

The Other "A" Word

Today's Reading Philippians 2:19-30

There is another "A" word. It is a practice that balances out the typical "you blew it" or "you could have done better" thoughts that are often associated with "accountability." It is an action that swings the pendulum in the other direction. Unfortunately, though this "A" word is a close cousin to "accountability," it isn't always invited to the family reunion!

Any guesses what the word is? I've already given you the first letter, a vowel that you didn't have to buy! It is the word "affirmation." It is the expression, "Hey, you did something right! Way to go! Great job! It is so cool to see God at work in/through you!" Affirmation is expressed as you applaud someone to their face and also as you recount their accomplishments before others!



Hopefully, you caught how Paul affirmed two brothers in Christ in Philippians 2.

"Timothy is one of a kind!" That was part of the "take home" on Paul's description of his beloved son in the faith. Paul affirmed him as one having a unique interest in the welfare of others and in the concerns of Christ. These generous words of affirmation must have blessed Timothy...perhaps especially on days when he questioned the value of his work.

"Epaphroditus deserves a purple heart and a hero's welcome!" This "fellow soldier" in Christ risked his life in the work of Christ and in service for the apostle Paul. Just imagine how those written words must have bolstered the confidence of this man and affirmed the work that he had done.

In both cases, those words of approval were neither solicited nor merely internalized. Chances are, you have been greatly encouraged at times in your life as someone expressed those kinds of words to you. Perhaps you can even remember the person, place, and specific words they shared. Now, you can be of great encouragement to others by verbalizing the ways that they bless you and others. Don't just keep it to yourself. Don't wait until you are asked. Be generous in the ways you express the other "A" word.