

# The Power of ENCOURAGEMENT

Some of the greatest success stories of history have followed a word of encouragement or an act of confidence by a loved one or a trusting friend. Had it not been for a confident wife, Sophia, we might not have listed among the great names of literature the name of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

When Nathaniel, a heart-broken man, went home to tell his wife that he was a failure and had been fired from his job in a customhouse, she surprised him with an exclamation of joy.

“Now,” she said triumphantly, “you can write your book!”

“Yes,” replied the man, with sagging confidence, “and what shall we live on while I am writing it?”

To his amazement, she opened a drawer and pulled out a substantial amount of money.

“Where on earth did you get that?” he exclaimed.

“I have always known you were a man of genius,” she told him. “I knew that someday you would write a masterpiece. So every week, out of the money you gave me for housekeeping, I saved a little bit. So here is enough to last us for one whole year.”

From her trust and confidence came one of the greatest novels of American literature, *The Scarlet Letter*.

—Nido Qubein



A banker always tossed a coin in the cup of a legless beggar who sat on the street outside the bank. But unlike most people, the banker would always insist on getting one of the pencils the man had beside him. “You are a merchant,” the banker would say, “and I always expect to receive good value from merchants I do business with.” One day the legless man was not on the sidewalk.

Time passed and the banker forgot about him, until he walked into a public building and there in the concessions stand sat the former beggar. He was obviously the owner of his own small business now.

“I have always hoped you might come by someday,” the man said. “You are largely responsible for me being here. You kept telling me that I was a ‘merchant.’ I started thinking of myself that way, instead of a beggar receiving gifts. I started selling pencils—lots of them. You gave me self-respect. You caused me to look at myself differently.”

—Quoted by Randy Stanford



Susan’s personal problems were enormous. She was dealing with tough issues from her past. Her husband had emotionally withdrawn from her. The family was in financial trouble. Somehow she kept up a good front at work, even though she was thinking of suicide.

Then she received a Christmas card from her boss with these handwritten words: “I don’t know what we’d do without you. Thank you for being so competent and helpful.”

Later she commented, “I framed that card and put it up in my kitchen. It’s like a sign that says, ‘You’re okay!’”

So send that card. Write that note. Offer that word of encouragement in the name of Jesus. Give that pat on the back as the Lord directs you.

You may be giving someone just the lift he or she needs.

—David C. Egner



## “Encourage one another.”

—The Bible (1 Thessalonians 5:11\*)

“Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones” (Proverbs 16:24).

“Your love has given me great joy and encouragement” (Philemon 1:7).

“May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father ... encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word” (2 Thessalonians 2:16–17).

\*Bible verses are from the NIV translation.