

## THE END OF CRABGRASS

39<sup>th</sup> in a Series in Ephesians called, “Messages to the Misfits”  
Ephesians 6:21-23

One of the greatest comic strips of all time is the classic *Peanuts*, by Charles Schulz, that featured the loveable loser, Charlie Brown. In one strip Linus has written his own comic strip. He tentatively shows it to his sister, Lucy, and says, “Lucy, would you read this and tell me if you think it’s funny?” Lucy is tapping her foot in the next frame, then she gets that impish grin and asks, “Well, Linus, who wrote this?” Linus gets a big grin and proudly says, “Lucy, I wrote it.” In the next frame Lucy wads it up and says, “Well, then, I don’t think it’s very funny.” In the last frame Linus has picked up his wadded up comic strip, put his blanket over his shoulders and, looking at Lucy, says, “Big sisters are the crab grass in the lawn of life.”

That classic song, *Home on the Range*, all about where the deer and the antelope play, has the line, “where seldom is heard a discouraging word, and the skies are not cloudy all day.” Yeah, right. We don’t live on the range apparently, because the skies are cloudy in our lives, all too often. And discouraging words are practically an everyday occurrence. There seems to be way too much crabgrass in the lawns of our lives. We can’t change the nature of life in this broken world. Cloudy skies and discouraging words are going to happen. But one thing we can control is we don’t have to be the source of them for other people. None of us really wants to be the crab grass in the lawn of life, do we? No one wants to bring unhappiness and discouragement everywhere we go. Today I want you to think with me about being the opposite of the crab grass that Lucy was for Linus. Our thinking will be sparked by looking at Ephesians 6:21-23.

### PREMISE: GOD WANTS US TO BE ENCOURAGERS

Recently Laurie and I watched an old black and white movie on TV, one that starred Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn. For some reason, one thing I noticed in the movie was the telephones. The lead characters were a married couple, and in their home they had a classic black rotary phone. It caused me to think about some of the huge changes in communication that have happened in my lifetime. I remembered when I was a kid we had an old black rotary phone like that in our house. How things have changed. Now you have a smart phone, a technological wonder that provides instant communication with almost anyone, anywhere in the country, any time. Back in the first century, communication was much more challenging and much slower. In order for them to communicate with someone in a different city they had only two options. They could tell a messenger who could travel to that city and pass on a verbal message, or they could write down their message and have someone hand deliver it. As I was thinking about this it occurred to me that this was a good thing. What if there were cell phones in Paul’s day? Maybe he’d have just called the Ephesians to encourage them and we’d never have known anything about what he told them. Or we’d be combing through the scraps of extended text messages.

Paul was in prison in Rome, some 1450 miles from Ephesus, about the distance from here to Houston, Texas. That’s a trip of 32.5 hours driving, or 3-4 hours flight time. But, of course there were no cars

and no planes. There was walking and maybe going some of the way by boat. If you walked 20 miles a day it would take 10 weeks to make that trip. Imagine if you had to walk that far. There was a great deal that could go wrong on a 10-week-long trip.

When he wanted to send a letter to the church at Ephesus Paul couldn't just put a stamp on it and mail it. He couldn't send an email. He had to entrust it to someone who could deliver it for him. He needed someone who was trustworthy, someone he knew would make sure Paul's letter arrived safely. He needed a man who was strong enough and wise enough to make the journey safely. He needed someone who would persevere, for traveling back then was much more difficult than it is today...with the possible exception of getting through TSA at the airport, of course... At least he didn't have to take his shoes off. Yeah, we run the risk of being waylaid by TSA, but travelers back then ran the risk of being waylaid by bandits, which would have been significantly more serious.

The man Paul chose to be the lead messenger was Tychicus. His name in Greek meant "fortuitous." In other words, he was called "Lucky." Maybe he was known for somehow having things go his way. But Paul chose him because of his character. Paul had earlier made a point of having the mostly Gentile churches that he planted, collect money to give to Jewish believers in Judea, who were being severely persecuted and needed help. When he had the money all collected, he chose a group of men to accompany him as he delivered the money to Jerusalem. According to Acts 20: 4 Paul "was accompanied by Sopater, son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia." Some interesting names in that group. We've seen it included Lucky, but it also included Gaius, whose name meant "I am glad." So his name meant "happy." The name Aristarchus meant "best ruler," or King. So you had King, Happy and Lucky, but there was also Secundus, whose name meant "second." Obviously he had creative parents. They named their second child, "Number Two."

Lucky was chosen as one of the men to make that trip with Paul, keeping safe a significant amount of money, because he was the kind of guy you'd want on such a trip. A man who could take on the rigors of a long journey, who would be tough enough and strong enough both to endure the rigors of the trip but also to protect the money, and who could be trusted with it. By the time of this letter Paul had been a prisoner for several years and had been moved to Rome, and Lucky was with him again. Later, when Paul was again in prison, he would send Lucky, who was still with him, back to Ephesus to relieve Timothy so Tim could go visit Paul one last time.

Lucky was a spiritual stud. He was one of Paul's most trusted men. Paul calls him a "dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord." His role was to tell the Ephesians how Paul was doing, to deliver the letter he had written and "that he may encourage you." Paul sent him to encourage this group of Christians, because encouraging was a big deal to Paul. It was a significant motivation for this letter. He felt the need to encourage the Ephesian Christians because they were having a rough time, so he wrote the letter to encourage them and sent Lucky to encourage them in person. Encouraging people is still, to this day, a big deal to God.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Paul instructed those Macedonian Christians, “Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:29, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” In other words, encourage each other; benefit others with your words.

In Hebrews 3:13 the author of that book wrote, “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.” He said we should encourage each other daily. Every single day! Years ago Laurie and I were walking along the main street of the little town of Lahaina on Maui when we noticed a shop that was closed. That was a bit surprising because it was in the middle of normal business hours in the middle of the week. Posted on the door was a sign that said, “Open at 10 AM daily most days.” Um, isn’t the definition of daily “every day,” not “most days”? Apparently not in Hawaii. The Lord doesn’t want us to encourage others daily, most days. He wants us to encourage others daily, meaning every single day. It is to be our constant habit. Every day what comes out of our mouths should be encouragement. That should happen as long as it is called “today.” So when is today no longer today? A fact of time is that today is always today. It is never tomorrow, or yesterday, or next week. The only time today will no longer be called today is when we are in eternity and time won’t pass as it does now. In other words, when today is no longer today, then you can stop. That means never in this life.

Hebrews 10:25 says we should not give up “meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” The closer we get to the day Jesus comes back the more urgent it is that we encourage each other, continually, constantly, daily.

## WHY IS ENCOURAGING OTHERS IMPORTANT?

### **Because we all need it!**

Think about the Ephesian Christians. Most of them were Gentiles who grew up and lived their whole lives in a culture that believed there were many gods, and the worship of those gods involved little to no moral component. They had believed in a religion that actually promoted sexual promiscuity as part of its worship and believed people were closest to the gods when they were drunk out of their minds. Then along came Paul with a message that there is only one God. This God actually came to this planet to live as a man in order to rescue us. He died on our behalf and rose from the dead, something that was considered absurd in their culture. This God called them to a new way of living in which they were to treat others with kindness, fairness, forgiveness and righteousness. They were to confine their sexuality to marriage and not be involved in drunkenness. They were not to have anything to do with idols or the worship of other gods that Paul claimed were not real at all.

When those people believed that message and chose to follow this alien religion, following this Jesus person, it was not well received by their community. This new religion was generally opposed and

frowned upon by the community. The faith of these new Christians offended people who had been their friends and colleagues, and even their own family. The new Jesus people no longer participated in the accepted rituals of their previous religions and they essentially said those religions were wrong. Their new approach to life and to sexuality stood as a rebuke to the lives of their former circle. They began to be shunned, in many cases even by their own family. In the case of some, perhaps they had a business, a stall in the marketplace. And now they found that people refused to do business with them, vendors even quit selling them merchandise. Now they faced financial disaster. All the opposition, the rejection, the hardship that had befallen them specifically because they believed in Jesus, caused them to wonder if maybe this was a bad idea. All they had to do to fix the whole thing was to recant, to declare they had made a foolish and bad decision, and go back to their previous way of living.

In other words, following Jesus directly led to some very discouraging circumstances. They were struggling with living out their new faith in a mostly hostile environment. To add to the discouragement, they were finding it hard to stay faithful. They were discouraged about their own efforts to follow Christ because it was just so hard. They were badly in need of encouragement.

That was not something unique to them. We all still today fight discouragement from numerous angles and need encouragement. Former pastor and writer, Ray Pritchard, said everyone needs encouragement “because everyone is having a hard time.” He’s right. We all struggle with discouragement that comes from both internal and external sources. Most of us would admit that our lives have not gone the way we dreamed they would when we were young. We also would admit that we are not the people we thought we would be. Our discouragement comes from failing to be what we wish we were. Why do you think so many people make resolutions at the beginning of a new year? And why are those resolutions fodder for so much humor? It’s because everyone knows they will be toast by Valentine’s Day. We go through the resolution thing because we see flaws and failings that we wish were better. But many of us have gotten to the place where we don’t even bother with resolutions because we know they won’t make any difference.

We also fight discouragement because of the things that happen to us. After a while we begin to feel like there’s no hope, that maybe the world is against us. One man said, “Encouragement is the oxygen of the soul.” How does your body do without oxygen? It dies. How does your soul do without the oxygen of encouragement? It dies. Talk about discouraging. I just saw a fact that was kind of shocking and definitely discouraging. It is that if you are over the age of 60, the year you were born was actually closer to the 1800’s than it was to the year 2020. Oh, man, I’m so old! That’s discouraging.

William James said, “The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.” We don’t notice it all the time, but the truth is that everyone around us is desperate for encouragement. Life is hard and full of discouragement. It’s like our souls have been cut off from the oxygen they need, and that oxygen is encouragement.

We all know that God calls us to love one another. Encouragement is actually a way of putting love into action. Love is seeking the good of another person, even above our own good. Love will inevitably seek to benefit others by encouraging them because that's what they need!

Author Doug Britton commented on something he noticed once on a family outing. He and his wife had taken their kids to a video arcade, a thing that is hard to find these days. They all played various video games. But Doug observed something unusual. There were some moments in the evening when his wife watched him play games and cheered him on. The unusual thing was that his scores on the games were always better when his wife was cheering for him! Doesn't that suggest something about the power of encouragement?

### **Because it is the very nature of God to encourage.**

Here's another reason why encouragement is important. It is because being encouraging is part of God's intrinsic nature. In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Paul wrote, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles." That's cool. God is the God of all comfort. But the word translated "comfort" there is the noun form of the same word translated "encourage" in Ephesians 6:22.

So this literally says our God is the God of all encouragement. He is the one who is the source of encouragement. It is part of who he is! In John 14:16 Jesus, as he was telling his disciples that he was about to leave them, said, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever." In verse 17 he said this advocate will be the Spirit of truth. He's talking about the Holy Spirit. That sounds good. I'd like to have an advocate, someone who will be in my corner, plead my case, and be there always. Sounds good.

The Greek word translated "advocate" is *parakletos*. It is a noun form of the verb *parakaleo*, which is the exact word used in Ephesians 6:22 and translated "encourage." So it means an encourager. It literally means "one called beside." It means someone who comes alongside you to be in your corner, to stand with you, to plead your case, to help you, to comfort you, strengthen you and encourage you. That person is the Spirit of God himself. Theologians and older Christians at times call the Holy Spirit "the Paraclete." That's just taking the Greek word for "the encourager" right into English. It is who he is and what he does! It is part of the character of God.

If the Holy Spirit is working in us, is it not obvious that one effect will be that we will also be characterized by encouraging others? Look back at 2 Corinthians 1:4. We noted that God is the God of all comfort or encouragement, who encourages us in all our troubles. It is easy for us to stop there and think that's a nice warm, fuzzy thought. God is the encourager who always encourages us in our troubles. Isn't that great? Yes, it is, but that's not the end of the sentence. Paul goes on to say, "So that we can comfort (encourage) those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." The words "so that" are crucial. God has a reason for encouraging us. It is that we would then be able

to encourage others, no matter what they may encounter. God does not want us to be merely the recipient of encouragement. He wants us to be dispensers of it as well.

This past Christmas our granddaughter, Ella, was totally into the whole scene. She could hardly wait to open presents as the climax of the holiday, of course. She was so excited about it that she wanted to be the person to “play Santa” and hand out the presents to people. Imagine if she picked up the presents and then opened them herself, thinking they were all for her. That was not at all how it was supposed to go. She was to pick up the presents “so that” she could give them to other people to open. When we receive encouragement from God but then don’t give it to others, it’s like we’re keeping all the presents, presents intended for other people, for ourselves.

## HOW CAN WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS?

The obvious answer to that is live in the Spirit. If we are living in the Spirit, we will be living in the spirit of the great Encourager. That trait always encouraging will pass through us to other people. Remember what we learned when we looked at the command in Ephesians 5:18 to be filled with the Spirit. We learned that was looking to God and his grace to be what we need for life, peace and joy. It means trusting in what he provides and believing that knowing him is what we need most of all. As we do that and are filled with the Spirit of Christ, as we trust him to work in us and for us, his Spirit will fill our lives. And when that happens he will make us encouragers. As we depend upon him he will give us what we need to encourage others.

We need to draw upon the encouragement that God gives us as Paul mentioned in 2 Corinthians 1:4. As we live in that encouragement, knowing that God loves us, forgives us, delights in us, always works good for us, has hope for us in every situation, that will begin to give us what we need to encourage others. In Philippians 2:1 Paul said, “If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love.” Do you have that? You should have encouragement from Christ and comfort from his love. That should enable you to do what he goes on to say, to follow Christ’s example and think of others not just ourselves. It should give us the resources to think of how we can encourage them.

Think for a moment about Paul’s situation. What were his circumstances when he wrote this letter? In Ephesians 3:1 he referred to himself as “the prisoner of Christ Jesus.” He was a prisoner. He had been for years. The injustice of that was terrible. A judge appointed by the Romans had already declared that he had done nothing wrong, and yet here he was, still in chains. He didn’t know how that was going to turn out. In Philippians 1, written about the same time, he had said he didn’t know whether the outcome of his impending trial would be life or death. In that miserable, uncertain, unfair, difficult situation, Paul made the effort to write this letter and have one of his closest friends leave for months to deliver it, specifically so he could encourage the Ephesian believers in their discouraging circumstances!

What enabled Paul to be so focused on encouraging others when most people in his situation would have been consumed with their own problems? Listen again to how Paul described himself in 3:1. He was the prisoner *of Christ*. He wasn't the prisoner of the Romans. He wasn't the victim of injustice and terrible circumstances. He was the prisoner of Christ. He was where he was because that's where Christ wanted him to be, so he was fine with that.

In the very first verse of this book Paul introduced himself as “an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.” He saw himself as being an apostle specifically by God's will. Then in 1:11 said God “works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.” Paul was able to think about other people and encourage them when he was in a situation much more discouraging than theirs, because he was totally confident that God was working in his life and was working out his will and purpose in Paul's circumstances.

If we think our security, our peace, and our joy are solely dependent on our ability to control our circumstances, and that they necessarily derive from having the right kinds of circumstances, we will focus our attention, energy, resources and power on obtaining those circumstances and protecting them. We will be obsessed with that end. And we will never be truly at peace, so we will never be able to truly channel our energies into encouraging others. But if, like Paul, we know we are right where God wants us, we are experiencing his encouragement, his life, his peace and joy, then we will be able to turn our attention to others and care for them, including encouraging them.

## WHAT ARE SOME WAYS WE CAN ENCOURAGE OTHERS?

An obvious one is using our words to build each other up and affirm. Mark Twain said he could live an entire week on one good compliment. That's pretty much true of all of us. Henrietta Mears, an amazing woman who had enormous impact on the kingdom of God, said, “Whenever I meet a new person I imagine them wearing a sign across their chest that reads, ‘my name is...Please help me feel important.’”

Dr. Larry Crabb, well known Christian counselor, speaker and author, tells of an incident that happened when he was a young man. In his church it was customary for the young men to pray out loud, leading the congregation during their communion service. Crabb felt the pressure to do this even though at the time he had a problem with stuttering. He finally screwed up enough courage to attempt praying, and he totally messed up. He says he prayed thanking the Father for hanging on the cross and praising Christ for raising the Holy Spirit from the grave.” Everything came out wrong. He was mortified. He vowed he would never speak in public again. He wanted to sneak out of the service when it ended because he knew church leaders would feel compelled to correct his theology. But he didn't make it. A man named Jim Dunbar stopped him. Crabb anticipated the correction he knew he deserved, but instead Jim said, “Larry, there's one thing I want you to know. Whatever you do for the Lord, I'm behind you one thousand percent.” In his book, appropriately titled *Encouragement*, Crabb reflects, “Even as I write these words, my eyes fill with tears. I have yet to tell that story to an audience

without...choking (up). Those words were life words. They had power. They reached deep into my being.”

We can encourage people by being there to bear their burdens. Years ago around the time our church started, one night I drove to watch a high school football game up in Oceanside. Toby was coaching then, Laurie wasn't feeling well that night so I went by myself to watch his game. Somehow there was a piece of concrete in the road that I did not see in the dark until a nanosecond before I ran over it. I knew when I hit it that this was probably a bad thing. I quickly pulled into a parking lot to see if there had been any damage. The car was fine, but my front left tire was already going flat. Oh, great. I hadn't changed a tire in years. Now I had to change this tire in the dark. Oh fudge. I opened the trunk and got out the jack and the puny temporary spare they give you these days. I was fumbling around in the dark trying to figure out how to make it work when a young guy, about 20 years old, obviously a Marine, walked up and said, “Excuse me, Sir. Do you need any help?” One part of me, the proud part, wanted to say, “No, I got this. I'm a man. I can change a tire.” It actually was a very small part. The much larger part, the wiser part, said, “Uh, yeah, I probably do.” That kid cheerfully plunged in and had that tire changed out in 5 minutes. Man was that encouraging. I was so grateful. I tried to give him money to thank him, but he wanted no part of that. What an encouragement that young Marine was. I've never forgotten him. He didn't know me from Donald Trump, but he saw someone he could help and he eagerly volunteered to make a difference. We can make a huge difference for others by helping them with whatever burdens them. Knowing you are not alone is hugely encouraging.

We can help people by letting them know we are in their corner. After Saul, the persecutor, was confronted by Jesus and became a believer, he returned to Jerusalem. But the Christians there wanted no part of him. Who could believe this ridiculous story that he was now a follower of Jesus? After all the terrible things he'd done to Christians, after all the venom he had vented on them, they'd have to be idiots to believe this fairy tale. They knew it was just a ploy to get inside the church so he could find more victims to terrorize. But Acts 9:27 says a man named Joseph came along and vouched for Paul. He stood with him. He told the apostles that Paul truly was a changed man, and that he now worshiped Jesus for real. Joseph had such credibility that finally they accepted Paul. If it was good enough for Joseph, it was good enough for them. You probably know Joseph by his nickname, Barnabus. That was Aramaic for “son of encouragement.” Barnabus encouraged Paul by being in his corner, believing in him, standing with him. And every human being you know is longing for people to believe in them, stand with them, and be in their corner.

## APPLICATION

### THANK GOD FOR HIS WORK IN YOUR LIFE

We will never be able to think about and care for others, to tune into what is happening in their lives so that we can encourage them, if we are anxious about ourselves. The only way to truly be able to focus on others is if we are at rest about ourselves. That rest will come from remembering that God is working to bring about his good purposes for us. We can learn to be like Paul, who had hard and



threatening circumstances, but in the middle of them he was not fretting about himself. Rather he was trying to encourage others. We can focus on others when we feel safe in God's plan, knowing we have what we need.

### RELY ON THE SPIRIT

Remember that the Holy Spirit is the *parakletos*, the paraclete, the one called beside us. In other words, he is the Divine Encourager. When we are filled with him, looking to him to give us life, believing he can give us the peace and joy we need, and asking him to work in and through us, his work will begin to be reproduced in us. The Divine Encourager will make us into human encouragers.

We recently were notified that our water provider was going to turn off the water to our neighborhood for a day because they had to fix a leaking water main. We filled up bottles and pitchers so we would have water to drink, but it was frustrating to not have water to take a shower or wash dishes. But it would have done no good to vent my frustration at the faucet or shower nozzle. It could only channel what was provided to it by the water pipes, which that day was nothing. That's a bit like us. We can only channel encouragement, but if we are connected to the source of it we will have all we need

### LOOK TO BE A SOURCE OF LIFE TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW

We need to especially be aware of the power of what we say. Last week our son, Toby, had an eventful day as a doctor in the emergency department. During the course of his day he saved the lives of 3 people. But right at the end of the day he had another man who came in with a coronary problem. He was stabilized so they sent him for an important test, but while he was in the test he coded, meaning his heart stopped. Toby was part of the team called immediately to respond and they got him back. Then he coded again. Once again they were able to revive him. Then he coded yet again, and they got him back. But not for long. He coded again, and this time they could not revive him. Toby's shift was already over, but he had one more duty. He had to go tell the man's wife that he was gone. When he found her he learned that she was deaf. The only way he could tell her what had happened was by writing it out for her. The poor woman began wailing in grief. How do you think Toby felt about his day? Hey, great because he saved the lives of 3 people in one day, right? When was the last time I saved anybody's life? Uh, never. But he didn't go home happy and satisfied. He went home saddened by that last case. One negative outweighs a lot of positive. That one sad case outweighed 3 really good ones. Some say we need 5 positive affirmations to balance one negative comment. I suggest that is more like 1000 positives for every negative, because the negative has great power and stays with us.

One very cool thing about encouraging others is that you also encourage yourself. It's been a difficult week for our family. Cara had to spend a couple of days in the hospital after suffering several seizures. That's been tough. Prior to that Ella, then Cara, then Anna, then Toby all had bouts with a stomach virus. Laurie, showing remarkable courage stepped into the breach to care for them. Yesterday that bravery was rewarded with an unsurprising prize. She also got the bug. I did what I could to help. In the afternoon things had calmed down to the place where she could take in some liquids without erupting. I offered to go to the store to buy anything she might want. She said maybe popsicles would

work. I asked if there was a particular flavor she wanted. She thought about it, and said, “I don’t know. I guess something bland.” I see. A bland popsicle. Okay. Then she said, “Probably small too. I don’t want too much.” I said, “You want a small, bland popsicle. Uh, isn’t that just ice? It’s small, bland, in fact it has hardly any flavor at all. I have lots in the freezer.” By then she was laughing pretty hard. She said, “Thank you for making me laugh. It helps.” As I left I found it felt really good to do whatever I could to help. It felt good to encourage her.

Columbia University psychiatrist Kelli Harding wrote about an interesting finding from a study of rabbits in her book, *The Rabbit Effect*. The researchers studied a group of genetically identical rabbits. They wanted to see how it would affect the rabbits if they fed them an unhealthy high fat diet. After some time they were mystified to find that while the bad diet had obvious negative effects on most of the rabbits, some of them were doing very well regardless of the diet. They couldn’t understand this. The rabbits were all the same. How was it that the bad diet didn’t seem to affect this group? So they observed more carefully to make sure the rabbits were all being fed the same diet. They were, but they noticed something else. The researcher in charge of this particular group didn’t just feed the rabbits. She would pick them up, pet them and talk to them. It was that affection, the encouragement and interaction from a human being, that made the difference. Harding says the obvious conclusion is that loving, affirming relationships is the biggest factor in being healthy. It is a bigger factor than one’s diet, a fact that the wellness industry in our country doesn’t really want to promote, because you can’t sell love. But the lesson for us is that caring for people, encouraging them, affirming them, can and will have a huge impact on their health and well-being.

We have such power. We have the power to bring gloom, defeat, hopelessness, discouragement, annoyance, even anger to people. Just focus on and talk about ourselves, just talk about all the hard things, the gloomy things of life. Or we have the power to bring hope, peace, love and joy, to give life. When we build up, affirm, encourage, stand with people, be in their corner, believe in them, we have enormous power for good in their lives.