

# Encouraging the Spiritually Weak

**TEXT:** Isaiah 35:3-4; John 13:34,35; 15:12-17

**SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES:** Ecclesiastes 4:9,10; Galatians 6:1,2

**KEY VERSE:** Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. — 2 Corinthians 1:24

The relationship between Christ and the true believer provides the basis for a worthwhile and fulfilling life. The one who is at peace with God is at peace with himself. An extension of that inward contentment is evidenced in the caring concern the Christian shows to those who suffer from spiritual weakness and discouragement. Admonitions to encourage one another, build each other up, and inspire each other to love and good works are woven all through the Word of God. One of the plainest expressions of love in the Scriptures is that of sharing with others. Some of the most valuable things we can share are our time, talents, and energies in building up those in the Body of Christ who particularly need spiritual support or encouragement.

**1.** We need to develop our power of spiritual observation and discernment in order to see areas where we can be used to encourage someone. What are indications that a person may be spiritually weak?

**2.** When we observe that a brother or sister is having spiritual difficulties, what is our responsibility in the matter? Doing nothing is not the answer. How can we best approach him in an encouraging manner, and avoid the risk of offending or alienating him?

**3.** The first two verses of our text in Isaiah list three things that we should do for the weak. How would you translate these instructions into some specific ways we should reach out to the spiritually weak?

**4.** There is a distinct difference between the spiritually weak person who is finding fault with holiness, the church, Christian people, etc., and the person who is simply ignorant of the deeper truths of the Gospel. How are we, as mature Christians, to identify and minister to their needs?

**5.** Jesus promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would dwell in them. The Greek word *parakletos*, or “helper,” was used to describe the Holy Spirit. That word in its literal sense means “one called alongside.” How can the Holy Spirit’s role in our lives be a pattern for our influence in other people’s lives?

**6.** There is a danger in neglecting our duties as Christians. Refer to Ezekiel 34:10 and Matthew 25:44-46. How might these verses apply to us?

**7.** Our greatest example of servanthood was Jesus, who was the essence of compassion. In Philippians 2:7, we read that He took on Himself the form of a servant. Though many of the miracles Jesus did while on earth related to helping those in physical distress, He also ministered to people with spiritual needs. In both the Old and New Testaments, we read of God’s encouragement to those in need. Describe how God encouraged:

Abram — Genesis 15:1-6

Gideon — Judges 6:11-23

David — II Samuel 7:8-16

Palsied man — Matthew 9:2

The disciples — Matthew 14:25-27

**8.** In reading John 13:34,35, we see that the Lord gave a new commandment. Explain what this commandment was, and how it relates to us as we attempt to strengthen the spiritually weak.

**9.** Our text in John 15 reiterates the commandment discussed in the previous question, but this time with an added depth to it. Explain verse 13 in your own words, and describe how we can fulfill it in our day.

**10.** Of all the promises and assurances you know in the Bible, which has been the most encouraging to you in a time of weakness?