

Digging Deeper

DEVOTIONAL



Son of Encouragement

(Part 1)

Kittiwake Baptist Church

<http://www.kittiwake.org/devotionals/>

(Week 26)

Day 1

Son of Encouragement

33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all 34 that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. 36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), 37 sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:33-37)

If we tried to find the perfect example of a Church Member in the Bible, Joseph (known as Barnabas) would be a great example. Barnabas was given his name by the early church. Barnabas means "son of encouragement." The word for encouragement, paracletos, means someone who is called alongside to:

- Help you
- Encourage you
- Strengthen you

Paracletos is most often used in the Bible to refer to the Holy Spirit. So when the early church saw what Barnabas was doing, they recognized that he was doing the work of the Holy Spirit.

If someone was describing you would they call you an encourager or would they say you were full of criticism? Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind someone he wants you to encourage and seek to encourage that person this week.

Day 2

Son of Encouragement

11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (1 Thes. 5:11)

14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. (1 Thes. 5:14)

Every day we are surrounded by criticism. Criticism is part of our fleshly nature. Our fleshly nature likes to point out the failures of those around us to give ourselves a false sense of pride.

Though the majority of the people around us are discouragers, the Church is supposed to be different. Our words matter! Encouragement can make the difference in the life of our family, our coworkers, our church family, or anyone else that you come in contact with.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (Eph. 4:29)

As the Church we need to take a look at what comes out of our mouth and see if we are building others up or if we are trying to tear them down so that our ego is satisfied.

Are you an encourager? How have you been encouraging those around you this week? If you can't think of anything make a point to encourage someone right now!

Day 3

Son of Encouragement

36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), 37 sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet. (Acts 4:36-37)

Looking at Barnabas we can pick out five characteristics that made him a “son of encouragement” to come up with a profile of an encourager.

Meet a Need in Jesus’ Name

The early church faced intense persecution and believers lost their jobs and houses, so the church sold their extra to meet the needs of their brothers and sisters in Christ. The Bible tells us that Barnabas sold a field to meet the needs of others. Now you may say, “I don’t own a field. I don’t even own my house. This is only for rich people.” But God is not concerned about what you would do if you won the lottery or became rich somehow in the future. He is concerned with what we are doing with the \$10 in our wallet right now.

Money or property is not the only thing that we can give either. We can give others our love, our time, our ear, and our wisdom.

How is God using you to meet the needs of those around you? Ask him to help you see the needs around you and to have a willing heart to meet them.

Day 4

Son of Encouragement

26 When he [Saul] came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. 28 So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. (Acts 9:26-28)

Look to include the excluded

Saul (who later became the Apostle Paul) would never have had a public ministry in Jerusalem if it hadn't been for Barnabas. After Saul's conversion, the early church was still weary of him because they remembered Saul as the man he used to be, someone who had severely persecuted the early church. They didn't believe he was truly a disciple so they were afraid it was a trap. But Barnabas came alongside Saul and stood up for him in front of the apostles.

Instead of saying "How could God ever use someone like that?" we should change our thinking to "Just think what God could do with that person." Those around us may only be one encouragement away from doing something great for God's kingdom.

Are there people in your life who seem to be hopeless? Maybe all they need is a bit of encouragement to follow God's plan for their life. Do you look for the potential in those around you or are you too focused on the negative? Look for ways to encourage those around you.

Day 5

Son of Encouragement

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Eph. 4:32)

17 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. 18 He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. 19 And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. (Deut. 10:17-19)

Barnabas sought to include those around him who were excluded. There are people sitting around us every Sunday who feel excluded. A Barnabas looks for those who are the outcast, those that aren't beautiful, those who are different, those outside the group, those excluded and the unfriended. A Barnabas sees these people and finds ways to befriend, include, encourage and make them a part of the Church body.

We need people in the church who can come alongside these people and make them feel accepted and loved and spur them on to do the great things God has called them to do.

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb. 10: 24-25)

Are you so focused on yourself, what you're going to eat for lunch, what happened on the way to church, etc. that you miss seeing those that need encouragement? Ask God to give you eyes to see those who need an encouraging word.

Son of Encouragement

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12 On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt. 9:10-13)

Barnabas understood that God in His great love for us sought us out while we were still sinners and outcasts and that He sent His most precious gift, His son Jesus, to pay the price for our sin. Jesus made a point to meet needs and to reach out to the outcasts. He even put the needs of others above his own needs; the ultimate example being His death on the Cross for our sins.

God saw our need and made a way for us to draw close to Him. We too are called to seek out those who are outcasts and encourage them and help them draw near to God. When we are meeting needs and reaching out to the outcasts we are showing the love of God, and it will be clear that we are disciples of God.

Who has God laid on your heart this week? What steps can you take to encourage this person? Is there a need that God has laid on your heart? How can you meet that need to the glory of God?