



Giving Courage

*After they had preached the gospel ...and had made many disciples, they returned.... **strengthening** the souls of the disciples, **encouraging** them to continue in the faith..."*
(Acts 14:21-22)

California's 1000 year old, 150 foot iconic sequoia called the 'Tunnel Tree' enchanted millions of visitors until it collapsed following a storm on January 9, 2017. This majestic giant became a popular tourist attraction when earlier landowners carved a tunnel in its base in the 1880s. Redwood trees have very shallow roots. They withstand storms by spreading out and intertwining roots with other sequoias in order to hold each other up. Over time, the Tunnel Tree became isolated with no other nearby redwood roots for support. Like sequoias ALL IN men must intertwine their spiritual roots in fellowship to strengthen and hold one another up. To grow strong ALL IN men must come to realize that fellowship and encouragement are not luxuries, but necessities. "A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer" (Eccl 4:12). Can you think of a time when God sent you a fellow sequoia to help you through a storm? How important is fellowship and encouragement to you?

ACTS 13:42-52 In what ways did the Lord bless Paul and Barnabas with great success on their 1st missions trip? What kind of opposition did they experience? How can you relate with them?

ACTS 14:1-20 How did the Lord bless Paul and Barnabas yet again with great success? What opposition did they experience?

ACTS 14:21-28 Paul and Barnabas realized that ALL IN men need constant fellowship and encouragement if they are to grow to become mighty sequoia trees. So they returned to the cities in which they saw men begin to follow Christ "spending a long time with them" (28) in order to **strengthen** and **encourage** them to continue strong in the faith (21-22).

Strengthen (sterizo) Where do you currently need spiritual steroids to grow strong through a particular situation or relationship?

Encourage (para/next to + kletos/call) Who has God called you to be next to or who has He called next to you in order to walk and encourage them through a hard/stressful situation?

Encourage = en/in + courage/heart = God's character in my heart!



Who has God put in your face lately that needs to be strengthened and encouraged? What will you tell them about God's strong character that would bring courage to their heart to face all that they are going through? Maybe someone in your TAG Team! Check out the "30 Days Of Praying The Names And Attributes Of God" handout for ideas.

TAG TEAM DISCUSSION What principles do the following verses teach about how to practically **strengthen** and **encourage** other men to grow as sequoia like saints in Christ?

Joshua 1:5-9

Hebrews 3:12-14

Hebrews 10:23-25

Isaiah 35:3

Col 4:7-9

I Thess 5:11-14

Romans 15:4-5

Phil 2:1-4

I Samuel 23:14-18

II Timothy 1:16-18

