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## WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

*What a Friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear;  
What a privilege to carry  
Ev'rything to Him in prayer.  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Ev'rything to God in prayer.  
Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged,  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a Friend so faithful,  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness;  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Are we weak and heavy laden,  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge,  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,  
Thou wilt find a solace there.*

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What comfort, what encouragement the words to this old hymn has been for many years and will be for many years to come! This **abbreviated issue** is dedicated to rewards and encouragement. As you read, you can think of people who have encouraged you or circumstances in which you know God has been at work.

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## BE LIKE BARNABAS

Dear old Barnabas, the man who could uplift a life. Sometimes his actions spoke louder than words when doing good for others. For instance, he had land, sold it, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet for the poor Christians in Jerusalem. He saw the need and was willing to do something about it. He encouraged the poor Christians from afar.

Barnabas was the man who introduced Paul to the Christians in Jerusalem when people found it hard to believe or trust Paul. And just look at the good Paul has done for the Lord in this world since!

When great numbers were being added to the Church in Antioch, Barnabas was sent to encourage them. *"Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord."* (Acts 11:22-24)

To encourage others we bring them near to ourselves. Once near, we are able to enhearten, lift up, boost, and strengthen them. Those who have this natural ability of bringing others to themselves with a desire to galvanize them have been blessed of God with the gift of encouragement.

Some of us are better at edifying, comforting, upholding, and being patient, but all of us can work on the encouragement capability. *"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all."* (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

Too many times things in life turn out to be much harder and take much longer that we ever thought. We need encouragement. We must keep our eyes peeled, and when we see or hear of others in need of a reassuring,

supportive, or hopeful word, we should be ready. As a whole, within the church, Christians seem to overcome differences when working with others and are edifying, building up, and encouraging them. Encouragement is catching and enlivens our environment.

Encouragement is both support and help. We can visit orphanages, old folks homes, assisted living quarters, homeless shelters, unwed mothers homes, shut-ins, hospitals, addictions facilities, inner-city works, disaster areas—just to name a few—and support these with gifts, money, and our time.

Encouragement can result in peace and harmony. A simple kind word of concern or a word of appreciation can still troubled waters. What we give to others returns to us also. *"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."* (Ecclesiastes 11:1)

If we ever find ourselves in a discouraging position and there is no person there to lift us up, we know that Jesus never leaves us uncared for or unloved. We must keep our eyes on Jesus, and He will provide comfort and peace of mind. He is the God of mercy and all comfort. This is His encouragement. The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, and He is with us.

Barnabas, the Son of Encouragement, portrayed one of God's own attributes. Scripture shows this godly preacher as kind, forgiving, encouraging and compassionate. Luke sums up his character as *"a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith."* (Acts 11:24)

Encouragement is a virtue we need to practice and value. Do not allow encouragement to become a lost art. Be like Barnabas—sons and daughters of encouragement.

Rebecca Voraritskul, Kon Khanaen, Thailand  
September, 2016



### DOWN IN THE VALLEY

A song which encourages us to bear one another's burdens is "Down in the Valley" (#554 in *Sacred Selections for the Church*).

- I. Stanza 1 points out the blessings that we may enjoy;  
"Are you dwelling in the sunlight?  
Is your path with roses strewn?  
Do you walk with buoyant gladness  
In the steps that you have hewn?  
Have you reached the top of Pisgah,  
Climbing always firm and true?  
Don't forget that in the valley  
There is someone needing you."
- II. Stanza 2 points out the importance of lending a hand to help a brother:  
"Is your day one round of pleasure,

From the morn till set of sun?

Know you not of pain or sorrow?

Are your victories all won?

Lend a hand to help a brother,

Who is struggling hard and true,

Don't forget that in the valley

There is someone needing you."

- III. Stanza 3 points out the need that others have for our assistance:

"Sweet it is to dwell in sunlight,

Where the shadow never rise,

Where the balmy, wafting breezes

Kiss the blue, o'er-hanging skies;

But there's always in the shadow

Some poor mortal, brave and true,

Don't forget that in the valley

There is someone needing you."

- IV. Conclusion.: The chorus repeats the fact that we have an obligation to come to the aid of others as we have the ability and opportunity:

"Lend a hand to help a brother

Who is striving hard and true,

Don't forget that in the valley

There is someone needing you."

As Christians, we should be ever pressing forward as we climb the mountains of faith. But we must also remember to do what we can to help those who are still "Down in the Valley."

Via the internet

<https://hymnstudiesblog.wordpress.com>

submitted by Lorna Smith, Lubbock, Texas



### CHEERLEADERS AND SUPPORTING CASTS

Have you ever been a cheerleader? Do you know any cheerleaders? Not the kind we see at ballgames or on television who are dressed in skimpy outfits and are constantly bouncing, jumping, and cartwheeling as they cheer their teams on to victory.

Have you ever been in the supporting cast? Do you know anyone who plays the role of a supporting character? Not in a theater production or on the movie screen. Have you ever *needed* a cheerleader or a supporting character? Chances are, you have been both a cheerleader and/or a member of the supporting cast.

There were lots of "cheerleaders" and "supporting characters" in the Bible. David's best friend, Jonathan, was his best cheerleader, never mind that it cost Jonathan his presumed right to the throne of Israel. Andrew was one of the first apostles called by Jesus. He was one of the first to convert a family member when he brought Peter to hear Jesus; but Andrew is mentioned

only a few times in the Bible, and he is most often referred to as “Peter’s brother.” He was in the supporting cast.

Supporting casts are very important to the success of any venture, be it in the workplace, in the Lord’s church, in an athletic contest, or in a dramatic production.

Our congregation supports several missionaries, most of whom are in other countries on other continents. They appreciate changes people in their chosen countries have made in their lives and how they have come out of lives of sin to worship and serve God, the creator of all.

Sometimes these converts are put down by their families and friends who are still involved in false teachings—sometimes even in idol worship—yet, these converts are now growing in their Christian faith and service.

Even the great apostle Paul was a great encourager in the New Testament. In every one of his letters to individuals or congregations, he tried to find something good he could say, some way to encourage and build them up—even when there were serious problems with which he had to deal.

Barnabas was known in the New Testament as the Son of Encouragement because he was such an encourager. Our walk with God is made easier by those who encourage us along the way. We in turn can be of great encouragement to others. As Paul wrote in Romans 14:9, “...let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify (encourage, build up) one another.”

There is a time and a place for a Joshua or a Caleb, but there is also a time and place for a Ruth or a Dorcas or a Pricilla—those who do their part without wanting or expecting attention and praise.

Evelyn Waite  
©February 28, 2002

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### DON'T FORGET THE TREATS

It struck me today how thrilled my dog is to get a treat—not just any old treat, but the very cheapest treats I can find in the store. She gets all wiggly and dances around just thinking about it. When I finally give it to her, she devours it instantly, and I wonder if her taste buds even get a chance at the goody before it hits her tummy. As soon as the treat is safely nestled there, she looks at me with eyes that say, “Thank you so much, Mom! Now can I have another? Just one more? Please?” Gone are all thoughts of the original treat, replaced by the possibility of another. Dogs are so unappreciative.

As Christians, we sometimes exhibit dog behavior. We dance around and make promises to God, if He will only help us. We beg and beg Him for a treat, and when it is given we simply say, “Thanks God! Now what about this other need I have?”

Just like my dog, we give no further thought to the last treat. If it’s a particularly large treat, like a big rawhide bone (a new car or paid mortgage), we may dig it up and remember it every now and then; but what about all those little treats He gives all day long? A car ride with the window down (the safe drive to the store)...A soft, comfortable doggy bed (the heat and warmth during the winter)...Full food and water dishes (food in the pantry and water in the faucet). We want to live treat-to-treat, and fail to savor each and every one.

In Psalm 100, David says, “*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: Come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, And into his courts with praise [definition: the expression of gratitude for personal favors conferred]: Be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*” Colossians 3:15 also commands us to be thankful. Romans chapter 1 reminds us of the downward spiral that occurs when we fail to glorify God and thank him.

We are commanded to be thankful, for the little things as well as the big. Imagine if God only provided the big things – the saved marriage, the house, the job – but neglected the ‘little’ treats. What a mess we would have! Thankfully, God is gracious and gives us what we don’t deserve. He gives, knowing we may not be thankful. He gives, knowing we will forget. What a good God we have! What a loving God we have!

©Samantha Sidwell  
Rolla, MO

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