

“The Son Of Encouragement”

Introduction. In the book of Acts there is a very prominent Christian and preacher named “Joseph.” Yet I imagine that few if any here could tell me anything about Joseph and what he did. The reason we do not know Joseph is because he is identified by another name in the scriptures, a name that really was a description of his character (Acts 4:36). Just as James and John had been called the “sons of thunder” for their fiery impatience (Mark 3:17), Joseph was called “Barnabas” or the “son of encouragement” for his great ability.

Encouragement is generally thought to be a call or summons (especially for help). There is no single word in English to represent the Greek word so it is variously interpreted as “exhortation,” “encouragement,” “consolation,” and “comfort.” “Exhortation” expresses the act, and “consolation” expresses the effect.

Just as every Christian needs encouragement, every Christian is to be a Barnabas. Paul said, “Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:11). How can we be sons of encouragement?

I. *We Can Be Encouraging By Offering A Kind And Good Example*

A. Barnabas’ example.

1. When the church at Jerusalem wanted to help the church at Antioch, they sent their best source of strength, the “son of encouragement” (Acts 11:22-24).
2. He wanted to encourage them to remain true to the Lord. His conduct was just as important as his words: “he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith.”

B. Your example.

1. By your faithful attendance (Hebrews 10:24-25).
2. By your faithful service.
 - a) 2 Corinthians 7:2-4.
 - b) Romans 1:11-12.

II. *We Can Be Encouraging By Offering A Kind And Good Word*

A. By the word of God.

1. Acts 13:15; 15:30-33.
2. 1 Thessalonians 3:2-3; 4:18.
3. 2 Timothy 4:2.

B. By uplifting words.

1. Job 16:5.
2. 2 Chronicles 30:22.
3. Acts 14:21-22; 16:40; 20:1-2.

- C. We do not give in to gossip or backbiting, but we need to be instructive and encouraging. A “good job” for someone who participates in a public or a non-public capacity is well-needed. It makes them strive for greater service in the kingdom of God.

III. ***We Can Be Encouraging By Performing A Kind And Good Deed***

A. Barnabas’ example.

1. In Acts 4:36-37, Barnabas helped with the needed distribution to the poor.
2. His benevolence would demonstrate to others that he was sincere and not a hypocrite.

B. Your example.

1. Hospitality.
 - a) Matthew 10:42.
 - b) 1 Timothy 5:10.
2. Support.
 - a) Acts 18:27-28; 28:14-15.
 - b) Acts 27:3; Romans 15:32; 1 Corinthians 16:18; 2 Corinthians 7:13; 2 Timothy 1:16; Philemon 1:7, 20.

Conclusion. Are you a “Barnabas”? Homer wrote, “Light is the task where many share the toil.” A congregation is built by the goodness and enthusiasm of its members. Jesus is our perfect example in everything. His example (John 8:29), His words (Luke 6:21), and His deeds (Acts 10:38) all show us the way. If your example, your words, and your deeds are not a source of encouragement to other Christians, then you need to examine yourself and change your heart.