

Week Two – Barnabas: The Value of Friendship

Acts 9:19b-28

Spend FIFTEEN - Day One

1. Who has been a mentor or role model for you in your life? What trait about them made them so significant to you?
2. If you had to choose, would you rather have a coach who knows all the right answers or one who believes in you? Why?
3. Look up the introduction to a lesser-known character in the Bible: Acts 4:34-36. What was the nickname of Joseph, a Levite from Cypress? What did his nickname mean?
4. Since you're not supposed to give yourself a nickname, what can you infer that other people thought of Joseph?
5. Is there anyone who is encouraging you in a meaningful way right now? Is there anyone that you are intentionally encouraging?
6. Finish your FIFTEEN by thanking God for all the encouragers that He has brought into your life. List by name the people He has used to inspire and uplift you. Pray for them, that they would receive the fruit of their labors on behalf of you and others.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two

7. How many people would you guess are involved in putting on a weekly worship service here at St. John? That's not just staff; how many volunteers do you think are required to do things like run sound, welcome guests, play music, man the coffee station, teach children, usher and help with communion?
8. Even though pastors and singers get the spotlight, many people contribute to our worship experience. In the same way, the apostle Paul gets the spotlight for writing much of the New Testament, but he couldn't have done it without the support of others. Read Acts 9:26-31. What initially hindered Paul's ministry in Jerusalem?
9. What reason did the apostles have to not trust Paul? (See Acts 7:54-8:1 and 26:9-11)
10. Read verse 27 again. How was Barnabas able to convince the apostles to give Paul a chance? How might Barnabas have known this information?
11. What kind of risks was Barnabas taking by befriending and trusting Paul?

12. Have you ever had to go out on a limb to trust someone or vouch for them? Has anyone done that for you? Why did you do it? Why might they have done it?

13. Read verse 31. What was the immediate result of Barnabas' willingness to be in relationship with Paul and to trust him for the sake of Jesus?

14. Pray to God to bring those kind of relationships to our church. Pray that members would give outsiders second chances and that trusting relationships would be built. Ask God to strengthen our church through members reaching out to those who want to know God better.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

15. Start your FIFTEEN by reading Acts 11:19-26. Some good things were happening in Antioch. Why do you think the Jerusalem church wanted to send Barnabas to Antioch?

16. What things did Barnabas accomplish at Antioch?

17. Who did Barnabas recruit to help establish this new church? Why do you think this might have been important?

18. Barnabas brought intentionality to the worship in Antioch. He had a vision, he recruited people to join the church and he taught and encouraged people regularly. In what ways do those things happen for you during your weekly worship at St. John (or elsewhere)? What individual encourages you or who do you encourage? Were you invited to worship here or have you invited anyone to worship?

19. Barnabas routinely made relationships. He encouraged people and invited people to join in things. What relationships are important to you where you worship?

20. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer, asking God to strengthen your connection with the people with whom you share in worship.

21. If your worship experience lacks focus and direction, you might consider joining a LIFEgroup at St. John. Information and signups for LIFEgroups can be found at stjstl.net/lifegroups.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

22. St. John and many other Christian churches value having small groups. What would you say is the primary purpose for a small group?

23. Read Acts 13:1-5. It lists a small group of leaders at the church in Antioch.* What spiritual disciplines did this group practice together? What did God call Barnabas and Saul (Paul) to do?
24. This marked the beginning of Paul's missionary journeys during which he wrote much of the New Testament. But based on the order of the list of names in 13:1, who seemed to be considered more important to the church at the time?
25. Go back and briefly review the impact Barnabas had on the early church: Acts 4:36, 9:26-27 and 11:24-26. What were the immediate results of his being in intentional relationship with people?
26. From the beginning of His church, God has used small groups of people to reach out to the lost, encourage each other in the faith and spread His word throughout all the earth. Spend your last few minutes of your FIFTEEN in prayer, asking God to have His hand on the LIFEgroup ministry at St. John. Ask that through these groups, God would encourage believers to share the Gospel with those who need to hear it.

*Tomorrow, we'll take a look at the person who is mentioned with Paul and Barnabas in verse 5.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

27. What's the worst disagreement you've had with a good friend? How did it come about?
28. Were you able to resolve it? If yes, did resolving the issue strengthen or weaken your relationship? If no, do you regret the rift or was it the right thing to do, regardless of the consequences?
29. Having intentional relationships with people - even people you love - is filled with difficulties. See what happened with the amazing friendship of Paul and Barnabas that we have been learning about this week. Read Acts 15:36-41. What was the source of conflict?
30. Based on the little detail that's given, whose side would you take, Barnabas' or Paul's? (You can review Acts 13:13 for the incident itself.)
31. Paul only had a ministry and an impact because Barnabas believed in him and gave him a second chance. How should that have affected his decision about John Mark?
32. Now let's look at the end of the story. Read Philemon 1:24 and 2 Timothy 4:11. What was Paul's opinion of John Mark toward the end of his life?
33. Barnabas is an amazing example of a man who encouraged others and gave them second chances. Who is there in

your life that God is calling you to encourage, maybe even offer another chance after they let you down? After all, John Mark went on to write one of the Gospels (the Gospel of...ahem...Mark) and his testimony about Jesus has helped shape your faith to this day! And that's - as Paul Harvey would say - the "rest of the story"!

34. Close your final FIFTEEN in prayer. Thank God for the second chance that he has given you through his conquering of death on the cross. Ask him to fill you with his grace for other people, and to help you show them the same love and forgiveness he has shown you.