

3. What does it mean to be full of the Holy Spirit?
 - a. Can you be a good person without being filled with the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?
 - b. Can you be filled with the Holy Spirit without being a good person? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think Barnabas sought out Paul?
5. What does the fact that Barnabas was willing to include Paul tell you about Barnabas?

CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE OF JOHN MARK (ACTS 15:36-39)

The first gospel written was penned by a young man named John Mark. The early church often gathered for prayer in his parents' home. Paul and Barnabas took John Mark with them on their first missionary journey. The rigors of the journey, however, proved to be too much for John Mark. So he packed his bags and headed back to Jerusalem. Paul saw him as a quitter, and wanted nothing to do with him. Barnabas saw him as a young man with a lot of potential, who deserved a second chance. So the last time we see Barnabas in the book of Acts, he is championing the cause of John Mark.

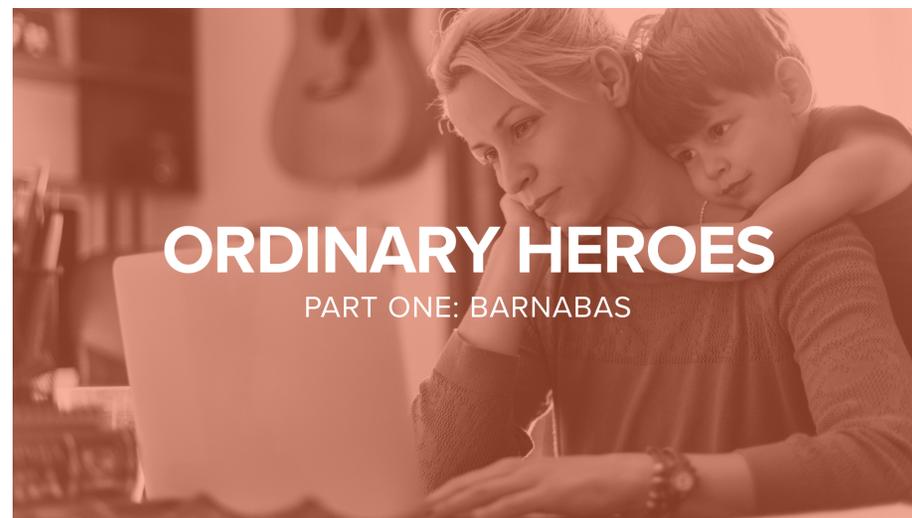
³⁶ Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." ³⁷ Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸ but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. ³⁹ They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹ He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

1. What happens when our passion for the task at hand overwhelms our concern for people?
2. What happens when our passion for people distracts us from the task at hand?
3. How does the gospel bring the two into balance?
4. What would have happened if Barnabas had listened to Paul?
5. How did God bring good out of an otherwise ugly confrontation?
6. What is your primary take away from our study of Barnabas?



SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 2017

360 DISCUSSION GUIDE



ORDINARY HEROES

PART ONE: BARNABAS

Ordinary heroes are not heroes nearly as much as they are ordinary people who do ordinary things with extraordinary grace. They are the first to recognize there is only room for one hero in every story, and they are not it. People who are trying to be the hero of their own story are automatically disqualified. Theirs is a small world wrapped up in themselves. Ordinary heroes live their lives in awe of a True and Greater Hero and somehow their lives become a sure but dim reflection of His.

Barnabas was an ordinary hero. While the New Testament writers are deeply fond of Barnabas, and he was no doubt a capable teacher, they do not preserve any of Barnabas's sermons—not even a tweetable quote. Yet, without Barnabas, there would have been no Paul. Without Barnabas there would have been no Mark. He found both men at their lowest, and was part of the redemptive process that made their lives count for Christ.

When we study the life of Barnabas, our goal is not to be like Barnabas. Our goal is to know God the way that Barnabas knew God, to follow Christ the way Barnabas followed Christ, and to be used by God the way Barnabas was used by God.

"Barnabas" was a nickname given to Joseph of Cyprus by the Apostles. The name means "son of encouragement." While we do not know everything we would like to know about Barnabas, we do know that he lived up to his nickname at every turn.

CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE OF THE POOR (ACTS 4:32-37)

The greatness of any people or any society is the depth of their care and concern for those who are less fortunate. God chose his people from among the poorest of the poor, and gave them careful instruction for remembering and caring for the poor. They were told if they carefully followed the Lord's instruction, "There need be no poor among them (Deuteronomy 15:4)." While that ideal was never realized in Israel, it was for a short time realized in the early church. We first meet Barnabas as a champion of the poor and disenfranchised.

³²All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³With 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 ³⁴that 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 ³⁵and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

³⁶Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), ³⁷sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

1. While many were making similar sacrifices, why do you think Luke chooses to highlight the contribution of Barnabas?
2. Most nicknames are derisive. The nickname that the Apostle's give to Barnabas is highly complementary. Why do you think they called him the son of encouragement?
3. Why is encouragement an important ingredient in the life of the church?

CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE OF PAUL (ACTS 9:26-28)

Acts 9, opens with Saul, "Breathing murderous threats against the Lord's disciples (Acts 9:1)." He is in Jerusalem for the sole purpose of securing the authority to arrest, imprison, and even execute anyone publicly proclaiming the name of Christ. There is little wonder that upon his return, Paul did not receive a warm welcome from the Church in Jerusalem. If Paul was ever going to play the role he would one day play in the early church, someone would have to take a risk. The only one willing to take the risk was Barnabas. So the next time we meet Barnabas, he is championing the cause of Paul.

²⁶When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. ²⁷But

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. ²⁸So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

1. What role did Paul play in the development of Christianity?
2. What role did Barnabas play in the development of Paul?
3. What might have happened to Paul, if Barnabas was not willing to risk his own reputation in order to take a chance with Paul?

CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE OF THE GENTILES (ACTS 11:19-26)

If the early church was suspicious of Paul, they were every bit as suspicious of anything and everything Gentile. They didn't mind Gentiles embracing the gospel and adopting a Jewish lifestyle, but it was another thing altogether for the Jewish Church to accept the Gentile Church as a legitimate way of doing church. Once again, it is Barnabas who bridges the gap of suspicion. The next time we meet Barnabas he is championing the cause of the Gentiles.

¹⁹Now 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.

²⁰Some 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. ²¹The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. ²²News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When 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. ²⁴He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

²⁵Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶and 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.

1. Why do you think the church in Jerusalem chose to send Barnabas?
2. How did Barnabas encourage the church in Antioch?
3. What can we learn from Barnabas about how we should encourage one another?
4. How does Luke describe Barnabas in verse 24?

