quickly came up with a comical reply, though I don't know why. I put the thought into words and won a laugh. 6 months later the young man came to me to resolve the bitterness triggered by the incident, in which he had felt terribly embarrassed."

**Life words:** "I recall staring at the floor, too embarrassed to look around, and solemnly vowing never again to pray or speak aloud in front of a group... When the service was over, I darted toward the door... but I was not quick enough. A Christian man named Jim Dunbar intercepted me, put his arm on my shoulder and cleared his throat to speak. "Larry, he said, there's one thing I want you to know. Whatever you do for the Lord, I'm behind you 1000%" Then he walked away. Even as I write these words my eyes fill with tears. I have yet to tell that story to an audience without at least mildly choking. Those words were life words. They had power. They reached deep into my being."

**Discuss the following questions together:**

"Life words" Can you think of an example of words that were spoken to you in the past which had a positive effect?

Why do you think words can be so powerful to encourage us?

Why do you think it is possible for words to have such a damaging effect on us?

Do you think you have spoken death words to other people?

Why as followers of Jesus would we speak to other people in such a way?

“Death words” Can you think of words spoken to you in the past which had a negative effect?  
(Don’t name the person who spoke them to you!)

How important do you think is the context into which the words are spoken?

How important do you think are the actual words that are spoken?

Do you think you are the kind of person who speaks life words or death words or shallow words?

As followers of Jesus, what stops us from encouraging each other?

What is one thing that you would like prayer for this week regarding your conversations?

**To think about before next week:**

Can you think of times when you make hollow promises or speak insincere words?

Can you think of recent time when you asked someone a question and weren’t really interested in the answer?

Can you think of a recent time when you said the opposite of what you were really thinking or feeling?

*All questions bar one are from the study guide to Larry Crabb & Dan Allender’s excellent book entitled oddly enough ‘Encouragement’ by Zondervan press (also available on kindle)*