

# UNITED

## Encourage One Another

**Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11, Hebrews 3:12-14, Romans 14:13-19

### Reflection:

Discouragement, which leads to despair, is not just an aspect of life, it is the inevitable result that comes when our expectation for ultimate fulfillment is placed on anything other than a life in Jesus Christ. To illustrate: all people will betray and disappoint; all will lose or leave their jobs; all new toys wear out; all new places lose their excitement; all relationships end in breakup or death; all people age losing youthful beauty; and all other religions require your adherence to their specific laws to achieve and maintain the love of their specific god. Additionally self esteem, positive energy and charitable activities will also, in the long run, leave us in a state of discouragement and despair because they are not ultimately fulfilling.

True encouragement comes from an all-powerful sovereign God who is “working for the good of those who love Him,” from an omnipresent God who “will never leave or forsake (His people)” and from an all-loving God who “made us alive in Christ while we were still dead in our sin” and who now calls us His “sons and daughters.” As Christians we are to encourage “one another” with these wonderful realities of our God. This week in our groups we will look more at how we can encourage each other in these truths.

### Questions:

1. How would you define encouragement? Talk about a time when you have been truly encouraged by someone.
2. Have you ever had someone attempt to encourage you and have the experience come out rather discouraging?
3. Sunday we learned the phrase “*Vocatus atque non vocatus*” which simply means that God is in control whether you like it or not. How does this phrase correlate to 1 Thess. 5:9-11?
4. Read Roman 14:13. In your experience, does the church function in line with this verse? Please explain why or why not.
5. What is Paul talking about in Romans 14:13-19? How is this verse applicable to our context?
6. Continuing from question 5, in what ways might we be guilty of “...destroy[ing] the one for whom Christ died (vs. 15).”
7. If we are to pursue that which makes for “mutual up-building” and encouragement, how do we go about this? How does this look different from the world’s version of encouragement?