

THE BOOK OF *Acts*

|| Group Discussion Guide ||

October 8, 2023

ON ENCOURAGEMENT

1

“Encourage” is an often-used word in the English language. What are some of the meanings and contexts where we might hear the word in our day-to-day lives?

2

Has there been a time when you’ve felt the need for encouragement? What circumstances prompted that feeling?

3

The English word “encourage,” means literally to “put courage [or more specifically, ‘heart’] into.” How might this help us visualize the process of encouragement?

4

In Acts 4, Barnabas is called a “son of encouragement.” The word encouragement is translated from the Greek *paraklēsis*, which may mean “consolation/comfort” or “exhortation.” Which meaning is likely implied in Barnabas’ name in this context?

5

Consider verses that use the word encourage or encouragement, like 1 Cor. 14:3, 1 Thess. 5:14, 1 Tim. 5:1. Does the meaning here pertain primarily to consolation or exhortation?

6

What is the relationship between consolation and exhortation? Can we do both at the same time?

7

The Greek word translated as encouragement is related to the word John often uses for the Holy Spirit: Paráklētos. What might this demonstrate about the nature and role of the Holy Spirit?

8

True encouragement is of the Lord. What kinds of substitutes might the secular world offer? How can we tell the difference?

9

When have you experienced true encouragement? What circumstances or people did the Lord use to bring that encouragement to you?

10

What are some practical ways that Christians can practice Biblical encouragement?

