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Heroic Acts of Unsung Heroes

Introduction to Barnabas

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

“Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in faith.” Acts 11:24 (NLT)

Barnabas vouches for Saul

“When he [Saul/Paul] came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles.” Acts 9:26-27 (NIV)

Barnabas redeems Paul...again

“Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul [Paul]. When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching large crowds of people.” Acts 11:25-26 (NLT)

Barnabas’ & Paul’s First Missionary Journey

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul [Paul] for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John [Mark] was with them as their helper.” Acts 13:2-5 (NIV)

Paul and Barnabas Disagree

“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.’ Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 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. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord.” Acts 15:36-40 (NIV)

Practical Ways to Encourage Others:

*“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up...”
1 Thessalonians 5:11 [\(NIV\)](#)*

1. **Listen** and **Learn** the whole truth.
2. **Offer** specific words of praise.
3. **Send** written messages.
4. **Speak up** for those who need it.
5. **Make** daily-encouragement a life goal.

Keep the Conversation Going...

READ ACTS 4:36-37

- What do you discover about Barnabas? (e.g., nickname, lineage, hometown...)

READ ACTS 9 (ESPECIALLY VS 26-30)

- What apprehensions would you have had about meeting with Saul/Paul?
- How may Paul's actions after his conversion have spurred Barnabas into speaking on Paul's behalf?
- Why did the apostles send Paul back home to Tarsus?

READ ACTS 11:19-30

- What happened in Jerusalem to cause the believers to flee the city?
- How did God use this persecution for His glory?
- After ten years, Barnabas intentionally went to find Paul, in Tarsus, to reactivate him into ministry. How does Paul respond upon being reunited with Barnabas? What do you think he might have felt after being out of ministry for ten years?

READ ACTS 13:1-13

- Describe the circumstances that caused Barnabas and Paul to go on a missionary journey together?
- What relationship do you see between "prayer and fasting" and a "move of God"?

READ ACTS 14:1-7, 19-20

- List some of the challenges that Paul and Barnabas encountered on their journey.
- How do you imagine facing such struggles together may have impacted their friendship?

READ ACTS 15:36-40

- Although close friends, these two men have a sharp disagreement. Why?
- What can we learn from this interaction between Paul and Barnabas?
- When Barnabas stood up for Mark, how did his behavior show Barnabas to be true to his nickname and character?

SO WHAT

- How can we be more like Barnabas—one who encourages others? Be specific.