

## Encourage Me

Text : **Phil. 3: 1-16**

### **INTRODUCTION :**

#### **A. Do you ever have trouble staying spiritually motivated?**

1. Is your spiritual battery like the “energizer bunny?” ( **keeps going and going** )
2. Sometimes mine is more like the old song, “*Just Another Manic Monday*.”
  - a. I don’t stop believing or start doubting that Jesus is the Christ.
  - b. I just loose my spiritual energy, my enthusiasm, etc. ( Become robotic - **DRIFT** )

#### **B. Sometimes I just need my spiritual battery charged.**

1. Even the world’s best battery eventually runs down.
2. Dealing with life is a constant drain on one’s spirituality.
  - a. People of the world by nature act like people of the world.
  - b. There’s no way to avoid the world while living in it.
  - c. I just have to learn how to survive in it. **Learn how to stay spiritually charged.**
    - 1) No one else can do it for me.
    - 2) This lifting process has to start within.

#### **C. Do you ever feel that way ?**

1. Every Christian has at one time or another.
2. We don’t make a decision to reject our faith, but one day we realize we aren’t thinking about God as much as we used to;.
  - 1) **We simply are not as spiritually active as we once were.**
  - 2) By nature we make excuses to ourselves to explain it away.
3. Whether we want it to or not, life has a way of taking us over.
  - a. Non-Christian relatives and friends consume our time, our thoughts, our energy.
  - b. It takes increasing amounts of time to maintain our standard of living.
  - c. Life dumps a host of problems on us and we have to deal with them.

**In the face of such pressure, how does one stay spiritually motivated, enthused and focused on doing what God wants him to do and on being what God wants him to be ? The formula for success is very similar in the spiritual realm and in the physical realm.**

## I. TO STAY MOTIVATED ONE HAS TO STAY FOCUSED ON HIS GOAL.

### A. All successful people have goals. ( Fundamental to success in any field )

1. Successful people write out their goal and keep it where they will be reminded.
  - a. He knows where he's going and how he plans to get there.
  - b. One doesn't wait until he's lost to look at the map.
2. There are many ways one can keep his goal in front of himself.
  - a. Post it where you see it every day.
    - 1) It may be written out or represented by a symbol.
    - 2) **ILL. – black marble**
  - b. Put pictures of the goal in various places where you will see it.
  - c. Talk about your goal with other people. ( **STAY GOAL ORIENTED !!** )

### B. Part of the goal-setting process is to list intermediate steps required to accomplish the ultimate goal. ( mile markers )

1. Intermediate goals provide a way to monitor progress toward achieving the goal.
2. How does one eat an elephant ? One bite at a time ! ( **Inch by inch it's a cinch,..** )
3. These same principles apply to our spiritual lives. ( **Compare ... II Pet. 1: 5ff** )
  - 1) Heaven is our ultimate goal. ( **faith, obey gospel, transform life, win others** )
  - 2) Along the way we must monitor our forward progress to insure we're on track.

### C. The steps to our goals are a roadmap to the future, not a logbook of past travels.

1. Forward progress demands forward thinking.
2. One cannot define himself by his past mistakes or accomplishments.
3. **No matter how long one sets on the past, it's an egg that won't hatch.**

### D. The Apostle Paul taught us to apply these same principles to our walk with God.

1. No one can set on his past accomplishments.
  - a. **Vs. 12 – Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.**
  - b. None of us have “obtained” our goal so long as we remain on this earth. ( **Heaven** )
  - c. Jesus instructed us that He expects daily service. ( **Spiritual atrophy** )  
**Luke 9: 23 – And He was saying to *them* all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.**

2. We must keep our eyes focused on the future. ( **walk = one step follows another** )
  - a. **Vs. 13** – **Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead,**
  - b. The N.T. nowhere tells us about grandfathers of the faith telling stories of old days.
    - 1) We've all had successes along the way, but we can't rest on our laurels.
    - 2) Jesus tells us that we are never off duty until we are called home.
    - 3) **Luke 17: 10** – **So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done *only* that which we ought to have done.'** ( **When we've everything possible ...** )
  - c. We've all made mistakes, but we can't let them distract us from pursuing the goal.
    - 1) Repent of our wrongs.
    - 2) Learn from our mistakes.
    - 3) Accept God's grace and move on. ( **One's self is the hardest to forgive.** )
  - d. We can only concentrate on the future if we put the past out of our minds.
- \* **A driver who focuses on the rearview mirror will rear-end the car in front.**
3. As we accomplish the intermediate goals, (**knowledge, holiness, soul-winning, etc** ) we must keep focused on our ultimate goal. **HEAVEN**
  - a. **Vs. 14**– **I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus**
  - b. We must not allow Satan to sidetrack us from the active pursuit of our goal.
  - c. Satan will do his best to divert our attention using those things around us.
    - 1) People we know and love
    - 2) Problems of our daily life
    - 3) Prosperity ( too much – **or** – too little )
4. If Heaven is indeed our goal, we must keep it before us every day.
  - a. **Heb. 10: 35**– **Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.**  
**36**– **For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.**
  - b. Each person is reminded of the goal in his own way.
5. Each individual must provide his own way of keeping focused. (**Focus is essential.**)

## II. CHRISTIANS MUST INDIVIDUALLY SEEK STRENGTH AND MOTIVATION.

### A. The corporate world has many systems in place to keep their people motivated.

1. Seminars
  - a. They know valleys separate every mountaintop.
    - 1) It is much easier to fall down a mountain than to climb up one.
    - 2) Gravity makes the trip down much easier.
  - b. Thus, companies invest large amounts for motivational events.
    - 1) They schedule these events on a regular basis. ( **pro-active** ... **not reactive** )
    - 2) The events are for maintenance and prevention, not correction.
    - 3) It's much easier to keep a body in motion than to get one started moving.

\* **When there are spiritual events, we need to avail ourselves of them.**

2. They have regular staff meetings.
  - a. These are corporate pep rallies.
  - b. Head off problems before they can fully develop.

\* **The church has such a meeting every Sunday.**

3. Provide motivational materials ... mail, email, fax or hand out.
  - a. Magazines, Newsletter, Posters
  - b. Videos, CDs, Audio Tapes
4. They weed out weed out negative influences.
  - a. Quickly silence negative voice
  - b. Relieve those who hinder the team / unit from excelling

### B. Successful people actively seek out motivation on their own. ( **also, Christians** )

1. No one is born highly motivated.
  - a. Attitudes are learned behavior. ( **environmental** ... **nurture not nature** )
  - b. Positive attitudes are developed, usually with long-term effort and influences.
  - c. People tend to pick up the attitude of their environment.
    - 1) People who are not comfortable in a company soon leave.
    - 2) If they do not leave they adjust their comfort zone to enable them to survive.
2. *“Birds of a feather flock together.”*
  - a. Successful people ( **Christians** ) seek the company of other successful people.
  - b. Successful mentors teach their students to avoid contact with losers/ failures.
  - c. Winning and losing are both learned skills.

**C. This principle is just as true in the spiritual realm and in the corporate world.**

**\* Spiritual success is also learned.**

1. There are positive and negative members in every congregation.
  - a. Negative members tend to be the most outspoken.
    - 1) They're against it (whatever) and they want to make sure everyone knows it.
    - 2) They're uncomfortable with change and suspicious of success. ( **insecure** )
    - 3) They're basically "*me, myself, & I*" oriented.
  - b. Positive members tend to go about their business hoping to avoid conflict.
2. There are also both spiritually minded and carnally minded members in all congregatio
  - a. There were carnally minded members at Corinth. ... **I Cor. 3: 1-4**
  - b. There were some spiritually minded people in Galatia. ... **Gal. 1-2**
  - c. All Christians start off carnal and "metamorphosisize" into a spiritual being.
3. The Christian's ability to stay spiritually motivated depends upon his willingness to seek out fellowship with those who can lead him to be what he wants to be.
  - a. When I'm down, Satan will always have someone available to reinforce my problems.
    - 1) "Well, I just can't understand why she would do that to you ..."
    - 2) "You have every right to be upset ..."
    - 3) "If we don't stop them they're going to ..."
  - b. The Apostle Paul warns us to be selective about those with whom we associate.
    - 1) **I Cor. 15: 33** – **Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."**
    - 2) **II Tim. 3: 1-5** – ( list of evils ) "... **avoid such men as these**"
  - c. No matter how much we like a negative or unspiritual person, we must be careful to limit our contact with him.
4. The responsibility of every member is to be an encouragement to every other member.
  - a. **Heb. 3: 12-13** ... In order to keep them from falling away.
  - b. **Heb. 10: 23-25** ... This is the reason we get together. ( assemble / go to church )
  - c. **I Cor. 14: 26** ... "**All things done for edification**" ( **God wants the assembly to ...** )
5. Christians are forbidden to be "downers."
  - a. **Eph. 4: 29** – **Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.**
  - b. **Col. 4: 6** – **Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.**

## **CONCLUSION :**

- A. We all share the struggle to keep our spiritual batteries charged.**
- B. Fortunately, when God created us in Christ Jesus, He created us with rechargeable batteries.**
  - 1. Like lithium batteries, the more we use them, the more powerful they become.
  - 2. Even when completely drained, they come back more powerful than ever when they are fully recharged.
- C. We must avail ourselves to the resources available to us.**
  - 1. Gatherings
  - 2. Bible
  - 3. Books
  - 4. Tapes, CDs
  - 5. Fellowship
- D. We must seek out positive spiritual companions.**
  - 1. Avoid those who tend to pull us down.
    - \* **We don't have to listen to complaints and criticisms.**  
**End such conversations quickly.** ( Don't talk to Satan ... **Matt. 16: 23** )
  - 2. We must spend our time with those who lift us up.
  - 3. We must learn how to talk about spiritual things and pray together.
- E. Don't miss an opportunity to be with the brethren.**
  - 1. In the assemblies of the church.
  - 2. Times of fellowship and shared activities.
  - 3. Gather in small groups.

## **This week :**

**Share with a brother one thing that builds you up.**

**Make one phone call to a brother or sister who needs encouraging**

**Send one card of encouragement**