

The Son of Encouragement

Do you have a nickname? The apostles gave Joseph a nickname. They called him "Barnabas." The name meant "son of encouragement." Joseph was such a positive and encouraging person that it was like "encouragement" was his father.

Encouragers build up and edify others. They make others feel good and inspired. They always have an audience. They always have a group of people who need what they are offering. They serve others powerfully and tremendously.

Who did Barnabas encourage?

He encouraged new converts.

- After Saul of Tarsus (a persecutor of the church) was converted, he tried to associate with the disciples in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26). He was denied fellowship because the brethren did not trust him. They believed that he wasn't truly converted and was still a persecutor.
- Barnabas was the only disciple who stood up for Saul. He believed the best about Saul and told the apostles about his powerful transformation (Acts 9:27). Saul would go on to become the Apostle Paul. Paul would spread the gospel throughout the world and contribute to almost half of the New Testament.
- We also need to encourage new converts. We need to get to know them, spend time with them, pray for them, and constantly check on them. We need to ensure they feel part of the family and don't slip through the cracks.

He encouraged the local church.

- The church in Antioch was racially diverse (Acts 11:20-21). Barnabas is sent from Jerusalem to help build up this church (Acts 11:22-26). He and Saul spent a year working with the brethren.
- Barnabas encouraged the church by being a "good man," having a resolute heart, and teaching "considerable numbers."
- We also need to encourage others through our godly example, serving, teaching, and faith.

He encouraged those who needed a second chance.

- Barnabas and Paul disagreed about John Mark (Acts 15:36-41). Barnabas wanted Mark to accompany them on their second preaching journey, but Paul did not because he had deserted them on the first trip.
- Rather than let this disagreement hinder their work for the Lord, they decided to split up. Paul and Silas would go into territories with the gospel, and Barnabas and Mark would travel back to Cyprus.
- Paul would one day agree with Barnabas about Mark (2 Timothy 4:11). Mark would prove to be a good worker in the kingdom.
- We also need to be willing to see potential in people when they mess up. We also need to put our arms around people when they experience failure and invite them to continue laboring alongside us in the service of Jesus.

He encouraged through his giving.

- Barnabas sold his property and used the profits to help needy saints (Acts 3:36-37). He used his money to ensure God's people did not go hungry.
- Encouragement doesn't merely involve saying kind and uplifting words. It can also include helping people in need. It can also involve buying someone a gift or paying for someone's meal. It can even include giving someone our time and presence when they are sick or grieving.

Conclusion:

Challenge yourself to encourage at least three people this week.

- Shawn Jeffries