

Gathering

ENCOURAGEMENT

Discouragement – we hear it all the time. Magazine headlines say that we could be better. People question our decisions, leaving us feeling discouraged about the choices we've made. It's not just others who discourage us, but we hear the voices of doubt and discouragement from inside our own heads, too. We think we could never live up to the expectations of others or even the standards we put on ourselves. Discouragement leads to stress, low self-esteem, guilt, fear, frustration, and just feeling down about life. Who needs more of that?!

According to an article from Harvard Business Review, people do their best when they receive 5 compliments for every criticism they receive. (<https://hbr.org/2013/03/the-ideal-praise-to-criticism>) That seems like a lot more encouragement that we are used to receiving, but we need encouragement in our lives – lots of it! – to counter all the negativity we receive and to help us fight against all that brings us down.

Encouragement boosts our confidence and makes us feel better about ourselves, but it also helps us to work harder and makes us more successful. It inspires us to be the best version of ourselves that we can be. And just one compliment or uplifting word can completely change our day.

How many of us are receiving enough encouragement? The Bible tells us: “*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

After sharing the Scripture, use at least three of the questions below with your group:

- Share a story in which encouragement changed the outcome from failure or fear to success.
- Do you feel like the scales in your life are tipped toward discouragement or encouragement?
- What is the most encouraging thing that someone has said to you? What made it so meaningful?
- Say something encouraging to the people in your group.

Complete your monthly report and turn it in to the Corps Officer.

1 Thessalonians 5:11



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Share a story in which **encouragement** changed the outcome from failure or **fear** to **success**.



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Do you feel like the scales in your life are tipped toward **discouragement** or **encouragement**?



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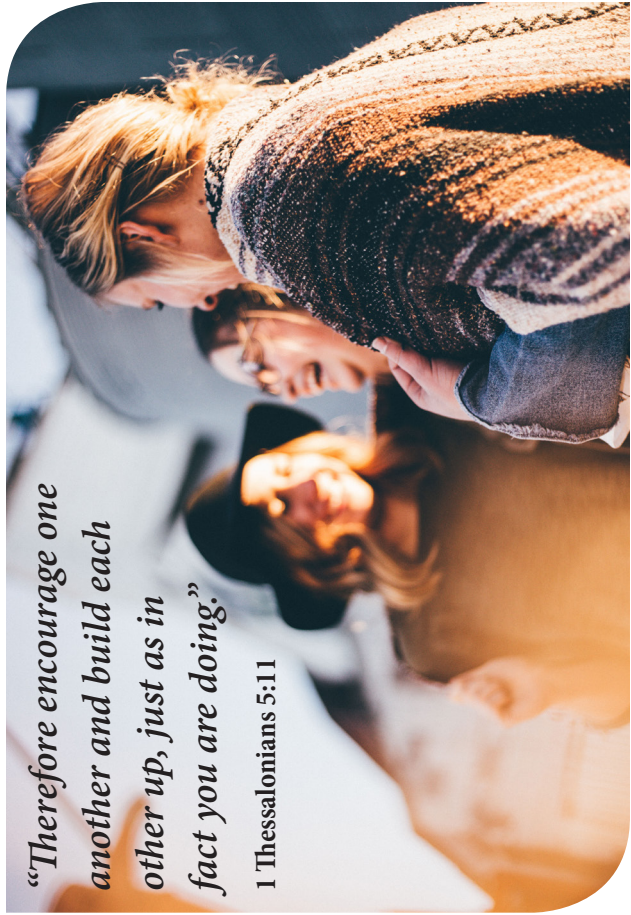
What is the most **encouraging** thing that someone has said to you? What made it so **meaningful**?



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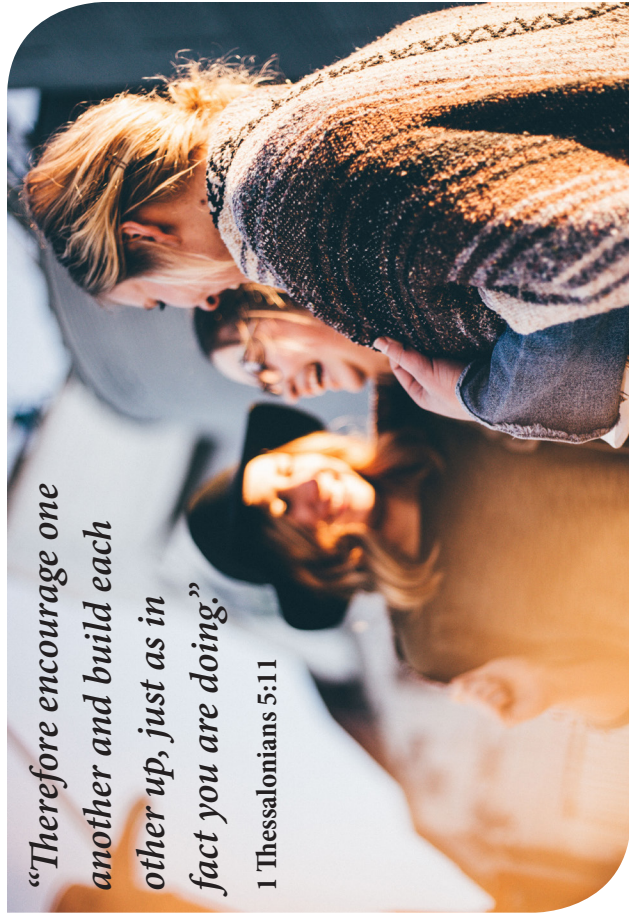
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Say something **encouraging** to the people in your group.



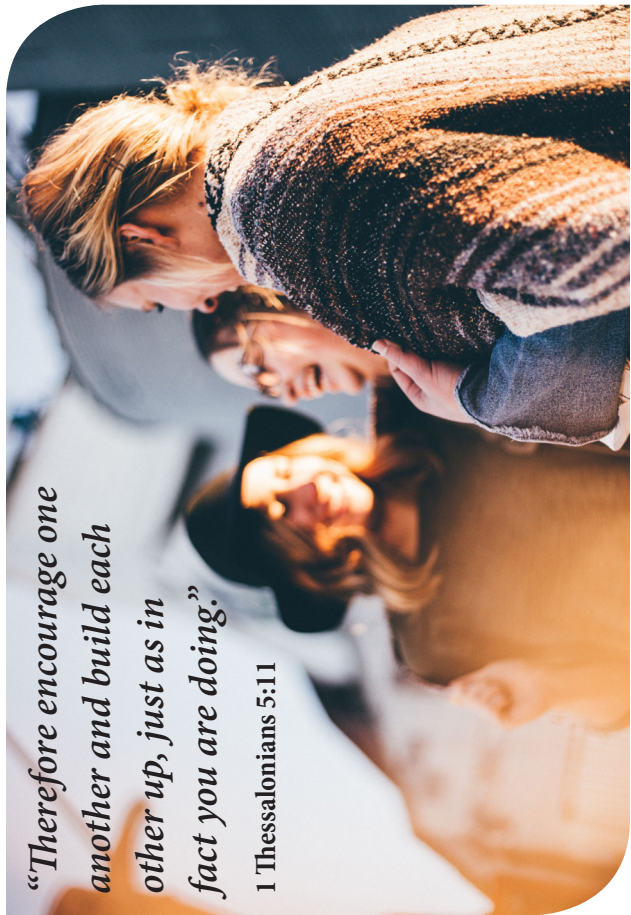
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1 *Thessalonians 5:11*



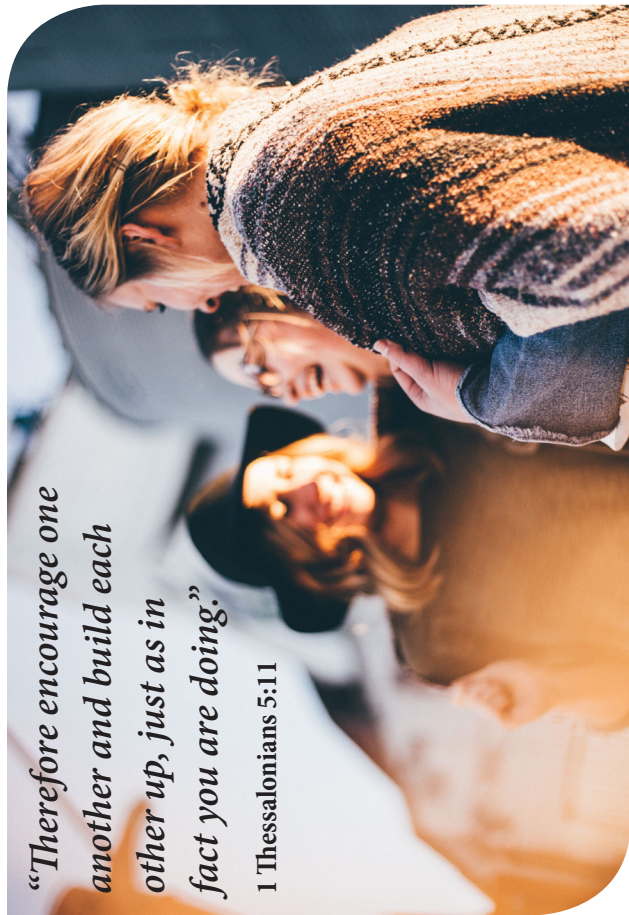
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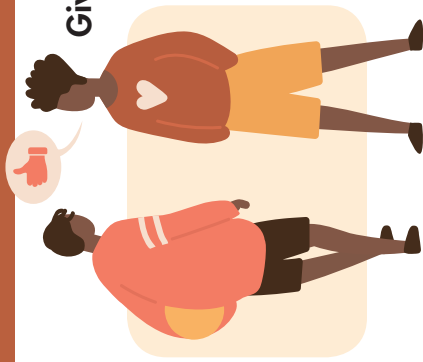
1 *Thessalonians 5:11*

Read through Psalm 42. How does the Psalmist counter his discouragement, and what can we do today to counter the discouragement we feel?

"My soul is downcast within me; therefore, I will remember You."

Get in the Habit!

Make a point to encouragement to someone else – at least once per day.



Give compliments!



Write an encouraging message on Facebook



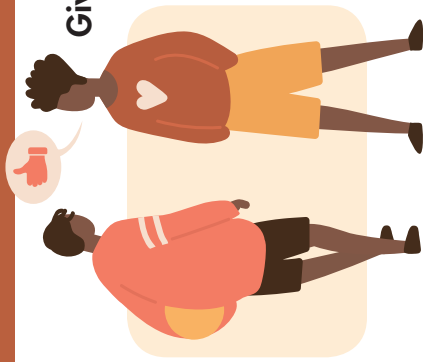
Remind someone of their strengths (and remind yourself while you're at it!)

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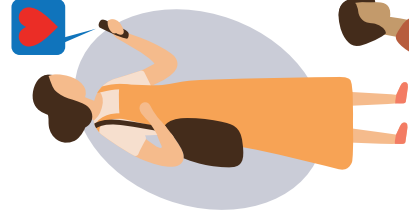
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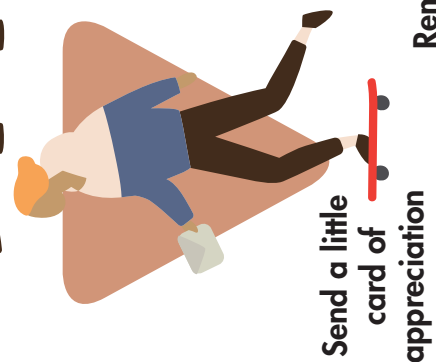
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Send a little card of appreciation