

ENCOURAGE THE FAINTHEARTED

1 Thess.5:13b-15 gives seven characteristics of a spiritually healthy church. Paul listed these seven characteristics by seven Greek present imperatives (standing commands).

We have studied two of them ([Live in Peace](#) and [Admonish the Unruly](#)).

**We will study four aspects of the third characteristic of a healthy church,
Encourage the Fainthearted.**

1. Note once again that Paul addressed the doctrinal solution before the problem - “Encourage (paramutheomai/ p.m.impv.2pl) the fainthearted (tous oligopsuchos/ aplm).”

Paul is making the point that **encouragement (paramutheomai)** is the spiritual ministry to fainthearted.

However, this is NOT the same Greek word for encouragement used with the spiritual gift of **paraklesis encouragement** (Rom.12:8). Paraklesis ministry is a calling to come along side another for the indwelling Holy Spirit to exercise supernatural comfort, exhortation, and encouragement.

Paramutheomai encouragement is a command to a specific group called **the fainthearted**.

2. (Paramutheomai) encouragement is a compound Greek word

(Paramutheomai) (para) [to come along side or near] and (muthos) [to give doctrinal advice, counsel, or console] pertaining to a specific crisis causing faintheartedness (1 Thess.2:11-13).

Death, health, divine discipline, undeserved suffering are areas where paramutheomai encouragement ministry is needed (Phil.2:1-4).

Jesus consoled, ministered, and encouraged the fainthearted at the funeral of Lazarus (John 11:19, 21-27, 39-39) [death] (Rom.12:15-16).

3. We are commanded to apply the paramutheomai ministry to the fainthearted (oligopsuchos).

Note that the word fainthearted is also a compound Greek word, (oligos) [small as in shrinking] of the soul (psuchos), one’s self-consciousness; conscience; mentality; volition; and emotion.

Becoming Fainthearted is the reaction to a stressful crisis whether short or long term or whether sudden or unexpected. The fainthearted believer has put his eyes (full attention) on the **crisis of life** rather than on the **Christ of life**.

(Heb.12:1-2) “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, **let us** also lay aside every encumbrance and sin which so easily entangles us; **and let us** run with endurance the race that is set before us, **fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the **author and perfecter of faith**, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross (directive will of God), despising the shame, and has set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Phil2:5--9, 12-18)

(1 John 5:4) “For **whatever is born of God** overcomes the world; and this is **the victory that has overcome** the world - **our faith.**” (The faith cycle)

4. (Prov.18:14) **warns of the danger when faintheartedness is not addressed - “The spirit of man can endure his sickness, but as for as a broken spirit who can bear it?”**

The fainthearted can become despondent, depressed, broken spirit, and suicidal. But God can revive the contrite and lowly of spirit (Isa.57:15-16).

- **One example** of the danger of faintheartedness is the 12 Israelite spies sent out by Moses to do a recon on the Promised Land before taking possession (Num.13:26-33).

They brought back two reports (Num.13:25-33) [good and evil]. Ten out of the twelve spies gave an evil report and only two gave good report, Caleb, and Joshua.

Evil report summarized (Num.13:32-33) “We became **like grasshoppers** in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.” (Num.13:33 and 2 Cor.5:7): “So they said to one another, ‘Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt?’” (Num.14:4) [**fear** and flight]

(Num.14:24) ‘But **My servant Caleb**, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.’

(Josh.14:6-15) 45 years later, at age of 85! [**faith** and fight] (1 Tim.6:12)

- **40 yrs later, Joshua gave the Second Exodus Generation the same promise from God:**

(Josh.1:5-7) “**Be strong and courageous**, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. **Only be strong and very courageous**; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.”