



December 2011

Hanukkah begins on the eve of Dec. 20th. The last candle is on Dec. 27th.

Dear Mishpochah (Family) in Yeshua,

Focus on Encouragement

The Lord has led us to encourage you to encourage others this month, so that December becomes a month of joy rather than a month of depression! According to the National Mental Health Association, more than one million Americans suffer from depression during the December holiday season. December depression is a response to stress which is triggered by unrealistic expectations, memories of past holidays, loss of a loved one, overcommercialization, changes in daily schedules, financial reversals, and being alone and isolated to name a few. December depression has a name: Seasonal Affective Disorder. But God also has a Name: *Adonai Rophe*, the God who heals. He is also the God of all comfort, *Elohey Chohl Nachamah*.

December is a special month to encourage others and to be God's hand extended to hurting people. To encourage is to: 1) inspire with hope, courage, or confidence; 2) give support to; and 3) stimulate, spur. To encourage another is to cheer, animate, or embolden them. Encouragement helps combat sadness and loneliness, hopelessness, anxiety, and feelings of worthlessness.

The prophet Isaiah spoke words that could apply to each of us as we interact with people this month: *"Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, 'Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you'."* (Isa. 35:3-4).

Encouragement Enhances Living

Jamie's father surprised us many years ago by sending us a piece of sheet music for her to play on the piano. He said it was one of his favorite songs. At the time, he was an alcoholic, in deep bondage to the enemy. The words of the song gave us a glimpse into his heart which only God could really see: *"If I can help somebody as I pass along, if I can cheer somebody with a word or song, if I can show somebody he is trav'ling wrong, then my living shall not be in vain. If I can do my duty as a good man ought, if I can bring back beauty to a world up-wrought, if I can spread love's message that the Master taught, then my living shall not be in vain."*

A kind word, an encouraging word, a word of love, peace, or hope can make a difference in a life this month. Our tongue can be a fountain of life to a discouraged, weary man, woman, or child. When we encourage others, we take on part of God's nature, since He is an Encourager, and His Spirit is a Spirit of affirmation, an uplifting "Yes!" and "Amen!" Spirit.

Encouraged to Possess God's Promises

The first time the word "courage" is found in the Holy Scriptures occurs in Numbers 13:20. Moses addresses the men sent to spy out the Promised Land, and tells them to "be of good courage" and to bring back the fruit of the land. When it was time to possess that Land, we find many words of encouragement in the Torah. God told Moses to encourage Joshua. Then Moses told the Israelites to encourage Joshua. Finally, God Himself encouraged Joshua. It appears that encouragement is

really important in possessing what God has promised! God to Moses: *"But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see"* (Deut. 3:28). Encouragement helps conquer fear. God to Joshua: *"Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you"* (Deut. 31:23). Encouragement imparts faith.

God is speaking the words, *"Be strong and of good courage,"* to each of us this month. In Hebrew they are, *chazak v'ematz* (חֲזַק וְאַמֵץ). As He encourages us, we need to encourage others. Yeshua is our Joshua who leads us into the spiritual Promised Land. Note: Moses did not take the Israelites in. This foreshadows the Law, which did not bring salvation. The sacrifice of Yeshua did. It is in Yeshua that we inherit the promises (2 Cor. 1:20). (You will love this month's musical CD offer: **Promises**.)

God's final words to Joshua before he led his people across the Jordan were: *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go"* (Josh. 1:9). We can overcome fear when we know that God is with us (Emmanuel), regardless of the situation or circumstance.

Encourage Your Son!

Men need encouragement. There is much in the world that tears them down, and seeks to discourage them. God wired men to be conquerors, warriors, doing battle for the sake of their wives, children, and their God. In our fatherless society, we see a lack of older men encouraging younger men. We are very proud of our son Jonathan, who has a heart for fatherless boys and is currently ministering to inner-city youth in Gainesville, Florida. God has given him a gift of encouragement which he is using to build the Kingdom of God.

We see a father encouraging his son in 1 Chronicles 28:20, where King David gives Solomon final instructions before David's death concerning building the Temple and assuming his throne: *"Be strong and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God—my God—will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD."* (This is a good word of encouragement for anyone who ministers for the Lord. God will help them finish strong!)

Son of Encouragement: Barnabas

There is a prophet, teacher, and apostle mentioned in the New Covenant whose name means "son of encouragement." Most know him as Barnabas. Barnabas, or Bar-nabas, can also mean "son of comfort." In Acts 4:36 we read that his actual name was Joseph, and he was a Levite from Cyprus. Barnabas sold land and brought the money from the sale to the apostles so that they might distribute it to needy believers. This first recorded act of Barnabas has a lesson for us according to John Sloan in an excellent, little, quick-to-read book, **The Barnabas Way**: "Barnabas demonstrated that if we can give things away easily, then they don't own us. And we have our hands free to receive what is more important than money." This is Barnabas, *"...a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith"* (Acts 11:24).

Barnabas was the one who defended Saul of Tarsus (Paul), and affirmed that his conversion was genuine. He encouraged the believers to accept Saul, even though many, if not most, were skeptical about this man who had ruthlessly persecuted them. But Barnabas believed that Saul deserved a second chance. Barnabas went with Saul (Paul) on his first missionary journey, but the team split up after a member of the party, John Mark, left them. Barnabas went on to encourage John Mark to leave the mistakes of his past and go on with God. John Sloan has a thought on this: "In the case of John Mark, had it not been for Barnabas' rescue efforts, we wouldn't have our second gospel." Nevertheless, this "encourager" remains behind the scenes in the Gospels, leaving Paul to ascend as the great "Missionary Statesman" of our faith.

What Encouragers Do

Encouragers help people press on, keep going, and not give up, usually behind the scenes. Barnabas did this with the believers in Antioch: *"When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord."*

Encouragers, like Barnabas, reach out to those who need help. In the process of giving mercy, they themselves are helped. But the Barnabas way is not always easy, "—trying to help and encourage those facing the tough times—means uncomfortable involvement with heartbreak and discomfort, and getting used to not having anything to say to the hurting, and having to trust that God remains a good God in spite of a world that festers with hurt and mistakes and brokenness." (Sloan)

If we want to be like Yeshua this holiday season, we must ask our Father to bring us someone who needs help. He will give us the compassion, the desire, the right words, and whatever else we need as we pray in faith. Expect a divine encounter. Encourage one person. Begin small, and work up to one each day. Many of you will discover a satisfying purpose for your life if you do!

Jamie experienced one such encounter in the supermarket recently. An elderly Jewish woman, age 87, stopped her and asked what she planned to do with the vegetables in her cart. (This happens a lot to Jamie!) A ten-minute conversation ensued with Ann pouring out her heart to Jamie about her 90-year-old husband of 67 years who is very ill. She has been his 24/7 caregiver for the past two years. Ann was weary and frightened. She desperately needed someone to talk to—actually, someone to listen. Jamie listened, affirmed her feelings, and spoke gently to her about a loving God. Ann left, thanking Jamie for taking time with her—and said she would try and make the healthy vegetable soup.

The Barnabas Way

John Sloan gives four general principles for implementing the Barnabas Way—the Way of Encouragement. The first principle is **"Taking a Risk."** This means "seeking out those who stand in the lonely corners of life because they don't think they look or act good enough to belong, having failed in the past or falling short in the present." It may be risky to befriend such a person since others may misunderstand, and criticize us. Principle #2 is **"Accepting Second Place."** A true "Barnabas" pushes others into first place, ahead of himself, and gives credit in front of others. This gives the person with low self-esteem confidence and hope. The third principle is **"Remembering Who We Really Are."** We are all sinners, saved by grace. As we mature in the Lord, we are more and more aware of our own shortcomings and of the grace of God. Humility is crucial. The fourth principle is **"Repeating it All Again."** There is always another person who needs our help or a second chance. This is just a taste of **The Barnabas Way**. We highly recommend this book for you, a friend, or family member. It is edifying.

Encouraging Through Scars

We came across an article entitled "Healing Life's Hurts," written in Feb. 2002 by the late Jamie Buckingham, which highlights a specific way in which we can encourage others—by showing them our SCARS. He tells the story of a pastor who had open-heart surgery who, after his recovery, was visited by a man who was fearfully facing the prospect of his own bypass surgery. The man shyly said to the pastor, "I want to see your scars." After the pastor allowed the man to touch the violet scars on his chest and legs, he said with tears in his eyes, "Thank you. Now I have hope." Seeing and touching the scars gave him hope for survival.

Everyone has scars. We have all failed. We have all lost. We all have weaknesses. While we think scars are ugly, an evidence of imperfection, they are really evidence of healing. As Jamie Buckingham so succinctly states, "Scars glorify God who has brought us through."

Others can be encouraged by your scars! The Apostle Paul said it this way: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua HaMashiach, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who*

comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Cor. 1:3-4). We like how Isaiah expressed the same idea, "Everyone helped his neighbor, and said to his brother, 'Be of good courage!' " (Is. 41:6).

Encouraging Yourself in God

The Bible makes it clear that we need to encourage ourselves as well as others! King David leads the way in this. Following the burning of Ziklag by the Amalekites and the abduction of David's people, including his two wives, he was blamed and threatened with being stoned to death. "...*But David encouraged himself in the LORD his God*" (1 Sam. 30:6, KJV). When confronted with the giant Goliath, he did the same, recalling how God had given him victory in the past. "*The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of the Philistine*" (1 Sam. 17:37). It is also King David who encourages us this December with a verse from one of his Psalms: "*Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD*" (Ps. 27:14)! While you wait, remember all that God has done for you in the past. He has brought you this far. He is Faithful to finish the good work that He has begun in your life! Imagine how Joseph and Mary needed to encourage themselves in God in the face of an extremely difficult scenario—a young girl pregnant out of wedlock, an arduous journey to Bethlehem, separation from family and friends, and having to flee to Egypt because someone wanted to kill their baby. But God! Let us all confess: **God loves me. He has chosen me. God is my Father. He has a perfect plan for my life. I am accepted in Yeshua the Messiah. Yeshua will never leave me nor forsake me. He is my defense; I shall not be moved. God is Faithful to provide for me since I am His child. He will make a way where there seems to be no way. I choose to trust in the Lord with all my heart, even when I don't understand Him. God's love never fails. Nothing is impossible for Him. To God be the glory, the honor, and the praise, both now and forever!**

Chazak, Chazak, V'Nit Chazek (Be strong, be strong, be strengthened) in Yeshua's name.

Love,

Neil & Janice

Your End of the Year Gift will be a great encouragement to us, as we encourage the lost sheep of the House of Israel to come home!

P.S. ENCOURAGE ISRAEL by joining us from August 26 - September 7 on our "Sound the Shofar" Mercy Mission. (See Is. 66:13.) **Download a brochure from our website, or call for a copy.**

P.P.S. The "bride" Michaela from our 2009 Mercy Mission had a baby boy last month. The "groom's" parents reconciled with them and attended the circumcision: a special miracle from God!

Jewish Jewels Television Airtime Schedule - December 2011

LOCAL TV STATIONS

AIRTIME:	STATE:	CITY:	STATIONS:
TUE 6:00 PM	AK	North Pole	KJNP TV 4
SUN 2:30 PM	FL	Tampa/St. Pete.	WCLF TV 22
THU 11:30 AM	FL	Miami/Ft. Laud.	WHFT TV 45
SUN 1:30 PM	FL	Tallahassee	WVUP TV 45
SAT 10:30 PM	FL	West Palm Beach	WFGC TV 61
SUN 2:30 PM	GA	Columbus	WYBU TV 16
SUN 1:30 PM	IA	Dubuque	KFXB TV 40
SUN 1:30 PM	MO	New Bloomfield	KNLJ TV 25
SUN 4:00 PM	NJ/NY	NYC/New Jersey	WMBC TV 63
SUN 12:00 PM	OR	Portland	K26GJ TV 26
SUN 12:00 PM	OR	Salem	K21GX TV 41

SATELLITE NETWORKS (EST)

DirecTV

SUN 3:00 PM Ch. 367 - WHT (World Harvest TV)
 SUN 4:00 PM Ch. 93 or 900 - WMBC
 SUN 2:30 PM Ch. 376 - CTN (Christian Television Network)
 SAT 10:30 PM Ch. 376 - CTN (Christian Television Network)

Dish Network

SUN 2:30 PM Ch. 267 & 9399 - CTN (Christian Television Network)
 SAT 10:30 PM Ch. 267 & 9399 - CTN (Christian Television Network)

AT&T Cable

SUN 2:30 PM Ch. 578 - WHT (World Harvest TV)



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