MONDAY MANNA
Oct 26, 2026

IMPARTING COURAGE IN A DISCOURAGING WORLD

By Robert J. Tamasy

Suppose a survey were taken of workers, asking them to cite their greatest needs. They probably would list things like more training, more time for completing assignments, more compensation, more benefits, more help with projects, things like that. Probably well down the list of felt needs would be something we all need, even if we do not acknowledge it: Encouragement.

We might not admit it, but whether starting a new job, transitioning into a different role, or having been doing work for some time, there are moments when we can fall prey to discouragement. Perhaps a meticulous plan that does not unfold as expected. Or a proposal does not get the positive reception you had hoped. Or being weighed down by responsibilities, with the week coming to an end and there is so much work yet to be done. Or working many extra hours, go the 'extra mile,' completing the assignment and not receiving even a 'thank you.'

Over the years, people have called me an encourager, but I have learned there is a flip side to that – it is easy to become discouraged. During my years as a magazine editor, putting each edition together was a complicated, arduous process. Most of the time seeing the finished product was very rewarding. But once in a while, we fell short of expectations; that would be disappointing and discouraging.

For that reason, it meant a lot when someone would offer a compliment to me and the staff about the magazine or a particular article. It was encouraging to hear when our efforts were making an impact. This is one reason I have tried to recognize opportunities to encourage others. One of my favorite people in the Bible is a fellow named Joseph who was given the nickname Barnabas, which literally means "son of encouragement." Encouragement basically means to impart courage to others. Barnabas encouraged others in many ways, and there is much we can learn from him, as well as from the book of Proverbs:

Providing a timely word. Sometimes all people need is affirmation, something to lift their spirits when going through a difficult time. It does not require saying a lot, or anything at all. At times just coming alongside someone and being present can show that we care about them. "An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up" (Proverbs 12:25).

Recognizing when people are in pain. Have you ever had a time when just looking at someone told you they were having a bad day? Perhaps they had a harsh disagreement with a coworker, or there were problems at home. Words of encouragement can go a long way to help. "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing" (Proverbs 12:18).

Encouraging people tangibly. The words we speak are very important, but there are times when we can demonstrate our support in tangible ways. "Joseph…whom the apostles called Barnabas…sold a field he owned and brought the money at the apostles' feet" (Acts 4:36-37).

Seeing the best in others. After Saul of Tarsus (who became the apostle Paul) encountered Jesus Christ and experienced a dramatic spiritual transformation, Barnabas had the courage to come alongside the one-time enemy of Christians and affirm he had truly "seen the light." "[Saul] tried to join the disciples, but they were afraid of him…. But Barnabas…told how he had seen the Lord…" (Acts 9:1-27). We see Barnabas offered similar support to his nephew, John Mark, in Acts 15:36-39).

© 2026. Robert J. Tamasy has written Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship; Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace; Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and The Heart of Mentoring, coauthored with David A. Stoddard, and numerous other books and magazine articles. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Some people start each day usually with an upbeat attitude, eager to take on whatever comes their way. Others approach their work with a sense of discouragement, wondering what might go wrong or even if what they do is even worthwhile. Which are you? Explain your answer.
2. Try to remember a time when someone encouraged you in a special way, whether at work, while you were in school, or in the midst of some other activity. What did that mean for you?
3. Have you observed that the workplace can become a place of great discouragement? If so, why do you think this is so?
4. What are some ways you can strive to encourage others – and cultivate an atmosphere of encouragement where you work?

Challenge for This Week

As you start a new week, how are you feeling? Are you encouraged and optimistic? Or are you somewhat discouraged and pessimistic? Or somewhere in between?

If you are discouraged, share how you feel with someone you trust – a close friend, advisor, mentor – and ask for their prayers. Perhaps they will offer you needed encouragement. If you are feeling encouraged, pray for God to lead you to someone who needs some words of encouragement or another form of support and affirmation, remembering that ultimately the Lord is our greatest source of encouragement.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Proverbs 16:21,24, 20:15; Acts 12:25, 15:36-41; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; Hebrews 10:23-25