

# Encouragement Through Listening

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us..."*

*Hebrews 12:1 NIV*

**M**any years ago when I was growing up, my mother took us to the Salvation Army church services every Sunday.

I have vivid memories of the various aspects of how the Army did church. Often the commanding officers would call on people during the Sunday meetings to give a testimony of God's grace in their lives over the past week.

The congregation numbered around 300, and there were often several people who would rise and tell of some blessing or corrective action by our heavenly Father in their lives during the past week.

I enjoyed hearing from the people. Even when I was only 7-8 years old I was attracted to the testimony time to hear the various ways God moved in people's lives.

The people to whom this epistle of Hebrews is addressed had been through great sorrow, and the writer seeks to offer comfort in the

context of pain. One of the ways the author encourages the readers is to call attention to believers from past generations who suffered greatly for their faith and who overcame adversity in the strength of the Lord.

During WW II psychologists noted that enlisted men fared better than commissioned officers in the same hospitals with similar medical conditions.

Doctors could not figure it out until one day someone observed the happy chatter in the wards and realized the c.o.'s did not experience similar camaraderie in the private rooms they occupied.

This is why fellowship with other Christians is such a helpful thing and is why the Lord calls us out of the world every week for a couple of hours.

Here in His house we recalibrate our navigation instruments. We receive encouragement through the preaching, the reading of

Scripture, the prayers, the fellowship with other believers.

If you are discouraged today, find someone who has recently experienced your challenges in life. Ask them to tell you how they persisted when things were especially difficult. Get the person to tell you what truth of Scripture, what story in the Bible, or what other thing gave them strength to carry on when they thought of quitting.

Read several times Hebrews chapter 11 and ponder the messages there. You shall be greatly inspired to carry on in the Lord's strength.

We find grace to persevere when we listen to other believers who have had similar challenges to us in life. May your listening this week inspire you to do great things for the Lord.

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