

## Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

*A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success. —Anon.*

---

A couple of years ago, I visited an elderly woman in an assisted-care home in Denver, Colorado. Although she suffered from a variety of ailments that had taken away some of her independence, she was in relatively good health.

Ethel had been a church secretary for much of her life. Her late husband had been a United Methodist pastor, mostly in Iowa, throughout his career. She was accustomed to a life in which people relied on both her and her husband.

The staff at the home confided to me that she had been depressed for some time. Her adult daughter, a grandmother herself, indicated the same.

“I don’t know,” Ethel said when I asked her what was the matter. But the truth came out. She felt adrift aimlessly, as she sailed for her eternal home. Life had lost its meaning; she had no purpose.

I shared with her what I had read that very morning in the Bible: “Encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). I knew that Ethel could have a powerful ministry of encouragement if she could just catch the vision. To be an encourager is to allow ourselves to be tools of growth in the lives of others.

The Bible also says, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Proverbs 18:21), and “To make an apt answer is a joy to anyone, and a word in season, how good it is!” (Proverbs 15:23). When we speak words of encouragement, it’s like walking alongside of someone, or standing with them in their time of need.

Perhaps the Lord is calling you to be a minister — a Minister of Encouragement (M.E.).

Ethel decided that this is exactly what she’d do, with God’s help. One of the things she did every day was to write an “encouragement card” to someone on her wing, or in the entire home, or to someone she knew back home. Her daughter printed up the cards for her. At the top were the words: “Encouragement Card” and below this in smaller type were the words, “Encouraging one another ...” (Hebrews 10:25).

Well, the Lord blessed her and her ministry touched many lives. She was an important help to many people.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to encourage one person today. In your name. Amen.*



**Daily Bible Readings — Sunday:** Numbers 18-20; **Monday:** Numbers 21-24; **Tuesday:** Numbers 25-27; **Wednesday:** Numbers 28-30; **Thursday:** Numbers 31-33; **Friday:** Numbers 34-36; **Saturday:** Psalms 31-32

### SAME ... BUT DIFFERENT

According to some definitions, a *homophone* is a word with the *same pronunciation* as, but *different meaning* than, another word. Thus, homophones come in pairs (at least). However, some remarkable homophones come in triples. Identify the first homophone using the clue provided. Then write two more homophones. We have done No. 1 for you.

| DEFINITION OR CLUE                                       | ANSWER<br>(First Homophone) | Second<br>Homophone | Third<br>Homophone |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Receptacle for cremains                               | URN                         | ERNE                | EARN               |
| 2. In 1918, a strain of this disease killed 18 million.  |                             |                     |                    |
| 3. The number of corners near Shiprock, NM               |                             |                     |                    |
| 4. A medieval craftsmen organization                     |                             |                     |                    |
| 5. Beef is a form of this.                               |                             |                     |                    |
| 6. Sacred  |                             |                     |                    |
| 7. Two of something                                      |                             |                     |                    |
| 8. A contraction of he will                              |                             |                     |                    |
| 9. A painter's paints are on it.                         |                             |                     |                    |
| 10. Destitute  |                             |                     |                    |
| 11. A smaller version of a highway                       |                             |                     |                    |
| 12. A cord stretched tight.                              |                             |                     |                    |
| 13. Also   |                             |                     |                    |
| 14. Not here, but ...                                    |                             |                     |                    |
| 15. 2 <sup>nd</sup> person possessive pronoun            |                             |                     |                    |
| 16. This duct carries blood back to the heart.           |                             |                     |                    |
| 17. He walked his daughter down this.                    |                             |                     |                    |
| 18. First person personal pronoun                        |                             |                     |                    |
| 19. Wild, tusked porcine beast                           |                             |                     |                    |
| 20. A penny is one of these.                             |                             |                     |                    |
| 21. You do this to bread dough.                          |                             |                     |                    |
| 22. Precipitation  |                             |                     |                    |
| 23. She regretted, or did this, the day she married him. |                             |                     |                    |
| 24. Short for, say, the tenor version of this            |                             |                     |                    |
| 25. The Spanish word for donkey                          |                             |                     |                    |

**ANSWERS:** 2. Flu, flue, flew; 3. Four, fore, for; 4. Guild, gilled, gild; 5. Meat, mete, meet; 6. Holy, holey, wholly; 7. Pair, pear, pare; 8. He'll, heel, heal; 9. Palette, palate, pallet; 10. Poor, pore, pour; 11. Road, rode, rowed; 12. Taut, taught, tot; 13. Too, to, two; 14. There, their, they're; 15. Your, you're, yore; 16. Vein, vain, vane; 17. Aisle, I'll, isle; 18. I, eye, aye; 19. Boar, bore, boor; 20. Cent, scent, sent; 21. Knead, need, kneed; 22. Rain, rein, reign; 23. Rued, rude, rood; 24. Sax, sacs, sacks; 25. burro, borough, burrow.