

What is the Meaning of the Word “Exhortation?”

The term “exhortation” is often used in describing portions of Scripture. We find examples of this in Paul’s letter to the Philippians (Philippians 1:27-2:18), which contains 4 exhortations.

Since some have asked for clarification regarding the meaning of the term, I did a search and found the following. I hope this information is helpful.

Exhortations appear in the Bible means an urgent, loving call to action, encouragement, or comforting advice given from a close position beside someone.

Biblical Meaning and Greek Roots

- **Parakaleo:** The primary Greek verb translated as "exhort" or "exhortation" is *parakaleo*, combining *para* ("from close beside") and *kaleo* ("to call").
- **Coming Alongside:** It literalizes the image of someone stepping right next to another person to offer strength, lift their spirits, or guide them, much like a parent or a close friend.
- **Dual Tone:** While it primarily means to comfort, cheer, and encourage, it can also include a firm warning, rebuke, or admonishment to help believers stay faithful and avoid sin.

Key Functions in Scripture

- **Spiritual Growth:** Used to build up the church, motivate believers toward love and good deeds, and apply Biblical truth to daily life.
- **Spiritual Gift:** Romans 12:8 lists exhortation as a motivational spiritual gift, seen clearly in Biblical figures like Barnabas (whose name means "Son of Encouragement").
- **Protection Against Sin:** Hebrews 3:13 commands believers to exhort one another daily so that no one is hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.