



Links Players

PEOPLE WHO HELP 2: ENCOURAGING WORDS

After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." (Nehemiah 4:14, NIV)

THERE'S NO STANDARD LINE FOR TOUR CADDIES. It might be, "You've got this," or "You know the shot," or "That's the club." Not the same words, but all the same idea: Make your last statement before the player's shot an encouraging one. A Tour caddie never wants to be guilty of planting a seed of doubt in the player's mind. Your positive words must leave a deep impression. So instead of saying, "Let's keep it out of that bunker on the left," you point out a specific target away from the bunker, affirm the player's club selection, and end with an upbeat charge: "Show me the good stuff."

In Scripture, we find many encouragements to encourage one another. But is this, too, about pushing the negatives away and emphasizing the positive? Yes and no.

The reality of life reminds us that enemies and obstacles will rise up to challenge us. Jesus told his disciples, "He who is not with me is against me" (Luke 11:23). And, as we have already considered this week, we will face tribulation.

What might we say to all this? Plainly, we need encouragement. When the hazards of life threaten us and cause us to tremble with fear or anxiety, what we need are reminders that God is with us and strengthens our stand.

Consider Nehemiah and the people of God, working to rebuild the broken wall around Jerusalem. Their adversaries came with ridicule. Whether it was these insults, the typical weariness of untrained workers, or the magnitude of the task that led them to it, Nehemiah's laborers complained that their strength was waning. And the threats of the enemies grew harsher, even breathing murder.

Nehemiah did not ignore these realities. He prayed and he took action, instructing the people to go to specific locations and be prepared both for work and for warfare. Then he told them, "Don't be afraid—remember the Lord."

Your life is no less treacherous. If you stand with Christ, others will stand against you, led by our great enemy. Be encouraged. Encourage others. Know that God is with you. There is no positive greater than the Lord!

Opening questions What are the most encouraging words someone can speak to you on the golf course? • Do you remember a specific time in life when someone's encouraging words made the difference for you?

READING Nehemiah 4:1-23; Hebrews 3:12-14

Encouragement and action (Nehemiah 4)

Considering Nehemiah's example, what value does encouragement have in leadership? How might we say that Nehemiah's actions were as encouraging as his words?

How important was it that Nehemiah brought an awareness of God to the people's minds? Where are you positioned in your life to deliver spiritual encouragement to others?

Encouraged to hold firm (Hebrews 12)

What enemy of our faith is identified here? How can we encourage one another to stand against this enemy? What is our reward for holding firmly?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2018 Links Players International. An introductory video for this Bible study is available here: <https://youtu.be/1Cw6DzwXzao>.