

## GLEANINGS — June 21, A.D. 2015

### "In Tribute, for Imitation"

Dr. Robert A. Cook, who went to be with His Savior in A.D. 1991, had a radio broadcast called Walk With the King. Dr. King's talks were filled with gems of wisdom, such as **"Some people have the 'gift of discouragement!' Specialize at being one who encourages others."**

On this Father's day, let's heed that word from an honorable father in the faith who is now with His heavenly Father. An exhortation to specialize in encouragement is timely for all, and especially for dads and granddads, for the Bible says, "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged." (Colossians 3:21)

Becoming an encouragement specialist requires no formal academic training or financial investment, but the benefits are incalculable! Think of how you have been blessed, motivated, and strengthened (perhaps at "just the right time") when you were on the receiving end of any one of the following simple, practical ways to encourage others. If you sow them in turn, who knows how abundant the harvest of these spiritual seeds will be?

Use the Word of God. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver." (Proverbs 25:11). Do we really believe that His word is alive and powerful...that man does not live by bread alone but by every word He has spoken? The entrance of God's word gives light, it gives understanding to the simple. Have a bushel of "golden apples" on hand, and providence will provide the settings of silver in which you can place them, thus encouraging many.

"Pray Now Vs. Forget Later." It is a common thing and a good thing among Christians that they ask one another for prayer. How often do we tell someone we will pray about that matter he or she has just shared, and forgetfully never do so! Why not instead pray – whether over the phone, online, or in person – right then and there? What an encouragement to the one in need!

Express Your Thankfulness to Others. Who should be more grateful than the one persuaded that the heavy indictment of sin he once carried has been removed by Jesus the sin Bearer? And who thereby becomes more keenly aware of the benefits he receives from his fellow creatures? Thanklessness is the habit of those who have not known God's grace. Abundant thankfulness is a joy of the redeemed, and part of their ministry of encouragement toward others.

By the power of His Spirit, the heavenly Husbandman prunes the branches in the true Vine. He does so in love and with perfect wisdom, so that the branches can bear more fruit (John 15:1,2). And there is surely a place for us cautiously to offer wise correction. According to Proverbs, those who are wise will heed correction, and love those who minister it (Proverbs 9:8; 17:10).

But the expression "withering criticism" well captures the effects of that spirit commonly called negative. It is one of constantly censuring, belittling, or perhaps worst of all ignoring others. Although those filled with this gall imagine they might be teaching an offender a good lesson by their words, they are only blighting what might otherwise blossom to the glory of God.

There was in the primitive church a Levite named Joses (*or Joseph*) whose life was so marked by the gift of encouragement that the apostles gave him another name accordingly, as we read at Acts 4:36. He was called Barnabas, the "Son of Encouragement."