



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- **1** { Read Acts 2:5-12 and 36-41. Summarize in your own words what is happening in this historical account.
What do you find encouraging in this event? What challenges might accompany such great blessing?
- 2** Read Acts 2:42-47. *Is this heaven on earth?!* What *might* go wrong in this situation?
- 3** Read Acts 6:1. "Hellenistic" Jews are Greek-speaking Jews whose homes were spread all throughout the Roman empire (see Acts 1:9-10), rather than "native Hebrews" (Hebrew-speaking Jews who lived in Palestine). In your own words, summarize the simmering ethnic tensions.
- 4** Read Acts 6:2-4. In your own words, what organizational solution did the church leaders propose?
- 5** Now read Acts 6:5-7. What was the congregational response, and how well did it work?
- 6** Acts 6 resolved the problem of inequitable, prejudicial **distribution** of food—but 3,000 believers required a mountain of food every day—**how was it paid for?** Read Acts 4:36-37.
- 7** Barnabas and other generous believers (see Acts 2:45) definitely would have become **B.M.O.C.**—**"Big Men Of the Church"**! **What** might go wrong in a situation such as this? (See Acts 5:1-11.)
- **8** { As in the first century, church life is a mixture of encouraging and discouraging experiences—we need "sons and daughters of encouragement" as much as ever! Read Romans 15:4-6.
From where (from *Whom?*) do perseverance and encouragement come (v. 5)?
- 9** **How, through what means,** does God give us perseverance and encouragement (v. 4)?
- 10** **What results from** the perseverance and encouragement God gives us (v. 6)?

Talking To Others About This Week's Message

- 11** If a neighbor or friend at work asks you, "*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

Talking To God About This Week's Message

- 12** "Heavenly Father, today I want to be a 'doer' of the Word, and not just a 'hearer'. Amen."

- 1 Jews from all over the Roman empire were in Jerusalem for the Jewish festival of Passover. Peter preached a sermon and 3,000 were saved in one day. It is a blessing that the gospel is so powerful (Romans 1:16). Consider the challenges that lie ahead when you find out that your wife is carrying quadruplets! That blessing will require a total restructuring of your lives—plus a bigger house and a full-sized van! The church of Jerusalem grew **2,300% in one day** (from 130 to 3,130). **Whew!**
- 2 It truly does seem as idyllic as earthly possible! *“Familiarity breeds contempt!”* Soon the newness wore off and the sin which remains in every believers’ heart will begin to express itself. And it did...
- 3 As the saying goes, *“After three days, fish and guests both start to stink!”* Soon enough “family differences” began to show up—the local believers (hosts) began to get more than the guests (Jews from various provinces, who came to faith while visiting Jerusalem, and now wish to stay and grow in their faith). Prejudices showed up in the daily distribution of food to dependent widows.
- 4 The apostles (all Hebraic believers) proposed that the Greek-speaking believers choose some men that **they** trust to distribute the food fairly.
- 5 Note that all seven men chosen had **Greek** names; this was **very** wise! The apostles put these men in charge, and a crisis—perhaps even a church split—was avoided.
- 6 Local believers started selling their own properties in order to free up money for buying food. Remarkable!
- 7 They undoubtedly would have been praised for their generosity. Soon some would want the accolades that came with generosity—without actually having to **be** generous!
Important Interpretive Note: This was **voluntary** generosity—**not** forced redistribution. This was **not** socialism, it was Christian generosity. Nobody made Barnabas (or anyone) sell their land and give the proceeds. And nobody required that Ananias and Sapphira give 100% of the sale price (v. 4). They wanted to **appear** more generous than they actually were. **That** was their sin.
- 8 **God** gives perseverance and encouragement.
- 9 God gives perseverance and encouragement **through the Scriptures**.
- 10 Result: Believers will “be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord we with one voice will glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
Now that’ll resolve crises and avoid church splits!
- 11 As you wrap up your discussion, take some time to synthesize and simplify the ideas you discussed so that group members can use them as they build redemptive relationships this week.
- 12 This is a good prayer to use as a segue to your group prayer time.

Sermon Summary (Key Text: Acts 9:26-28; 11:22-26; 15:36-41)

Typically when we study a biblical character we focus on their successes. But the truth is, in all of our lives there is failure. Two weeks ago we saw this in Peter's life; last week we saw it in Demas'. Today we'll end this series by looking at failure from a different perspective. Because we all fail in many ways, we need someone in our lives who can encourage us when we do fail. Today we'll look at a first century Christian who is fairly obscure but greatly honored by the Lord. An ordinary man who lived an extraordinary life. He is so eclipsed by his contemporaries that you are liable to miss him.

One day, Peter delivered such a powerful sermon that 3,000 people placed their trust in Christ. In one day the church grew from 120 to over 3000! Many of these brand new believers were visitors to Jerusalem, and they decided to stick around for a while to learn more about their new faith. In the meantime, they needed a place to stay and food to eat. One man saw that need and sold a piece of land, giving the money to the church (Acts 4:36–37). His given name was Joseph, but the Apostles gave him a nickname—Barnabas. To us, it just sounds like another name, but it means, “Son of Encouragement.” Barnabas is not a main character in the book of Acts, but we get a few glimpses of his life. Let's look at those snapshots and see what we can learn from them.

The next time we see Barnabas is in Acts chapter 9 when Paul (aka “Saul”) becomes a believer. Saul was a murderous Pharisee; his goal is to stop Christianity. On the road to Damascus, Jesus revealed himself to be the Messiah, and Saul was converted. Immediately Saul began to share his story about how Jesus changed his life. Later, when he wanted to go to Jerusalem to meet Jesus' disciples, they refused to meet with him. They assumed it was a trap (Acts 9:26–28)—but Barnabas personally vouched for him. Barnabas believed the best about people, and stood up for them. He put his reputation on the line, and as a result, Saul became a trusted insider. What would happen in our relationships if we believed the best in others?

Soon thereafter, some Gentiles heard the gospel and they came to faith in Jesus. This was totally new, and the Apostles back in Jerusalem weren't sure if this was supposed to happen. This was a delicate situation and they handpicked Barnabas to check out this powder keg situation (Acts 11:22-24). Barnabas saw evidence of God's power in their lives and began to encourage and challenge them to grow in their faith. Where others were skeptical, Barnabas believed the best in others. But even more: where others may have seen an opportunity to make a name for themselves, Barnabas involved Saul in helping to lead this young church (Acts 11:25–26). He saw—and developed—Saul's potential.

Next, Barnabas developed a redemptive relationship with Saul on a short term mission of church planting (Acts 13:2–3). Question: Whenever you think about these two guys, Saul and Barnabas, how do you say it in your head? Do you say, “Barnabas and Paul”, or “Paul and Barnabas”? In this passage, we see that Barnabas was the leader of this missionary team (see Acts 14:11-12; Zeus was the ruler of the Roman gods; Hermes was lower in the pantheon). Paul was a great man, and we often think of him as the leader, but Paul was able to do so many great things because Barnabas brought out the best in him. Let's be the kind of person who celebrates other people's success, rather than always fault-finding, critical, suspicious or jealous.

OK, one final snapshot: Paul suggested to Barnabas that they retrace their first mission trip and see how those new believers were doing (Acts 15:36–41). Barnabas agreed, and suggested they take his young cousin, Mark, along. Paul was adamant; Mark had deserted them on their first trip, and he was unwilling to take another chance on him. Their disagreement was so sharp that Paul and Barnabas went separate ways. Who was right? I think they both were. Paul wanted someone he could trust, and I respect his position. But I also think that Barnabas was right. He saw a young guy who messed up and he invested in him. And it worked! In 2 Timothy 4:11, late in life, Paul writes: “Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.” I absolutely love that! Several years after saying, “I don't trust him. He is not going with me”, he recognizes that Mark has developed and now he is someone that he wants on his team! Barnabas was the kind of person who believed the best, and brought out the best and celebrated the best in others.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Barnabas' nickname was "Son of Encouragement." In the following verses, the underlined words are forms of the Greek word for encouragement (the word will depend on your Bible translation). For each of the passages, answer: **(1) Who is the encourager?** **(2) Who is the encouragee?** **(3) Is there a *command* for you in this passage?** **(4) How will you obey that command *that day*?**

Monday—Read John 15:1-31. Look for the word Helper or Advocate or Counselor.

Tuesday—Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-5. Look for the word comfort.

Wednesday—Read Hebrews 10:23-25. Look for the word encourage or encouraging.

Thursday—Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14. Look for the word encourage or comfort.

Friday—Read Romans 12:1-2. Look for the word urge or plead or appeal.

Saturday—Read Ephesians 4:1. Look for the word implore or urge or beg.

YOU are a Caregiver

You may be...

- worried
- exhausted
- at times, even...angry.

Your loved-ones, whether old or young, require your energy and sometimes drain your reserves.

How can you navigate this season with joy and resilience?

This seminar will nourish, encourage and equip you for the loving service you are providing.

We're here to help!



**The Biblical Counseling Ministry of
Triangle Community Church**

invites you join us for

"Help for the Caregiver"

Saturday, March 5, 2022
9am til noon

Ticket: \$10 ♦ Free Childcare

For more info: **TCC.org**

Keyword: **Caregiver**

Your children **NEED** encouragement! Colossians 3:21 instructs us...
"Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart."

Look up "encourage" at Dictionary.com. What do you learn? Now...

- List the names of your family members (children and spouse).
- Beside each name, write **ONE** thing each lacks confidence or boldness to do.
- **Pray** for wisdom in how to encourage each family member where he needs it.
- **Display** a smile each time you first lay eyes on them throughout the day.
- **Say** something encouraging to one family member each day.
- **Delay** criticism til another day!

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