

**ON THE ROPES**  
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*Encourage one another and build each other up.*

—1 Thessalonians 5:11

**INTRODUCTION**

When the king of Assyria threatened to invade Jerusalem, King Hezekiah encouraged his people. He told them, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him” (2 Chronicles 32:7). He reminded the people that God was with them and would fight for them. King Hezekiah’s words had a strong effect. The people gained confidence and were no longer afraid. And sure enough, God wiped out the invading army, and the king of Assyria went back to his own land. The people of Jerusalem didn’t have to fight at all!

Encouraging words can be very powerful. When people are worried, words of encouragement can help them find courage. When people are having a hard time, words of encouragement can inspire them to keep going.

Today’s devotion is a reminder for us to encourage others with our words. It’s based on 1 Thessalonians 5:11, which says, “Encourage one another and build each other up.” The devotion is called “On the Ropes.”

**DEVOTION**

Sam struggled to climb the big cargo net. It led up to the high platform at the beginning of the ropes course at summer camp. “Almost there!” said Mack, his counselor. Sam knew that the other boys from his cabin were watching him. They’d all become friends during the week, doing lots of fun stuff together.

“Go, dude!” Scott shouted.

Resting a moment, Sam shouted back, “This is harder than it looks!” With a burst of effort, he pulled himself onto the platform. The group cheered, and he did a victory dance.

“Okay, Sam,” Mack said, laughing. “Let’s see you tackle the high wire.”

“Aye, aye, Captain,” Sam said, turning around. Short ropes dangled above a cable that stretched to the next platform. Grabbing the first rope, he stepped onto the cable. It swayed and he lost his balance, pitching forward. He hung there awkwardly, holding the rope, his feet still on the cable.

“Don’t give up, dawg!” Jimmy yelled. Regaining his balance, Sam slowly worked his way across. The group cheered again. This time Sam only grinned, too tired to dance.

When people around you are struggling, God can use you to encourage them. Your words of support will lift their spirit and give them confidence. Can you think of someone you know who needs encouragement?

## WORDS TO TREASURE

*Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today".*

—*Hebrews 3:13*

## QUESTIONS

1. Can you remember a time when you were encouraged by something someone said? How did you feel before they spoke to you? How did you feel afterward?
2. How can you tell when someone around you needs encouragement? What are some signs that they may be struggling or afraid?
3. What are some words or phrases you could use to encourage somebody? Spend some time brainstorming to come up with a list.
4. What do you think is the reason why words of encouragement are so powerful?

For a clue, either have children look up Proverbs 18:21, which says, "The tongue has the power of life and death," or read this verse to them. Remind them that God created everything just by speaking, and we are made in his image. Words are powerful!

5. Is it possible to encourage people without using words? What are some ways you could do this? Spend some time brainstorming to come up with a list.

Consider spending some time playing a game or doing an exercise to help children memorize the "Words to Treasure" Scripture verse.