

The Encouragement Newsletter

*...but let us Encourage one another-and all the more
as you see the Day approaching.
Hebrews 10:25*

Introduction:

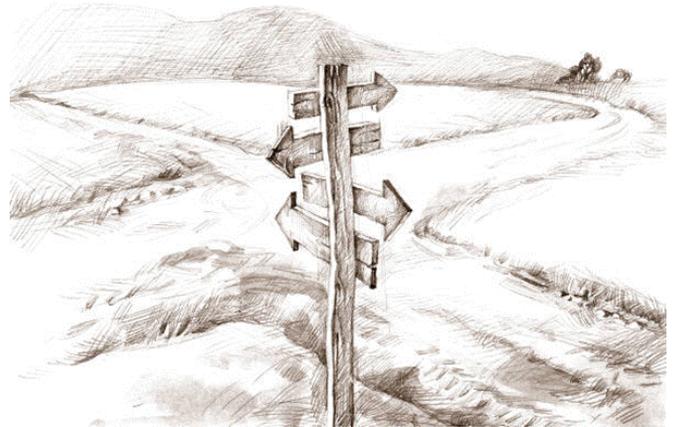
Welcome to the first quarterly edition of The Encouragement Newsletter. The idea for this newsletter began while I was living in Stuttgart, W. Germany. I had been married almost a year when I was awakened with either a vision or dream of a newsletter I had written. The title of the newsletter read either "Enlightenment" or "Encouragement".

I returned home in 1990 and began to settle down and adjust to new things, but often thought about this newsletter. Year after year I asked the Lord, "Is this the time", but never felt it was the time. Last year, I sensed more than ever it was time to begin the newsletter that would minister Encouragement and bring Enlightenment. Also, having experienced tremendous growth and maturity both spiritually and naturally since this experience, now almost 20 years ago, I believe the vision has expanded to include more than a newsletter publication. However, I will begin with the newsletter and expand to other areas of ministry in the near future.

Definition & Purpose:

To begin, I'd like to define a few words to provide a greater understanding of my purpose. The word **Encouragement** is defined as the support that inspires confidence; something that encourages; the act of encouraging, which is giving hope and promise. To **Encourage** is to inspire with courage, spirit, or confidence; to stimulate by assistance, approval, etc.; and to promote, advance, or foster. In the Strong's Concordance, **Encourage** means "to urge forward and persuade". Each definition is simple, yet profound. So is my purpose. As

you read each article, testimony, exhortation and poem in The Encouragement Newsletter, my prayer is that you will receive confidence, strength, courage, inspiration and hope to move forward in your personal life and journey with Jesus Christ.



The Chosen Path:

On the first day of the year, which was only a few weeks ago, I was pondering many things. As I was talking the Lord about these things, I saw a vision of a dirt road with a straight path through it. The road was imprinted with tire marks. To the right I could see another path and to the left another. What I believe I heard the Lord say was, "I have a Chosen Path for you. The path of another is their path and you cannot follow their path because it's not for you. It may be that you will do the same things on the path you see for another, but at a different time in your life. Rest in the Chosen Path I have chosen for you". Although this encounter was personally for me, after meditating on the vision and words, I decided to share my thoughts in the first newsletter.

The path symbolizes our own unique journey, step, direction, way, life or walk with the Lord. Many times we all (myself included) have looked at another's path and wished we were on the same path. There are times we are on same path as a friend, family member, or neighbor, but suddenly things change. It feels awkward, but it is the Lord shifting and making major and/or minor changes to our individual path and plan according to His

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timing. (Jeremiah 29:11) At times, it can be difficult to follow and walk His Chosen Path because we cannot see where the road will lead. We begin experiencing many ups and downs, bumps in the road, and unexpected challenges. Things do not always go smoothly. Then there are those times when we can see, feel and taste the dream or vision, but it seems like it is taking “forever” to achieve. Stress, distress and wanting to give up are common feelings. As a free moral agent, we can exercise our own will and take a detour in hopes of moving faster. Or, just take a break from it all. Or...we can make a few revisions to the Chosen Path, taking matters into our own hands to “make it happen” - which is actually when we become responsible for the outcome. Umm... something to think about.

Walking the Chosen Path is a journey filled with preparation. Prior to being released for all the world to see, Jesus had a 33-year preparation period. At the age of 12 He knew that He was to “be about the Father’s business”. (Luke 2:41-51) Although He had a keen sense of Who He was, possessed wisdom and astounded many, He submitted to His parents. This was a part of Jesus’ Chosen Path. His Chosen Path included being baptized by John the Baptist (Luke 3:21) and immediately going to the desert to be tempted by the devil. (Luke 4) This, again, was all a part of the Chosen Path. Jesus had to endure temptation before He could say, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to...” (Luke 4:18) We will have to do the same.

The life of Joseph is another encouraging example to look at for strength. Joseph had dreams of his future. (Genesis 37, 39 – 42) I am sure he never thought the Chosen Path to his dreams would mean his brothers would be jealous of him and put him in a pit. I am sure he never thought he would be sold like property, face temptation, accusation and imprisonment. As we read his life, we see the favor of the Lord continually upon him. The

mark of those who walk the Chosen Path is Favor with God and man.

In Genesis 41:14, we find Joseph standing before Pharaoh and doing what he has been doing all along, interpreting dreams. He is promoted to the place of being in charge of whole land of Egypt. The dream came to pass, but not without the cost of preparation.

Where are you? On the Chosen Path or your own path? Is it rough right now? Do you want to take a detour? Don’t take a detour. Do not become weary. As I thought about what it would take to get and/or stay on the Chosen Path, I came up with a list of suggestions and scriptures. Here are a few of them.

- Seek the Lord about your current path. Ask yourself “Am I doing the will of the Lord, the will of man or my own will. (Psalms 16:11, 25:4-5 and 27:11)
- If you’re not sure about where you are, look for someone to pray with you, help guide, encourage, provide some insight and wisdom. Oftentimes, our minds are on mental overload because we’re always on “go”. Asking someone to pray with you can help you break through the mental blockages and think clearly. (Matthew 18:18-19)
- Talk with those who have been where you are going. So many people have gone before you and know the way. You may not necessarily walk the exact path, but they know the bumps in the road, traps and temptations. With their help, you can avoid costly mistakes and frustration, gain wisdom and perhaps get there a lot quicker with fewer wounds. If you cannot find anyone to talk with face to face, there are many books, reference guides and helpful internet sites. (Proverbs 4:13, 11:14, 19:20 and 27)
- Always remember you are “a work in progress” and learn to rest in the Lord. Walking the Chosen Path is full of phases of preparation. So Rest. (Psalms 16:7-11, 62:1 and Matthew 11:28-30)

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- When it gets rough, don't detour, avoid distractions and stay focused. When it gets rough we all have a tendency to look for relief. Jumping on to a new path may look like the right thing to do, but remember, it may be right for some else, but not for you. (*Proverbs 3:6, 4:11-19*)
- Pray and Persevere. (*I Thessalonians 5:16-17, Hebrew 10:36, 12:1*)
- Always remember the Lord is the guide on the Chosen Path. (*Psalms 32:8 and Isaiah 42:16*)

As I stated earlier, I asked the Lord year after year "Is this the time" to begin the newsletter. His Chosen Path was for me to experience many things in my journey before I could write them. I am still being prepared and I am constantly making a conscience decision to stay on the Chosen Path. It isn't always easy, but with a heart set on obeying the Lord, there is great delight in walking the Chosen Path, even in the hard times. Spend your days on the Chosen Path where there is Life and Peace.

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal Encouragement and good hope, Encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.
II Thessalonians 2:16-17 (NIV)

Jesus Christ is the Author & Finisher of my Faith
Veronica B. McCray, Co-aAuthor
Fred McCray – Editor

*The Chosen Path is the Perfect Will of God.
Get on the Chosen Path....
Stay on the Chosen Path.*



If this newsletter is has been an Encouragement to you, please let me know by e-mailing me at hisminstrl@yahoo.com. I'd love to hear from you