

influencer

the life
story of
Barnabas





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HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This booklet is designed to coincide with the Winter 2023 sermon series at Waypoint Community Church. However, it is also designed to be a stand-alone resource that you can use on your own or adapt for any small group. If you would like to hear the sermon associated with the particular text, you can access that online at waypointclt.org.

Each section contains the following content:

::BLUF::

“Bottom Line Up Front”

This is the Big Idea of the text; it is a summary statement of what will be focused on in that section.

QUOTE - A tweetable line from a non-Biblical source.

::READ::

This is the scriptural text. It is recommended to read through it at least twice. On the first pass, try to capture the general flow of the passage. During the second pass, notice the areas that capture your attention, make you pause or confuse you.

::RETELL::

After reading the text, try to summarize the scripture as if you were explaining it to a ten-year-old. Who is involved, where is it occurring, what is happening, why does it matter?

::RELATE::

Use the prompted questions as springboards to personal reflection or group discussion. Depending on the age and stage, spiritual maturity and purpose of your group, you will need to tailor these questions so that they resonate with your group.

::REMEMBER::

This is a passage you are challenged to memorize. Join the Waypoint Group on BibleMemory APP. (See “Resources” on p. 20.)

GENERAL NOTES

What is the Book of Acts about?

The Book of Acts is the sequel to Luke's Gospel. While the Gospel of Luke captures the life of Jesus Christ, Acts focuses on the growth of the church by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Is it Saul or Paul?

Saul and Paul in Acts are the same guy. In Acts 8:1, we are introduced to a Jewish leader named "Saul." Acts 9 describes his conversion from being violently opposed to the early church to the most important missionary in church history. By Acts 13, the author Luke stops using Saul and begins to use the name Paul. Paul is considered his Roman name and as his ministry grows to reach the Gentiles (non-Jews), Luke starts to use that name more often. Therefore, when you compare to your Bible, you will notice that Saul's name has been changed to Paul throughout this booklet in order to provide clarity and consistency.

MORE THAN A FOOTNOTE

::BLUF::

Barnabas is a minor character who plays a major role in influencing the life Paul (also known as Saul).

“Leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less.”

~*John Maxwell*

::READ::

Acts 4:36

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.

::RETELL::

Paul is considered one of the most influential people in human history because he brought the message of Christianity out of the small group of Jewish believers and into the Western world. However, Paul did not accomplish this on his own. Count how many times Paul & Barnabas appear together:

“For a whole year Barnabas and Paul met with the church and taught great numbers of people.” Acts 11:26

“The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Paul.” Acts 11:29-30

“When Barnabas and Paul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.” Acts 12:25

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them.’” Acts 13:2

“The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Paul because he wanted to hear the word of God.” Acts 13:6

“As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath.” Acts 13:42

“When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.” Acts 13:43

“Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly.” Acts 13:46

“They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.” Acts 13:50

“At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.” Acts 14:1

“So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.” Acts 14:3

Are you still reading these? — keep going.

“Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.” Acts 14:23

“This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.” Acts 15:2

“The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them..” Acts 15:12

“Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.” Acts 15:22

“So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Acts 15:25-26

“But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.” Acts 15:35

- What were the primary things they did together?
- How would you describe their relationship?
- What qualities do you see in Barnabas?

::RELATE::

Put a check mark by these top Instagram Influencers' you recognize:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cristiano Ronaldo | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoe Sugg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leo Messie | <input type="checkbox"/> Chris Burkard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Selena Gomez | <input type="checkbox"/> Cole Sprouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Justin Bieber | <input type="checkbox"/> Milena Ciciotti |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taylor Swift | <input type="checkbox"/> Mark Rober |

- Why are these people considered cultural influencers?
- What does it mean to be an influencer?
- How do you know if someone is worth following?
- What in the description of Barnabas in Acts 4:36 makes him worth following?
- Who is someone that has positively influenced your life? How?
- Who is following you? Where are you leading them?

Action Step: Have you ever thanked them for their positive influence? If not, consider writing them a note of gratitude this week.

::REMEMBER::

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”
1 Corinthians 11:1

RISKING YOUR REPUTATION

::BLUF::

Barnabas is willing to risk his reputation by associating with Paul.

“God’s wonderful hand was clearly seen in that the cruel wolf was not only turned into a sheep but also assumed the character of a shepherd.”¹

~*John Calvin*

::READ::

Acts 9:26-30

When [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. He told them how Paul 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. So Paul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

::RETELL::

Retell this story in just six words.

¹ Jean Calvin, *Acts* (Wheaton, IL; Nottingham: Crossway Books, 1995), 149.

::RELATE::

The NASB translates verse 27 as “But Barnabas *grabbed hold* of him and brought him to the apostles.” Neil Cole writes, “There is nothing quite like the warm touch of a friend in a lonely situation.”²

- Can you remember a time when you did not feel like you belonged, and someone made sure to include you? How did they do that?
- Have you ever had someone doubt your capability? How did you respond? Do you rise up to prove them wrong? Do you allow their criticism to erode your confidence?
- Have you ever risked your reputation to help someone else feel like they belong?

Paul only lasted two weeks in Jerusalem before causing so much chaos that they shipped him home to Tarsus.

- How do you think Barnabas felt about standing up for Paul and then having to send him off to Tarsus?
- Have you ever seen someone you have invested in flame out?

Action Step: Paul was a ruthless killer but is now a shepherd leader. That is his WAS/NOW story which Barnabas influenced. Write one word that describes who you WAS before you met Christ and then write one word to describe you NOW.

::REMEMBER::

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”
John 15:13

² Neil Cole, *Journeys to Significance*, (John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 28.

SEEING POTENTIAL

::BLUF::

Barnabas is able to see the need for Paul's ministry in Antioch, so he goes out of his way to launch Paul.

“Barnabas seems uniquely gifted to read people and see the true light in their souls.”

~Neil Cole

::READ::

Acts 11:19-26

Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some 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. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Paul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Paul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

::RETELL::

Reread Acts 9:30 and then flip to 11:25. It is ten years between Paul being sent back to his hometown of Tarsus and being brought to Antioch. The last time Paul preached people wanted to kill him.

What does it say about Barnabas that ten years later and having witnessed the positive growth of God's grace in Antioch, he would go and pull Paul off the bench to put him in the game?

::RELATE::

- Who was a friend of yours ten years ago? Are you all still close? Why or why not?
- Have you ever waited 10 years for something like Paul? How did you feel?
- Did you ever sit the bench on a team? How did you feel when the coach finally put you in?

Neil Cole writes, “Barnabas, as described in Acts, seems uniquely gifted to read people and see the true light in their souls. He also seems to know exactly what they need, and he loves to lift their spirits and draw out what good things he sees in them.”³

Parent is a Latin word that means to “Bring Forth.”

- Who is someone that has helped bring forth and draw out good things in your life?
- If you are parent, what qualities are you trying to bring forth out of your children?
- Galatians 5:22-23 describes the “fruit” that the Holy Spirit is wanting to bring forth in your life? Which one is blooming in your life? Which one needs to be cultivated?

Action Step: The four most powerful letters you can speak into another’s life are I-C-N-U (I See In You). Write an ICNU note to someone else.

::REMEMBER::

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Galatians 5:22-23

³ Neil Cole, *Journeys to Significance*, 28.

CLIMBING DOWN THE LADDER

::BLUF::

During their first missionary journey, Barnabas empowers Paul to take more of the leadership role.

“Leaders launch others.”⁴
~Jonathan Murphy

::READ::

Acts 13:1-3

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen and Paul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and 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.

Acts 13:42-52

As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

::RETELL::

Circle Barnabas’s name and put a square around Paul’s name in the above sections. What do you notice about their ordering?

“It is interesting to watch how Paul emerges as the true leader on this first trip. The journey begins with the Holy Spirit saying, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Paul for the work I have called them to.” The team that leaves is referred to as Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13:7), but as the journey progresses the terminology is transposed to “Paul and Barnabas” (Acts 13:42, 43, 46). As already mentioned, at one point the team is referred to as “Paul and his companions” (Acts 13:13), and Barnabas is left out altogether.”⁵

⁴ Jonathan Murphy, *Authentic Influencer*, (Thomas Nelson, 2023), 104.

⁵ Neil Cole, *Journeys to Significance*, 21.

::RELATE::

- Would you rather be the starting player on a losing team, or sitting the bench on a winning team?

During their first missionary journey, Barnabas and Paul spent one year traveling 1500 miles to start churches. It was catalyzed by the call of the Holy Spirit. Imagine the moment Paul hears the Holy Spirit say, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them?” How would you have felt?

- When was a time you were given a big responsibility or a crucial assignment? What did you do to prepare? How did you do?
- Barnabas begins to take a secondary position to Paul. That transition occurs while in his hometown of Cyprus. Have you ever taken a supportive role? Have you ever set someone else up for success? How did that make you feel?

Apprentice style leadership follows this intentional flow:

I Do, You Watch
I Do, You Help
You Do, I Help
You Do, I Watch

- What is something you are doing right now that you should be handing off to someone else so that they could grow?

Action Step: Delegate. Identify one thing you need to *Stop Doing* in order to *Start Helping* someone else do it.

(Alternate Action Step): Step Up. Identify one thing you could do around the house in order to help someone else.

::REMEMBER::

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

FROM STARDOM TO STONING

::BLUF::

Barnabas and Paul experience both false praise and unfair accusation.

“Do not let the good times go to your head,
or the hard times go to your heart.”

::READ::

Acts 14:8-20

In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, “Stand up on your feet!” At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker.

The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: “Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.” Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

::RETELL::

Close the booklet. Tell the above story - then reread the story. What details did you forget? What part stuck out to you the most?

::RELATE::

- Would you rather get praise for something you did not do, or avoid getting blame for something you did wrong?
- The crowds thought that Barnabas was Zeus. How would you have felt if a crowd of people called you the most powerful deity in their culture who could throw down lightning bolts and make the world shiver? How did Barnabas respond?
- How do you respond when you receive a compliment?
- When have you felt that people's cheers and support for you have turned into boos and complaints against you?
- What is the difference between arrogance and confidence?
- Have you ever felt attacked for your beliefs? When have your beliefs made you feel different than the people around you?
- Where do you find confidence when people have turned against you?

Action Step: Pretend you won an award; Write your acceptance speech. What award did you win? Who would you thank?

::REMEMBER::

“We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God.”

Acts 14:15

NAVIGATING CONFLICT

::BLUF::

God is able to use conflict in our lives as ways to develop and grow His Kingdom.

“God uses conflict for his purposes in a leader's ministry, as well as in his personal life. It is bad enough to go through conflict; it is worse to go through conflict and not profit from it.”⁶

~Robert Clinton

::READ::

Acts 15:36-41

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the brothers 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 brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

::RETELL::

Eugene Peterson's *Message Translation*

After a few days of this, Paul said to Barnabas, “Let's go back and visit all our friends in each of the towns where we preached the Word of God. Let's see how they're doing.”

Barnabas wanted to take John along, the John nicknamed Mark. But Paul wouldn't have him; he wasn't about to take along a quitter who, as soon as the going got tough, had jumped ship on them in Pamphylia. Tempers flared, and they ended up going their separate ways: Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus; Paul chose Silas and, offered up by their friends to the grace of the Master, went to Syria and Cilicia to put grit in those congregations.

- How does Peterson's translation impact the way you view this story?
- Whose side are you on - Paul or Barnabas?

⁶ J Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader : Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2012).

::RELATE::

“Barnabas was as adamant about following God’s lead regarding his assessment of people’s hearts as Paul was about defending his Gospel. Neither would have backed down, and so a split was inevitable.”⁷

- Are you more task oriented or people oriented?
- In a fight, would you rather be right or maintain the relationship?
- How do you “fight fair?” How can you maintain your character in conflict?
- When are the times when you should prioritize the person over the mission? When are times when the mission should take priority over the relationship?
- When has conflict been good for you? Why?

Action Step: Identify which of the 5 conflict styles is your default.

Avoidance — Withdrawal from the situation.

Accommodation — Yield our convictions and allow other to win.

Compromise — Appeal to easiest agreements to find common ground.

Collaboration — Strive for a workable solutions for both parties.

Competition — Convicted to hold your ground because you are right.

All styles are useful in certain situations. When a bear is threatening to attack you is not a time to collaborate but rather to avoid the conflict.

::REMEMBER::

“A friend loves at all times; a brother is born for adversity.”

Proverbs 17:17

⁷ Neil Cole, *Journeys to Significance*, 67.

LEAVING A LEGACY

::BLUF::

Having left a legacy Barnabas fades into the background of God's story.

The legacy of Barnabas is the Apostle Paul.

::READ::

2 Timothy 4:9-11

Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get [John] Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

::RETELL::

The passage above is written by Paul to Timothy, his mentee. In it we can read Paul's transformation into a Barnabas encourager. He too has experienced the pain of broken relationships (Demas) while also the joy of reconciling relationships (John Mark). Whatever caused the conflict in Acts 15, Paul and John Mark have repaired their relationship.

There is, however, no mention of Barnabas. He disappears into obscurity. The last we hear of Barnabas in Scripture is when he sails away with his cousin to their home of Cyprus after a major fight with Paul. While Church tradition tries to fill in the gaps, Scripture becomes silent. Interestingly, Scripture rarely captures the end stage of people's lives, because the fate of individuals is secondary to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Rather than bringing closure to Barnabas's biography, Luke leaves his life story unfinished. By doing so, he invites us to consider what we would do — did Barnabas reunite with Paul? Did Barnabas carry forth the Gospel to Cyprus and elsewhere? Did Paul mature as a leader and realize the gift Barnabas had been in his life? Did Barnabas influence the life of John Mark — who likely became the Gospel writer Mark? Who else did Barnabas influence?

How would you write the final chapter of Barnabas's life?

::RELATE::

A **Disciple** is one who follows; an **Apostle** is one who is sent with a message
How are you following Jesus?
How are you spending time with Him?
Where can you carry the message of the Gospel?
Who could you share the message with?

Legacy building turned inwardly is ego inflation that is never satisfied.
Legacy building turned outwardly is sacrificial living for the benefit others.
Godly legacy is always about positively influencing other people.

- What does success look like for you? Describe a successful person?
- How is that different from a person of significance?
- Have you made a transition from striving for success towards a hunger for significance? If so, when did that occur for you?

Tony Campolo interviewed fifty 95 year-olds and asked what they would do differently if they could live life over again. They reported three things, they would do:

- 1) Risk More
- 2) Reflect More
- 3) Invest in things that outlast themselves⁸

Action Step: Begin writing your obituary by completing this sentence: “He/She was known in the community for being a person who _____

::REMEMBER::

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”
John 3:30

⁸ Tony Campolo, “If I Had to Live it Over Again,” January 1, 2000, accessible at <http://www.tonycampolo.org/mp3/If_I_Had_to_Live_it_Over_Again.mp3>

QUALITIES OF A BARNABAS STYLE LEADER

What are the qualities you have seen in Barnabas?

In order to be a Barnabas-style Influencer, my next step is:

RESOURCES



Sermon Podcasts
Listen to the sermons
in the Barnabas series



Bible Memory App
Memorize 1 verse from
each sermon

Take it Further

Authentic Influencer: The Barnabas Way of Shaping Lives for Jesus
by Jonathan Murphy.
Focuses on fifteen leadership principles based upon the life of
Barnabas.

Journeys to Significance by Neil Cole
Follows the leadership development of Paul through his four
missionary journeys.

Bible Project - Acts Overview

An illustrated video series that provides an overview of Acts in 16 minutes.



Acts, Part 1 (8 min.)



Acts, Part 2 (8 min.)

DOODLES



WAYPOINT'S GUARDRAILS

There are five old Latin phrases that provide guardrails for our beliefs as part of the reformed tradition. As we get our bearings for this journey called life, these set the course for us by starting with God, focusing on Jesus, living according to Scripture, standing on faith, and receiving God's grace.

- 1. God's in charge, not me**
- 2. Jesus is The One who points and prepares the Way**
- 3. The Bible shapes who we are to become**
- 4. Real relationships are formed through faith not rules**
- 5. God's love is a gracious gift that transforms our daily lives**

WAYPOINT'S MISSION

Equipping people for life with Christ through community

WAYPOINT'S CORE VALUES

Biblical Foundation
Genuine Community
Authentic Worship
Daily Impact

*For more information on these ideas, please visit
waypointclt.org/our-beliefs.*

