

Cleaning Fish #3

Pray: Ask the Lord to make you an encourager.

Read: 2 Timothy 1:15-18

Spiritual Encouragement

Everyone appreciates the encouraging friend. Critics are a dime a dozen, but encouragers are worth their weight in gold. When an individual receives Christ, he often experiences a shifting of friends. That can cause a lonely void, but a kind, spiritual friend can bridge those weeks of adjustment with regular encouragement.

1. What difficult experience did Paul encounter (v. 15)?

Imagine you are on death row, ready to be executed. Paul is in this terrible situation. Members and leaders of the church in Asia Minor, which is now Turkey, either volunteered or were assigned to care for Paul while he was waiting for the death sentence to be carried out. However, they may have been fearful of risking the kind of suffering Paul willingly endured. Their turning away from Paul left him feeling abandoned.

2. What four things did Onesiphorus do to encourage Paul (Vv.16-17)?

How different it was with this faithful disciple. Onesiphorus, who lived in Ephesus, accepted the risk and was willing to visit Paul often. Paul was refreshed by his visits, and in verse 16 he asked for a special blessing on Onesiphorus and his family.

3. What indicates that Onesiphorus practiced encouraging others as a way of life (v. 18b)?

Rather than distance himself from Paul, Onesiphorus came to Rome and searched until he found Paul. He must have asked dozens of minor officials where Paul was- and been firmly linked to Paul in their minds. How fortunate Paul was to have at least one loyal and faithful friend.

4. In what circumstances could a new believer use the kind of “spiritual refreshment” Onesiphorus gave to Paul (Vv.16- 18)?

Onesiphorus had already proven himself to be an outstanding servant in the Church of Ephesus, and he continued to prove his faith and character in his ministry to Paul. Again, Paul asked that God would grant him special favour on the Last Day.

5. Together make a list of things you might do to help a new believer. (*Thought Question*) (*Discuss*)

Pray together; ask the Lord to make each one of you an encourager of others.