

## **Encouragement from the Stands**

### **Ready:**

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.”  
-1 Thessalonians 5:11

### **Set**

This weekend Michigan State University’s men’s basketball team pulled off an upset of the UCONN Huskies to advance to tonight’s NCAA national championship game against North Carolina. Now, I don’t know if you saw the game or not, but it certainly seemed to me that there was a lot of green in the stands in support of the Spartans. With the Final Four being held in Detroit, which is only about 90 miles from MSU’s campus, it would be safe to say that the Spartans were at a great advantage. And I have no doubt that it helped them keep momentum as they went on to victory on Saturday night.

Encouragement is a powerful thing. It is incredible what a simple pat on the back or cheer from the stands can empower an athlete to do. As competitors, I’m sure we’ve all experienced this. That’s why higher-ranking teams are given home-field advantage. With a better record, you can earn the right to be encouraged as you take the field.

As Christians, we need to be intentional about encouraging our “team.” Life is tough. The Bible says that this world will have troubles, and we all know that’s true. But that’s one of the reasons that God directs us in His Word to encourage each other and to bear one another’s burdens. He knows that we will have troubles, and He knows just how much more bearable those challenges will be when we have people in our corner to support us and cheer us on.

We all have people in our lives who can use extra encouragement, and we need to be strategic in allowing the Lord to let us provide it for them. We can’t abandon our teammates to defeat simply because we didn’t take the time or the effort to speak words of truth and life to them. It would be like Michigan State fans getting up to visit the concession stands at critical points in the game.

Today, be an encourager and cheer on your Christian brothers and sisters. You never know what victory could be brought on by your support and love.

### **Go**

1. Think of three people in your life who need to be encouraged. How can you provide that encouragement to them?
2. Beyond simply offering a word of support, how can you encourage them spiritually?

### **Workout**

Romans 15:4-5  
Philippians 2:1-11  
Colossians 2:2-3  
1 Thessalonians 5:14  
Hebrews 3:13; 10:25

**Bible Reference:**

Hebrews 3



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