

Bridgeway Community Church
Series: Be Encouraged
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How to be Your Own CEO - Chief Encouragement Officer

“In a day of such discouragement, hard news, loss, and a lack of available mental health care, the art of biblical self-encouragement is something we must all pay attention to. My prayer today in this message, and in the next 4 week in this series that I am doing called “Be Encouraged”, I wanna pour much hope into your "encouragement tank" so you can be equipped to grow mature & mighty in Christ.”

1 SAMUEL 30:1-9 NIV84

David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, ²and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way. ³When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. ⁴So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. ⁵David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. ⁶David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.

v.6 KJV

And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

⁷Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelek, “Bring me the ephod.” Abiathar brought it to him, ⁸and David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?” “Pursue them,” he answered. “You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.”

“David had a crisis on his hands.”

QUESTIONS:

- What do you do when public sentiment has turned against you?
- What do you do when the people who were following you, now want to fire you or fight you?
- What do you do when the ones who were your fans, become your enemies?
- How do you handle those who were saying “hosanna, hosanna” one day and are now saying “crucify him, crucify him” the next day?

The very men that were following David now wanted to kill David.

This led to David being distressed (*“Greatly distressed”* - v. 6)

1 SAMUEL 30:6 NIV84

David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.

This particular story demonstrates an outward crisis leading to emotional distress, depression, and despair. Outer crises can lead to pain and brokenness.

- You get fired from a job
- Your boyfriend or girlfriend break up with you
- Your friends at school gang up on you on social media
- Your medical diagnosis comes back unfavorable
- Your house catches on fire, like what happened last week to one of our beloved attenders, Arge Romera. (We are praying for you, my sister and your family!)

“These kinds of events lead to discouragement and can send us into the dark corners of negativity. What happens when there are out crises we can understand that it can lead to distress.”

QUESTIONS:

But what about the things that happen inside?

Is there something that can happen inside that's so painful and confusing leading to despair?

"What happens when there's nothing you can tie your feelings [to], there's no outer crisis at all, you know you feel something on the inside but there's no outer crisis and you can't seem to understand it, you just know you feel lost inside?"

"What about when you feel stuff inside that you can't label and connect to a particular crisis, you only know inside you feel something and you can't put your finger on it."

"For some of you, life seems to be going fine...but there's a sputtering in your spirit."

Question: If everything seems okay, then why do I feel blue, bland, blah Why do I feel a little depressed or sad?

I have no reason to feel down! I have no reason to feel depressed! I have no reason to be discouraged! It just doesn't make sense!

There is something [going on in your life] "causing you to realize that there is a sputtering sound of grace alerting you to pay attention to what's happening inside of you."

Famous recent suicides: Anthony Bourdain, Kate Spade, Ian Alexander Jr & Cheslie Kryst

"Friends, mental illness is real!...but there are so many others who are not famous or popular but they are stuck in the dark shadows of despair."

- They are senior citizens, teenagers, LGBTQ+ people, military veterans.
- They are pastors, church goers, and everyday people like you and me
- You can be black or white, Asian or Latino, Arab or African, male or female...

Depression doesn't discriminate

Discouragement doesn't park only in poor zip codes and run down neighborhoods

Despair doesn't bypass the educated and the elite

Despondency does not take into account your net worth

"Mental illness is real!"

1. Everyone should put the National Suicide Lifeline in their contacts on their phone:

800-273-TALK (8255)

2. Pastor David's Instagram account @andersonspeaks also has a post with the number

3. Bridgeway's Mental Health & Faith Ministry - Bridgeway.cc/support

4. Tuesday Night Care Groups - Bridgeway.cc/support

"All the other OUTER trappings of life cannot replace the need for regular attention and maintenance that we all need to keep our lives running well."

"I believe that the oil in your "encouragement tank: needs to be changed regularly in order for you to keep you moving on the road of life. Regardless of how the outside looks, if the oil of encouragement is not flowing, you're not going."

Check your oil!
Change your oil!

"Whether it is an inner sputtering where no one can notice your pain, or whether it is an outer crisis like David was facing in 1 Samuel 30 when everyone discovered that their families had been kidnapped, you must choose to address your need for strength, for oil, for help!"

Question: What did David do, and can we attack our discouragement the same way he did?

"I think yes!"

"Do what David did in his discouragement...he turned to the Lord for strength and for wisdom."

“Sometimes, we have to turn down the noise and listen.”

David turned to the Lord, inquired of the Lord, and listened to the Lord!

1 Samuel 30:7-8 NIV84

Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelek, “Bring me the ephod.” Abiathar brought it to him, ⁸ and David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?”

EPHOD

Question: What’s an Ephod? What’s up with this Ephod thing?

- An ephod is a garment for priests that they would wear before the Lord whenever they would come into the presence of the Lord.
- It was an ornate garment made of linen and other jewels to cover the breastplate area of the priest.
- Only priests and Levites could wear this garment.

“However, warriors, on the other hand, they also wore an ephod; it wasn’t made of linen, it was a different kind. It was a hard breastplate for war.”

- These were two different kinds of ephods. One for the priest and one for the soldier.
- What is interesting is that David wasn’t a priest. Yet he was familiar with the Ephod. We know that David is a warrior soldier, they were out at war when they came back to find their families were missing.
- Yet, David is calling the priest for a clerical ephod, not a military one.

“In this moment of discouragement, he [David] calls on the priest to bring a garment that would take him before the Lord.”

We see something similar in other texts

2 Samuel 6:14 NIV84

David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord with all his might, while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sounds of trumpets.

Question: What was David doing [by asking the priest to bring the ephod]?

“While David wore an ephod for worship when dancing; he also wore one when he was at war fighting. I believe that David knew that if he was going to be victorious that he would need to get before the Lord. I believe that David put on the ephod to bring together his worshiping spirit and his warrior spirit.”

“David realized that he was in spiritual warfare when he was feeling the discouragement in his heart. When people were saying to him that they might stone and kill him, David realized that his warrior spirit wasn’t enough.”

“He couldn’t fight back all the things that were coming toward him. He couldn’t fight the negative words. He couldn’t fight the negative encounters with others. He couldn’t fight what had been taken from him. What he had lost with his wives. What he had lost with his children. What he had lost with his material possessions. Now what he had lost with the teammates that were with him fighting. He could not have enough warrior in him to fight against all of that and to push back his discouragement.”

“David realized that a military ephod and armor wasn’t enough for this battle. David was going to have to have victory beyond military victory. He first needed to have a victory spiritually. Emotionally. Mentally.”

David was about to use...his worship as a weapon against the enemy.
David was using his worship as a war cry against his depression.
David was getting strength from being in the presence of the Lord!

- Sometimes you have to fight for your sanity through worship!
- Sometimes you have to fight for your victory through praise!
- Sometimes you have to dance your way out of your problem!
- Sometimes you have to dance your way to victory!

David turned down the noise - the chatter about stoning him
David tuned his ear to the Lord
David turned up his worship!

This was David’s way of changing his oil!

Isaiah 61:3 NIV84

To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning. The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness

God wants to exchange your ashes with beauty

God wants to exchange your mourning with oil of joy

God wants to exchange your spirit of heaviness with the garment of praise

Beloved, worship your way to your breakthrough

LIONS

- Lions don't roar when they are on the prowl
- Lions roar when they have the victory.

Somebody needs to roar their way to victory!

Somebody needs to roar their way to victory by faith knowing that they will succeed!

I wish somebody would dance their way to victory right in your living room right now!

I wish somebody would clap their hands toward their victory by faith knowing that praise will confuse the enemy and will blind him!

"When you begin to put on that ephod of praise, God will exchange that spirit of heaviness with a garment of praise. Worship is your weapon!...The next time you feel downcast, lift up a praise and see what happens."

- When the pills aren't enough, praise him
- When the medicines not enough, praise him
- When the food can't soothe you enough, praise him
- When the addiction can't cover your pain enough, praise him
- When the alcohol can't anesthetize you enough, praise him

Put on your Ephod, your garment of praise, and lift your hands to God!

- When you don't know what else to say, say hallelujah anyhow
- Say, praise him anyhow
- Say, Hallelujah, Victory is mine, Glory to God
- Say what you need to say!

Psalm 150:6 NIV

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Psalm 121:1-2 KJV

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

² My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

Psalm 46:1 NIV84

God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

“When it is all said and done, as the Chief Encouragement Officer of your Life choose to say what God said to do in Psalm 46:10. He said this:”

Psalm 46:10

Be still and know that I am God