

## PRICELESS TREASURES OF ENCOURAGEMENT

## JOURNALING

An encouraging lifestyle flows from intimacy with Christ. Keeping a journal is a tool which can draw you into deeper intimacy with Him. A written journal is a record of your spiritual journey. If you have never kept a journal, try it during this study. Here are some ideas for getting started.

- **Prayer Journal**— Write out your prayers as if you are writing a letter to God. Don't worry about spelling or grammar. Use this section to record prayer requests for others and how God answered those requests.
- **"Staying Focused"**— Use this section to record your answers to the study questions at the end of each chapter in *Treasures of Encouragement*.
- **Blessing Book**— As an act of praise, regularly record God's blessings.
- **Memory Verses**— Write out each memory verse as you memorize it.
- **"Living Focused"**— Record the actions you take in response to this section of *Treasures of Encouragement*. Also make notes of how God used your encouragement to help others and you.

ENCOURAGEMENT  
PRINCIPLE #1

*God keeps His promises  
through other believers.*

## JOURNALING TIPS

There are no rules for journal keeping. Your initial efforts may be effortless or strained. You may write a few lines or pages. Your journal is private correspondence between you and the Lord. The goal is not to fill pages but to keep a record of your deepening relationship to Christ. When a good friend did not know how to help me sort through what seemed to be conflicting doctrines and strong emotions, she suggested I work through my questions by writing them out in my journal until God cleared up my foggy thinking.

God often brings people to mind when we write out our prayers to Him. Ask the Lord if you need to take any action to encourage this person.

Anticipate a deeper awareness of God's presence as you record His actions in your life.

## GROUP ENCOURAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

One of the recurring encouragement themes in this book is the blessing of the covenant community, including our local churches. God gives us the privilege of being His promise keepers through the practice of biblical encouragement and calls all of us to offer encouragement in the context of our gift mix. Working on a group project throughout this study will demonstrate how we each have unique needed gifts and will deepen community in your group, your local church, family, and community. Start thinking about whom you want to encourage as a group. Next week you will be given time to make a decision and a plan. You will be given time every week to plan for the next wave of encouragement.

### FUN IDEAS

You will be divided into groups of three or four and given time after Lesson 1 to choose a person or group as your target for biblical encouragement. At the end of each lesson, you will be given time to discuss how to proceed in an intentional way. See Appendix A: A Treasury of Encouragement Ideas (pages 213–19) and Appendix B: Treasures of Encouragement over the Years (pages 221–28) for encouragement ideas.

For instance, if you choose your Session, find out when their meetings are and leave a box of cookies, napkins, and even a pot of coffee. Be sure to clean up the next day. Or leave a note in their mailboxes with a promise to pray for them while they meet. For the worship leader, leave a bouquet of flowers on the piano or a “praying for you” note on the guitar. Or prepare a Joy Box (See Encouragement Story in Chapter 1) and plan how each one in your group will contribute to it over the next few weeks.

Sign all of your correspondence as the Church Blues Busters or some other name like Eager Encouragers, Your Anonymous Fan Club, etc.

### NEXT WEEK’S ASSIGNMENT

- Watch Chapter 2’s five-minute Encouragement Stories video at [www.treasuresofencouragement.org](http://www.treasuresofencouragement.org)
- Download all Handouts at [www.treasuresofencouragement.org](http://www.treasuresofencouragement.org)

### A NOTE FROM *Sharon*

Shortly after our son’s death we received surprise encouragement from an anonymous group called the GRPC Blues Busters. (GRPC stands for Glasgow Reformed Presbyterian Church.) We learned others in our church leadership were receiving similar encouragement. Thank you notes to the GRPC Blues Busters started appearing in our bulletin. We still do not know who these special promise-keepers were. Three small groups in our church adopted this ministry when they studied *Treasures of Encouragement*. What fun they had surprising nursery coordinators, music ministers, youth pastors, prison ministry counsellors, etc.

- Read Chapter 2 and complete the Staying Focused section, making notes of scriptures or statements that impress you.
- Use the following to write a summary of this lesson:
  - Write a summary statement of Chapter 2.
  - List a few things from the chapter that were helpful to you.
  - How did this chapter change or inform your thinking about encouraging others?
  - Write a prayer based on some of the scriptures in this chapter.
  - How would you like for others to pray for you as you seek to apply the scriptures in this chapter to your life?
- Review Joy’s Story at the beginning of the chapter and pray about giving a Joy Box to a friend, neighbor, clerk, cashier. Think outside the box!
- When God brings a specific person to mind this week, come prepared to share how you responded to His nudge.
- Personalize the prayer from Scripture.
- Read the journaling handout and start making entries in your journal. If you already journal, offer to share a two-minute story of how the Lord uses journaling to encourage and guide you.
- If you have a “Magic Eye” picture, bring it with you.
- **For Fun** — Share a Poke Cake with a friend or family and explain what it symbolizes to you (Find the recipe on Chapter 1, Handout #3).
- **Bonus:** Listen to the suggested Chapter 1 Help & Hope podcasts at [www.treasuresofencouragement.org](http://www.treasuresofencouragement.org) to help equip you to offer biblical encouragement.
  - *Healing after Abortion* — *A Conversation with Lovette Vassar*



### PRAYING SCRIPTURE

*With all my heart I will praise  
 You, O Lord my God. I will give  
 glory to Your name forever,  
 for Your love for me is very great.  
 You have rescued me from  
 the depths of death.*

PSALM 86:12-13 (NLT)

## HOLIDAY POKE CAKE

Preparation Time: 15 Minutes

Makes 12 servings

(2) 9-inch round white cake layers, baked and cooled

(2) cups boiling water

(1) pkg. (4-serving size) gelatin, any red flavor

(1) pkg. (4-serving size) lime flavored gelatin

(1) 12 oz. tub whipped topping, thawed

- Place cake layers, top sides up, in two 9-inch round cake pans. Pierce cake layer with a large fork at 1/2-inch intervals.
- Stir 1 cup of the boiling water into each gelatin flavor in separate bowls for 2 minutes or until completely dissolved. Carefully pour red gelatin over 1 cake layer and lime gelatin over the other.
- Refrigerate 3 hours.
- Dip 1 cake pan in warm water 10 seconds; unmold onto serving plate.
- Spread with about 1 cup of the whipped topping.
- Unmold second cake layer; place on first cake layer.
- Frost with remaining whipped topping.
- Refrigerate until ready to serve. Decorate as desired.