

CODDLING CHRISTIANS

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You often hear it; so-and-so needs encouragement. A man is a drunkard and has left the church; he needs encouragement. A young person has become involved in illicit drugs and crime; he needs encouragement. Someone has thrown a childish fit and has quit attending services; he needs encouragement. A church member gets very angry at some little something said in a sermon or Bible class; he becomes unfaithful to the Lord. He needs encouragement. Someone wants to be "used" in the Lord's work. No one gives him a job to do so he gets irritated and peevish; he needs encouragement.

Don't get me wrong. I believe that discouragement is one of the greatest problems we face as individuals and as congregations. Edifying one another is one of our most sacred privileges and responsibilities. But, often people who are loafing and dragging expect others who are already overloaded and overworked to pet them and coddle them in order to get them to do elementary Christian duties. Physical adults can be spiritual babes crying, "Wah! Wah! Wait on me. Serve me. Keep me happy. Wah!" They are such as have need of milk and not of strong meat! (Heb. 5:12-14). A strong individual can hunt his own food and carry his own weight. A baby must be served. His milk must be brought to him. Some babies cannot even hold their own bottle. You have to do it for them.

What would you think if you saw a grown man sitting on his mother's lap cooing and twiddling his thumbs while she held his bottle for him? Ridiculous? Yes, indeed! But, no more so than the spoiled Christian that must be catered to every moment to try to keep him faithful to Christ.

Yes, we all need encouragement. Elders do. Preachers do. Teachers do. Young people. The aged do. Everyone does. But you cannot be petted into Heaven. The only way to enter that glorious place is by bearing one's own cross (Mat. 16:24-26).~