

CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE, CHANGE YOUR LIFE

8 – Choose Relationships over Isolation

“My friends, we beg you to warn anyone who isn't living right. Encourage anyone who feels left out, help all who are weak, and be patient with everyone.”
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14

“Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts aren't evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, as long as it is called “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.”
- Hebrews 3:12-13, NLV

Everyone is susceptible to periods of despair, anxiety, complacency, and even rebellion against God. The fact of the matter is that *every* Christian (without exception) needs what *any* Christian can give—encouragement. Relationships with fellow believers is just as crucial to our spiritual growth as prayer or Bible study. Spiritual growth is never associated with needing other people less. On the contrary, we need each other to stay faithful to God!

Welcome

Share something newsworthy or significant from the past week.

Word

1. Has there been a time when you were really committed to doing something, and in spite of the fact that it was in your best interest you didn't do it (diet, budget, devotions, exercise, etc.)? Explain.

Read Hebrews 3:12-14

2. We begin with great intentions, determined to stay the course, but along the way we find ourselves falling back into the places and behaviors we intended to avoid. Somehow strengthening our commitments and deepening our convictions isn't enough. What's the “missing ingredient” according to this passage?
3. Why is it easy to acknowledge the need for relationships in other areas of our lives, but difficult to admit our need when it comes to our spiritual walk?
4. Do you believe that anyone—regardless of how long they've been a follower of God, or how much they know—is susceptible to turning away from God? Explain. What does the word “encourage” mean in this passage?
5. Have you ever had crystal clear clarity into someone else's poor decisions, even though they couldn't see it for themselves? Did you say anything? Why or why not? Has anyone ever pulled you aside when you were about to make a poor decision?
6. Given our need for spiritual connection with other believers, how can we encourage one another in this group? What is needed in order to have access to each other's lives?

Worship

Personalize your time together by ministering to, and praying for, one another. *In what areas of your life would you like to be encouraged? What is God telling you through this passage about the way in which you approach your small group?*

Works

Who has permission to pull you back on course when you drift? The best (and only) way to avoid self-deception is not to do life alone. What challenge do you sense God giving you right now in light of what you've discussed?