

Lifting Up a Hod Carrier

In his book, *Another Chance*, Dean Merrill writes about a man who was ousted from his profession for an indiscretion, and – to put bread on his table – took work as a hod carrier (a laborer who carries supplies to bricklayers, stonemasons or cement finishers).



He was suddenly plunged into a drastically different world. Instead of going to an office each day, he was hauling loads of concrete blocks up to the fifth level of a construction site. Gone was the piped-in music in the corridors; now he had to endure blaring transistor radios. Any girl who walked by was subject to rude remarks and whistles from his co-workers.

Profanity shot through the air, especially from the foreman, whose primary tactics were whining and intimidation. Using

God's name in vain, he often said, "Can't you do anything right? I never worked with such a bunch of SOB's in all my life."

Near the end of the third week, the new employee felt he could take no more. "I'll work till break time this morning," he told himself, "and then that's it. I'm going home." He had already been the butt of more than one joke when his lack of experience caused him to do something foolish. The stories were retold constantly thereafter. "I just can't handle any more of this," he thought. A while later, he decided to finish out the morning and then leave at lunchtime.

Shortly before noon, the foreman came around with paychecks. As he handed the man his envelope, he made his first civil comment to him in three weeks. "Hey, there's a woman working in the front office who knows you. Says she takes care of your kids sometimes."

"Who?" The foreman named the woman, who on occasion helped in the nursery of the church where the man and his family worshiped. The foreman then went on his rounds.

When the hod carrier opened his envelope, he found – along with his check – a handwritten note from the payroll clerk. "When one part of the body of Christ suffers, we all suffer with it. Just wanted you to know that I'm praying for you these days."

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The man stared at the note, astonished at God's timing. He hadn't even known the woman worked for this company. Here, at his lowest hour, she had given him the courage to go on, to push another wheelbarrow of mortar up that ramp.

It's safe to say that all of us, at one time or another, are struggling to climb some kind of mountain. Perhaps it's a financial problem, a health issue for ourselves or a loved one, or perhaps a broken relationship is threatening to overpower us.

Encouragement can be a mighty tool of lifting one's spirits and confidence building, whether it takes the form of a note, as in the case of the hod carrier, a telephone call or someone to come alongside us simply to listen.

We have such great opportunities to encourage others – not just in our personal lives, but in the careers we have chosen.

Find someone today who needs a word of cheer.

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing (1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter