

passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

WHEN I FEEL ALONE

Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Matthew 28:20 And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Psalms 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me: your rod and your staff they comfort me

WHEN I NEED ENCOURAGEMENT

Psalms 46:1-2 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.

1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.

Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they will run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE YOURSELF IN THE LORD.

And David was greatly distressed; for the people spoke 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. 1 Samuel 30:6

MOVING TOWARD MATURITY

In 1 Samuel 30 David found himself in a difficult spot. So much so, that the very people he was trying to lead were plotting his demise and death. Scripture tells us that in the midst of that overwhelming situation David somehow encourages himself in the Lord.

It doesn't tell us how he did it, but I think it is a skill that all of us need to ask God to help us to learn. I remember when our kids were smaller, they would be crying in their crib and at first you would rush in at any sound or whimper. But eventually as parents (if you want any sleep at all and non-whiney children), you have to allow them to learn how to comfort themselves. It is a part of their maturing as children. So to, we need to learn that we can give ourselves encouragement in the Lord in order to grow and mature.

TWO VITAL TOOLS NEEDED

The vital tools we need in order to grow in this area are not complicated and unknown, but they are unutilized and easily taken for granted. First, we must pray. The apostle Paul's admonition in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 is to "pray without ceasing". He goes on and tells us this is a part of God's will for us. David modelled this in his life. The book of Psalms are full of his prayers. They were heartfelt and anguish filled, but they were also trust based. When it was all said and done, his hope was in the Lord.

The second tool again is not some unknown thing. It is something that we have readily available to us: The Bible. In God's Word we have access to, as the old hymn states, "wonderful words of life." These words can speak encouragement in to your life. It's interesting to note that the longest chapter in the Bible, Psalm 119, is packed full of the benefits of God's word. It encourages to hide it's

words in our hearts. This is key if you want to learn to encourage yourself in the Lord. I would challenge you to make your own journal to help you in this process. These scriptures should give you a good starting point.

WHEN I AM AFRAID

Isaiah 41:10 Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Zephaniah 3:17 The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline.

WHEN I HAVE NO PEACE

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

John 16:33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Romans 8:6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which sur-