

### HOW TO BE A BARNABAS

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Hebrews 13:7

**If we were to make a list of the most influential people in the Bible, we'd likely go quite awhile before we came to Barnabas.** And Barnabas may not be as prominent as people like Peter and Paul, but his influence in the early church is still significant. And while not many of us may have the status of Peter or Paul, I believe there are aspects of Barnabas' life that each of us can and should incorporate in our lives.

Hebrews 13:7 says, "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." That's what I'd like us to do today as we consider the life and ministry of Barnabas, beginning in Acts 11:19-21

Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. Acts 11:19-21

Stop there: Who went to Antioch and began to tell people about Jesus? "Some of them." We're not talking Peter or John or one of the others from the 12 disciples. In fact, we don't even know their names. They're simply referred to as "some of them." But I love this because it serves as a reminder that God can use anyone to lead people to Christ; even "some of us" like me and you.

You remember the stats: If every Christian lead one person to Christ every year and then the process was repeated each year, within 7 years the whole planet would know Jesus as Savior and Lord. God's primary plan to reach the world is to use ordinary people like some of us to tell other people about Jesus.

Also, notice that the plan to lead people to Christ wasn't as much about getting people to come to church where they could hear about Jesus. It was about people from the church going to the world and telling them about Jesus.

**We need a missional mindset.** Every time we leave this building we are going into the mission field. Is this the way you see your neighborhood, your workplace, or your school? **Are you willing to be that somebody who tells anybody about Jesus?**

News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. Acts 11:22-30

So Peter and Paul get a lot of attention in the book of Acts, and rightly so; but I want each of us to prayerfully consider what it takes to be a Barnabas:

**\*A BARNABAS IS COMPLETELY YIELDED TO GOD**

**You gotta love Barnabas, whatever was needed to advance the gospel, he was willing to do it.** Whether it was going to Antioch to disciple new believers in Antioch or take an offering to those in need in Judea, **Barnabas was completely available for God's service.**

**Example: Baseball Players- Utility Players.**

I believe God is looking for more utility players in His church; people who are willing to do whatever needs to be done for the sake of furthering the mission. **Are you willing to be a Utility player for God? Are you completely available to God to use however He wants to use you?**

**\*A BARNABAS IS AN ENCOURAGER**

When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. v. 23

**It's not surprising that when Barnabas arrived in Antioch, he began to encourage others.** Acts 4 tells us that Barnabas' original name was Joseph, but the apostles gave him the name **"Barnabas"** meaning **"son of encouragement"** because he was such an encourager.

**Usually we name our children and hope they grow into the name.**

Dawson Josiah= 2 Kings 23:25: *Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did—with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength.*

Noah Andrew= *Walked with the Lord and did everything just as God commanded.* (Andrew). *Brought Peter to Jesus.*

**But what would happen if we waited and named people according to their most dominant characteristics? What would people name you?** I'd feel pretty good if people called me "son of encouragement."

Mark Twain once said *he could live for two months on a good compliment.* We all need to be encouraged; all of us, but we also need to be encouragers.

**\*A BARNABAS IS GOOD**

He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith... v. 24

In this one verse we find 3 characteristics, but they're presented in such a way that they're connected to each other.

To say someone is "*good*" seems kind of vague or vanilla. We live in an age of hyperboles where people are described as great, awesome or amazing; so describing someone as good feels a little understated.

But consider that the Greek word used for "*good*" in reference to Barnabas has to do with moral excellence. And the One who defines what is morally excellent is God. Barnabas did what was morally excellent in God's eyes. He lived life on God's terms.

**So this morning may be a good time to ask ourselves, are we good? Are we doing what is morally excellent in God's eyes?**

**\*A BARNABAS IS FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith... v. 24

Being "full of the Holy Spirit" was one of the most significant things you could say about someone. Remember that in Acts 6, when the apostles were looking for people they could trust to carry out the ministry of the church they looked for men who were "*full of the Spirit and of wisdom.*"

To say that someone is "*full of the Holy Spirit*" is to say that they are being **led by God**; that there is something about their life that gives evidence that **God is present and active in their life.**

Francis Chan explains the difference the Holy Spirit makes in our lives this way: I don't want my life to be explainable without the Holy Spirit. I want people to look at my life and know I couldn't be doing this by my own power. I want to live in such a way that I am desperate for Him to come through. That if He doesn't come through, I am screwed.

**Being full of the Holy Spirit is a mystery that's hard to fully explain, but when someone is full of the Holy Spirit, you can't help but see God in their life and through their life.**

BTW- We read that Barnabas was a *"good man."* Well, Galatians 5:22 tells us that *the fruit of the Spirit is goodness.* So as we abide in Christ and the Holy Spirit abides in us, we are more inclined to be good.

**\*A BARNABAS IS FULL OF FAITH**

He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith... v. 24

The description of Barnabas being a man who was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit is the same description that was given of Stephen in Acts 6 when he was chosen by the apostles to carry out the ministry of the church.

Barnabas was full of faith and full of faithfulness. And just as being "full of the Holy Spirit" makes us more good, it should also increase our faith. **Being full of faith is a trademark of those who are full of the Holy Spirit.** People who are full of the Holy Spirit tend to be optimists because they see people and circumstances from God's perspective.

Faith is a really big thing to God. Hebrews 11:6 says that *"without faith it is impossible to please God."* Hebrews 10:38 says, *"My righteous one will live by faith and if he shrinks back I will not be pleased with him."* In 2 Corinthians Paul wrote that *we live by faith, not by sight."*

**It's no coincidence that someone who was full of faith was also known for being an encourager.** Think of how valuable a person who is full of faith like Barnabas would have been at a time when the church was facing such intense persecution that it drove Christians from their homes into other cities.

When circumstances are most dire, people who are full of faith are rare & priceless commodities. They are incredibly valuable as they keep God's people from being discouraged or wavering in their faith.

Does this describe you? Are you full of faith? Does your faith inspire and encourage others?

**\*A BARNABAS IS PASSIONATE ABOUT SEEING PEOPLE COME TO CHRIST**

He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. v. 24

This verse tells us that *"a great number of people were brought to the Lord"* but it also indicates that **Barnabas played a significant role in this happening.** Barnabas was passionate about seeing people come to Christ.

**Is this true of you? What about your life gives evidence that you are passionate about seeing people come to Christ?**

I recently read that only 55% of Christians believe they have a responsibility to share their faith and less than 5% of Christians have ever lead anyone to Christ. Clearly, we need to be more passionate about seeing people come to Christ.

Consider this: If statistics repeat themselves, Over the next year, over 329,000 people in California will die; over 3.4 million Americans will die; and over 60 million people in the world will die. That's over 164,000 people each day, 6,800 every hour, and 114 people every minute.

Now I don't like these statistics any more than you. I hate death. But **death is a reality and what people decide about Jesus in this life will impact the rest of their eternity.**

So once again, **What about your life gives evidence that you are passionate about seeing people come to Christ?**

**\*A BARNABAS IS PASSIONATE ABOUT SEEING PEOPLE GROW IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST**

He encouraged them to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts... Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. v. 23, 25-26

**So how ironic is it that Saul is called to Antioch to disciple new Christians who came to Christ because of the persecution that he started?!** And the church in Antioch would be the one to launch Saul and Barnabas into their missionary journeys! God always gets the last word.

I like what David Platt said, **"Satan's plan to stop the church will ultimately serve to spread the church."** He's right. Persecution only served to strengthen the faith of Christians and only made them more passionate about spreading the Gospel.

But let me come back to our point: The verses we just read serve to emphasize the importance of growing in our own relationship with God as well as the call to help others grow in their relationship with God.

**Are you intentionally investing your own spiritual growth?  
Are you intentionally investing in the spiritual growth of others?**

**They had these new believers in Antioch and those who had introduced them to Jesus recognized the need for these new believers to be discipled.**

And the way they discipled people was not by inviting them to attend a worship service. Their plan was to entrust these new believers to more mature followers of Christ to ensure that they a) didn't drift in their commitment; b) so they would learn more about Jesus grow in their relationship with God and that they too would be used to bring other people to Christ.

**Worship services are great, but church has to be more than a worship service if we really want to make disciples.**

Mike Breen (Building a discipline culture) wrote: “Most of us have become quite good at the church thing. And yet, disciples are the only thing that Jesus cares about, and it’s the only number that Jesus is counting. Not our attendance or budget or buildings. He wants to know if we are making disciples.”

**Repeat after me: Disciples disciple others.** Each of us need to be investing in the spiritual development of others.

Also worth noting, these were Gentiles that Barnabas spent the year with. If you’re gonna be a Barnabas, you have to be willing to invest in whoever God calls you to come alongside.

We read that Barnabas *“encouraged them to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.”* We need to ask ourselves: **What am I doing to encourage others to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts?**

Closing: We’ve identified 7 characteristics or priorities that made Barnabas such a valuable instrument of God and such a blessing to the church. *Which aspects do you need to focus more on? Are you willing to be a Barnabas?*

**HOW TO BE A BARNABAS**

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Hebrews 13:7

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