

# Comfort and Encourage One Another

## Scripture

“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11-15 NKJV)

## Thesis

Believers should care for others just as they would care for themselves.

## Commentary

I have seen such harsh judgments rendered by those in the Christian faith it has caused me to risk making my own judgments. It really makes no sense for us to judge another’s standing before God. Truly, God has warned us not to do so recklessly.

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” (Matthew 7:1-2 NKJV)

The problem is we are not qualified to make judgments about a person’s standing before God. We can and should judge sin and deal with it in the church, but to say this man is not saved or that man is saved is presumptuous at best. It is also dangerous because it impedes our ability to love and encourage others. Read the words of John Owen on this subject:

I will not judge a person to be spiritually dead whom I have judged formerly to have had spiritual life, though I see him at present in a swoon (faint) as to all evidences of the spiritual life. And the reason why I will not judge him so is this -- because if you judge a person dead, you neglect him, you leave him; but if you judge him in a swoon, (faint) though never so dangerous, you use all means for the retrieving of his life. –John Owen

The Scriptures tell us to comfort and edify each other. We are to esteem the laborers. Yes, we are to warn the unruly also, comfort the faint hearted, uphold the weak, and be patient with all.

Therefore, the next time you are tempted to write a professing believer off because they have fallen into some sin remember to have a spirit of love. Leave the judgments to God. He is the only one qualified to make them.

## Prayer

Father, forgive us when we have a condemning spirit. We know that we are to love even our enemies. Surely, you are not pleased with the death of the wicked. Let us not seek their condemnation either. Rather, let us be given to prayer on their behalf. We know that love suffers long: bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and, endures all things. Teach us to love as you love, amen.