

## **How to Encourage Yourself in the Lord**

### **1 Samuel 30**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Life is a roller coaster ride, isn't it? There are so many highs and lows that we go through.
2. Here in our text, David went through one of the toughest times of his life. He literally lost everything that he had, including his family.
  - In chapter 29, David was prepared to fight for the Philistines against his own people. This would have been very wrong, and could have kept David from ever ascending to the throne of Israel.
  - God protected David from such a tragic mistake by turning the princes of the Philistines against David. They were leery of David and didn't trust him, so King Achish sent David and his men back home to Ziklag. vs. 7, 10-11
3. While David and his men were gone, the Amalekites had come and taken David's city of Ziklag. They burned the city with fire and took all the women and children as captives. Read verses 1-3.
4. Can you imagine, as they approached their home town, all they saw was smoke billowing up to the sky? You ask, "What did David and his men do?" They sat down and cried like babies. vs. 4
5. Things went from bad to worse. Not only had David lost everything, but his own men were so emotionally distraught they were blaming David and talking about stoning him. vs. 6a
6. But, I love the end of verse 6. What an incredible statement! "*...but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*"
7. There will be times of discouragement in our lives, but we cannot allow them to swallow us up. Weeping is fine and normal, but it doesn't solve the problem. We must be able to encourage ourselves in the Lord. How did David do this here in our text?

#### **First, by seeking God's guidance - vs. 8-9**

1. David made the best decision that he had made in a long time. He told the priest to bring the ephod (a special vest worn by the high priest when he would inquire of the Lord).
  - David didn't say, "Bring me my sword," or "Bring me a tranquilizer or a bottle." By saying, "Bring me the ephod," he was saying, "We're going to the Lord with this thing."
  - David had made several decisions before this without seeking the Lord, and they were not good decisions at all. But now he decides, "I'd better seek God."
2. This is so crucial. This is the first and most crucial step in encouraging yourself in the Lord. But yet, it never crosses the mind of so many people.

- When disaster strikes, people turn to psychiatrists, or they turn to drugs, or alcohol, or illicit relationships. None of those are going to solve the problem. They may bring temporary relief, but will not provide lasting encouragement.
3. The world has a lot of places it runs when life pulls the rug out from under it, but the believer's first move should be to the Lord. We run to Him, and take our problems and cast them upon Him. 1 Peter 5:7
  4. Satan wants to convince you that God doesn't care, but He **does** care. Psalm 34:4; Matthew 6:26; Hebrews 4:15-16

### **Second, by acting upon God's leadership - vs. 9**

1. I love the first three words of verse 9, "*So David went...*"
2. God had made it quite clear what His will was - "Pursue!" Based upon God's promises, David got up and went. He was standing on the promises of God.
3. How do we determine God's will today? Today, we don't fetch a priestly vest and then have God speak audibly to us. We have two things today, as believers, that David did not have in the Old Testament. One is God's Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us at all times.
4. We also have every Word that God wants us to have in a book called the Bible. With our Bibles in hand, we read and study God's Word; we pray and seek God, yielding ourselves to His Spirit that lives within.
5. When God's Word has a clear answer for us, we simply obey and act upon it. In gray areas, we apply the principles of God's Word to our situations, pray, and use godly discernment to make those decisions that God would have us to make.
6. Again, Satan's desire is to move you away from God's Word. He doesn't want you praying or studying God's Word because he knows that these are your sources of help, guidance, and instruction.
7. But, like David, once we understand God's instruction in a matter, we need to immediately obey. David couldn't sit around crying and waiting for God to lay everything back in his lap. David went and he obeyed what God said.

### **Third, by enlisting the help of others - vs. 9-16**

1. David knew he needed help as he dealt with this catastrophe. David enlisted 600 men to go with him (vs. 9). Two hundred were so exhausted that they couldn't go on, so David moved forward with 400 men. vs. 10
2. Then they find a young Egyptian man who was a slave to an Amalekite. Again, David enlists his help and derives vital military information from him. vs. 11-15
3. What is my point? David couldn't go at this thing alone. He couldn't bear this burden all on his own. Many times we need the help of other godly people. Galatians 6:2
4. This is where a local church is so crucial. You need a church family. You need to be in a L.I.F.E. Group, forming godly friendships with people who will be there for you.

5. They can not only be there, they also can give godly advice and counsel, and truly help you, and not hinder you even more. If you are hurting today, we here at CrossRoads are here for you. We don't want you to have to face life's problems alone. Don't be afraid to call us and say, "I need prayer. I need encouragement. I need counsel. I need a friend."
6. David encouraged himself in the Lord by first seeking God, but then he acted on God's Word, and also enlisted the help of others.

#### **Fourth, by refusing to allow others to discourage you - vs. 10**

1. It is interesting that there were 200 soldiers who bailed on David. They said, "We can't go on any further. We'll sit here beside the water brook and pray for you guys."
2. This was no little, insignificant thing. David lost 1/3 of his army at one time. What would David do now? Would he say, "What's the use?" and give up, quit, throw in the towel?
3. Look at verse 10. "*But David pursued...*" He continued to do what God had told him to do. He would not be deterred.
4. Have you ever met people that seem to have just the right words to say when you're going through a tough situation? On the other hand, have you ever known people who seem to have just the **wrong** words to say? When you get around them, they're like sandpaper. They can instantly rub you the wrong way.
5. Some people have little faith and are very fainthearted. You cannot allow these kinds of people to discourage you. You have to be like David: "I know what God would have me to do. I still have 400 with me. I'm moving on!"

#### **In Conclusion:**

1. When David arrived at the Amalekites' camp, he looked down and there they were, drinking, and dancing, and having a big time (vs. 16). David and his 400 men attacked and they recovered everything. vs. 18-19
2. When he came back with all the spoils of victory, the 400 men looked at the 200 men who were left behind, and they wanted them excluded from the bounty. vs. 21-22
3. I love David's gracious response (vs. 23-24). David said, "No way, they are getting their fair share, just like everybody else."
4. Do you want to encourage yourself in the Lord? Don't have a vindictive spirit. Have a gracious, kind, giving spirit. Once you have been encouraged in the Lord, you will seek to encourage somebody else in the Lord.