

## **Encouragement in Times of Need**

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I teach with competent and talented teachers. They are well educated and well spoken. They are attractive and interesting. They are experienced and dedicated. They are confident and committed. They are out of my league! Wait, do I even have a league?

What happens when you feel that those around you are so much superior to you? Or, when you wonder how you can attain the amazing standards which are implied in the CAT~net articles or promoted in other teaching materials? Sometimes I find myself thinking I should just quit and save my students the experience of taking a class from me!

OK, I need support and encouragement! Where to go? Well, I do hang onto the concept that we are where we are because that is where God wants us to be. And, there are the times parents tell me they appreciate what I am doing. We have a 'Mom's in Touch' group here which is wonderfully kind. My principal is supportive. I do love my job – and my students. My job is rewarding and fulfilling, nevertheless, the standard is so high and I don't know if I can be all that I should be for my students.

What is the plan for moments like these? Do you ever feel it is more that you can do and wonder if where you are is really where you should be? Statistically, there is a 25% turnover in the staff of our schools every year. This can be explained by all kinds of valid reasons. But, I want to address the times when we are overwhelmed with the educational/spiritual load inherent in our jobs, or, the times we just need encouragement. So, then, what is the plan? To bring encouragement to you in times of need, here are some suggestions:

*Seek God daily.* He promises that He will add all things to you generously when you seek first His kingdom. I like to ask God for a verse or two which I can live by for the day, or alternatively, I ask Him to direct me to where I should read to meet my needs. This produces a wonderfully encouraging made-to-order walk through the Bible. Over the course of last year, while at home, I was led on a path of healing, rebuilding, and acceptance; starting with verses in the New Testament and ending in Nehemiah and Habakkuk. Another time, in response to a prayer for direction in friendship, I was led to read Romans 12. Lately, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes have been open on my lap.

*Pray for your students.* This will help you to bond with them and care about them. It will also generate opportunities to interact with them with the right attitude. God will also give you creative discipline ideas.

*Be yourself.* I think we do not know what it is about ourselves that students learn from the most. Just when you think you cannot get through to someone, you will notice that the student who is the least expected to, thoughtfully looking at you and considering what you are saying. What do you remember from your elementary, junior high and high school days? Probably not too much content, but rather the times and ways your teachers interacted with you—good or bad.

*Be knowledgeable about your content.* And excited! Pray for creativity and be adventurous. There is great confidence in knowing that you know what you should know.

*Pray for your fellow teachers.* Even if you are sure they are all superior to you, they can probably use your prayers. You will bond with them more readily when you care about them. You won't necessarily form friendships at work, but, the working environment is enhanced by peer acceptance and respect.

*Pray for your school.* It can become your mission field. Have a desire to be of service to God and believe that He wants you in your position.

*Enjoy your summer holiday and get refreshed for a new year.* Jesus loves you and He knows your heart. And in the words of some anonymous person on Hornby Island, "Live well, Love much, Laugh often."

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