

Selected Thoughts



ENCOURAGE
TO INSPIRE WITH HOPE,
COURAGE, OR CONFIDENCE

RON ADAMS



This work is dedicated to my loving wife,
Marie,
my constant companion since July 1954,
who has encouraged me to share these thoughts.

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CONTENTS

ENCOURAGEMENT – 3

‘AS IS, WHERE IS.’ – 5

PASSIVE OR ACTIVE – 7

‘WHAT ABOUT HIM?’ – 9

HERE’S HOW TO HAVE A BETTER DAY – 11

HOLD TO GOD’S HAND – 13

AM I THE ONLY ONE? – 15

OBSTACLES AND OBJECTIVES – 17

DIFFICULTIES IN FORGIVING – 19

HONEST SELF-APPRAISAL – 21



INTERSPERSED WITH BRIEF NOTES

MY PRAYER

May the thoughts on the following pages be an encouragement to you the reader.

Ron Adams



ENCOURAGE



ENCOURAGEMENT

Therefore

encourage one another

and

build up one another,

just as you also are doing. But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.

Live in peace with one another.

We urge you, brethren,

admonish the unruly,

encourage the fainthearted,

help the weak,

be patient with everyone.

See that

no one repays another with evil for evil,

but always

seek after that which is good for one another

and for all people.

1 Thessalonians 5:11-15

Lesson: One Another: Giving and Receiving

Everyone needs to listen to these words, so that they may encourage one another. It's giving encouragement as well as receiving it.

Encouraging: The gift that benefits both the one who encourages and the one who is encouraged. It's a win-win activity.



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This is the confidence which we have before Him, that,
if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

1 John 5:14



*God promised to hear our prayers. As one of His
children we have promised to obey His will.*

*His promise is unwavering. May
our promise also be unwavering.*





‘AS IS, WHERE IS’

“As is, where is” is a term used at auctions. It means that when you bid on an item and make the winning bid, it’s yours “as it now is, where it is now.” Life is a lot like that.

We must take it as it is now, where we are now. We are not given the option of refusing to accept it until it is changed to our liking.

It is apparent that the Apostle Paul understood this concept when he wrote:

“Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having an abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

Philippians 4:11-13

There are many things that happen about which we have nothing to say. We had no voice in deciding when we were born, the family into which we were born, or the social, cultural and economic status of that family. There are many things which we have little control over: how others treat us, what kind of diseases we will contract, our length of life, etc.

Since we exert so little control over such external things, we must learn to accept life “as is, where is.” This is what produces contentment. Not that we wouldn’t like it to be different. Not that we shouldn’t try to improve our lot in life. It is accepting our present circumstances for now.



When we accept ourselves “as we are, where we are,” we are able to face today, and gain strength to change things for tomorrow.



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Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be
content in whatever circumstances I am.

Philippians 4:11



*Contentment is more a matter of disposition
than position. It's being ready to accept
what it is for the moment. It produces
inner peace.*





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PASSIVE OR ACTIVE?

While going through some difficult times, I put a sign on my office wall that read: “*It’s up to You to Make the Day a Success.*” It reminded me that one must take charge of his or her thoughts and actions.

* * *

Take Charge of Your Thoughts

Push your problems into the background as much as possible and let your mind dwell on noble things.

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Philippians 4:8

* * *

Take Charge of Your Life

Do some kind deed. Say a kind word. Pray for those you know who are less fortunate. Lift the spirits of someone downtrodden. Share the Good News. Spend time in prayer.

* * *

Be Active!

Hoping things will be better, wishing things to improve, looking to others to make your day, causes one to be passive.

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

MAKE YOUR DAY!

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Galatians 6:10



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Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

James 4:8



When life becomes difficult. When our bodies become frail. When circumstances become hard to endure. It's time to draw near to God. Meditate on His word. Be fervent and frequent in prayer knowing that he hears our prayers. Find comfort in His care and lovingkindness.





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WHAT ABOUT HIM?

So Peter seeing him said to Jesus, “Lord, and what about this man?” Jesus said to him, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?

You follow Me!”

John 21:21-22

Peter, having been told what would befall him, asked what was going to happen to “him.” [It is commonly believed that this was John.]

‘You Follow Me’

We need to be a faithful follower of the Lord. This is a personal commitment that must not depend on whether others (family, friends, brethren) follow the Lord. We can help and support each other in following Jesus, but at the judgment each will give a personal account.

So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this— not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way.

Romans 14:12

Faith and fidelity are strictly
personal obligations.



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Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32



Motto: Be Thoughtful and Kind.

Kindness is an act of love. It demonstrates love of others, love of the brethren, and love of God.

Blessed are they who show a tender, considerate, and helping nature. And blessed are those who are the recipients of such kindness.





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“Have a good day” is often expressed as one departs.

HERE’S HOW TO HAVE A BETTER DAY

Sometimes it is the things that we don’t do that make a better day:

- not procrastinating
- not becoming impatient
- not being possessive
- not being anxious to impress others
- not cherishing an inflated opinion of yourself
- not taking advantage of others
- not keeping a record of hurts done to you
- not worrying about tomorrow.

By not doing these things, you will have a better day!

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Prevention is far better
than remedial.



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But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the
greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13



*To have faith in Jesus Christ and the hope of eternal
life is awesome. But to have the love of God is greater.*

*May His great love motivate us to love Him
and love others.*





HOLD TO GOD'S HAND

While shopping with our young children, I never held their little hand. Instead, I held out two fingers and told them they were to hold onto me. The only way the hold could be broken was for them to let go. As I look back on that arrangement it reminds me of holding onto God's hand (figuratively). He has extended His hand to us and it is up to us to take hold and not let go. Whenever the hold is broken, it never is God who lets go, it is always us.

We are not to let go when we don't want to go where He leads.

We are not to let go when the glitter of the world beckons.

We are not to let go when trials and temptations come.

He is always faithful and never lets go because He loves us and wants what's best for us.

Take Hold by Faith

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16

Hold On Patiently

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

Hold On Firmly

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13



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Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 4:16



Our physical body degrades with time. The process of decay is ongoing, and so is the process of renewal. It's been said that as a Christian nears the time of departure, heaven seems nearer and dearer.





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AM I THE ONLY ONE?

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

THREE THINGS WE LEARN

My Temptations Are Not Unique.

I am not to think – “I’ve been singled out. Woe is me.”

I Am Able to Resist.

I am not to consider myself powerless – “I couldn’t avoid it.”

I Have A Way Out.

I am not to regard myself as helpless – “I can’t help it.”

Don’t Give in! Don’t Give Over! Don’t Give Up!

Rather, use it as an opportunity to strengthen your faith.

We all are unique individuals
who share common temptations.



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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.

Philippians 3:13



*The past is to be a springboard to spur you on,
not an anchor that holds you back.
Learn from the past, live in the present, and
prepare for the future.*





OBSTACLES AND OBJECTIVES

Obstacles are the things encountered on the way to the goal. Focus on the obstacles and one loses sight of the objective. Focusing on the goal helps one deal with the obstacles.

The Israelites heard the spies' report of the obstacles and gave up pursuing the objective of entering the promised land.

Their response:

"Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!"

Numbers 14:2

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Paul the apostle upon hearing of the obstacles facing him in Jerusalem, pursued his goal and dealt with the obstacles.

*"The Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."*

Acts 21:11

### **His response:**

*"What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."*

Acts 21:13

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When we encounter obstacles in living for Jesus, we must not focus on the obstacles but keep our eye on our objective. May we echo the words of Caleb and the Apostle Paul:

"If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us."

Numbers 14:8

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:14

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### **Our response:**

*I will not lose sight of the goal.  
It's attainable with God's help!*



## ENCOURAGE



Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without  
wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23



*Our hope is based on a promise made by God who  
cannot lie. And He has demonstrated His power  
over death. Therefore, we can look forward to  
our resurrection with confident expectation.*





## DIFFICULTIES IN FORGIVING

The Lord's forgiveness is contingent upon us forgiving those who ask for our forgiveness, "*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*" (Matthew 6:12). Is it not good for one to refuse those who seek forgiveness. Forgiving those who hurt us often is difficult, but those who have been forgiven by the Lord are to be forgiven by us. As difficult as that may be at times, there is a more difficult act of forgiving: forgiving oneself.

"I'll never forgive myself" is sometimes spoken after committing a grievous sin. However, if one has repented and sought forgiveness from God and from those affected by it, one must be willing to forgive oneself. Carrying a burden of guilt after being forgiven may be to some a means of penance (self-mortification). But why carry a heavy load that the Lord has removed? Don't feel worthy? Neither did Paul. Nor does any Christian. We are all debtors who have been forgiven, some more, some less—but all are forgiven. The "chief of sinners" found mercy, and moved on to what lay ahead, not letting his past sins become an anchor to hold him back, and so must we.

*It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.*

1 Timothy 5:16

While we can't erase the memory of our transgressions, we can rejoice in the fact that the guilt has been taken away. Rejoice and move on to what you can do for the Lord, without a load of guilt.

***If a debt is paid in full...what is left to pay?***



## ENCOURAGE



A friend loves at all times,  
And a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 17:17



*In times of adversity true friends will be there.  
The bonds of friendship are strengthened,  
not weakened, in times of hardship.  
True friends are indeed a great blessing.*





## **SLOW TO ANGER**

*But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;  
for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.*

James 1:19-20

Anger can build up within us. That's not wrong within itself. However, the Scriptures tell us that we are to be "slow to anger." When you are able to maintain control of your anger, you demonstrate great inner strength. The one who "flies off the handle" at the least provocation has little inner strength and is at the mercy of others.

## **SOME GEMS FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS**

*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,  
And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.*

Proverbs 16:32

*He who is slow to anger has great understanding,  
But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.*

Proverbs 14:29

*A hot-tempered man stirs up strife,  
But the slow to anger pacifies contention.*

Proverbs 15:18

*A man's discretion makes him slow to anger,  
And it is his glory to overlook a transgression.*

Proverbs 19:11



## ENCOURAGE



Members should have the same care for one another.  
And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with  
it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice  
with it.

1 Corinthians 12:25-26



To know that someone cares—warms the heart.  
To hear words of comfort—lifts one's spirit.  
To feel a pat on the back or a warm embrace—  
strengthens one's resolve.







## PERISH THE THOUGHT

Whenever one of these thoughts enters our mind,  
it needs to be disposed of promptly.

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“How could God . . .?”

Perish the thought that we can think on a level with God.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:8-9

“It sounds reasonable to me that . . .”

Perish the thought that reason can be the basis for determining what is acceptable to God. Reason is subjective, interpretive, and limited by personal knowledge and bias.

Then God said to Jonah, “Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?” And he said, “I have good reason to be angry, even to death.”

Jonah 4:9

“I know what it says, but . . .”

Perish the thought that what is written can be rebutted. If we know what the Bible says, that’s all that matters; attempting to rebut truth is vain.

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 4:24

“Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.”

John 17:17

“If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

John 8:31-32



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Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
and to make you stand in the presence of His glory
blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty,
dominion and authority, before all time and
now and forever. Amen

Jude 1:24-25



*What an excellent expression of praise to God our
Father and His Son Jesus Christ.*





HONEST SELF-APPRAISAL

Haughtiness is not an attractive trait and it certainly is not in accord with the spirit of Christ. Thinking too highly of oneself makes one of little use to anyone. A haughty attitude should be avoided at all cost.

Also, self-deprecation is not an attractive trait. While seeking to avoid being haughty, one should not swing the pendulum to the opposite extreme. Considering oneself worthless and devoid of any value is equally useless. Unwittingly, a person may use self-abasement as a ploy to have others boost his or her self-image: “I’m no good ,” and “I’m worthless,” beg for a response of, “No you’re not!”

What is needed is a fair and balanced appraisal of self: a healthy self-appraisal. Looking at one’s good qualities as well as one’s faults. The scriptures do not forbid thinking highly of oneself (when justified), only “more highly than ought.”

For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Romans 12:3

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!

2 Corinthians 13:5

**The most important person to be honest with
is yourself.**



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My Personal Encouraging Thoughts