
BE A BARNABAS

(An Encourager)

ACTS 4:31-37

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The Church of God needs more of a Barnabas and less of a Diotrephes. Diotrephes is mentioned in one passage of the Bible, in the short letter of 3 John. In brief, Diotrephes was a self-seeking troublemaker in an unnamed local church in the first century. We know nothing of his background, other than he was probably a Gentile (his name means “nurtured by Jupiter”).

John wrote in *III John 1: 9-10*.

9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. 10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.

In only two verses, we have the following statements made about Diotrephes:

- 1) he loves to be first
- 2) he refuses to welcome the apostles into the church.
- 3) he maliciously spreads gossip about men of God.
- 4) he withholds hospitality from other believers.
- 5) he requires others to follow his poor example; and
- 6) he excommunicates anyone who crosses him.

From John’s description, we can assume that Diotrephes was a leader, or at least an influential member, in the local church where Gaius was a member. Diotrephes was clearly abusing his position of authority and such attributes is not to be heard of children of God and people like him have made some to abandon their faith or even move their membership to other congregation.

The Bible tells us of an interesting man. His name was 'Joseph' from the island of Cyprus, A Jew of the tribe of Levite. No one remembers his true name; everyone calls him by his nickname. "**Bar**" which means "**Son of**" and "**Nubas**" which means **encouragement** or as we know him "Barnabas meaning "**son of encouragement**". That is one who aids others. Whose words or behavior gives others the confidence to do something.

The account of Barnabas is recorded in the book of **Acts 4:31-37, 9:26-30, 11:19-24, 25-26, 15:35-41.**

Barnabas was a man deserving of his nickname and one with attributes worthy of emulating.

He Gave of Himself. We first read of him selling his property (Land) to aid the Christians in Jerusalem- **Acts 4:36-37.**

36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

He was an Advocate. It was Barnabas that introduced Paul to Christians in Jerusalem when no one would believe of his conversion- Acts 9: 26-27.

And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

He possesses the qualities of a servant. When Word came that the people of Antioch were believing in Christ, it was Barnabas who was sent to encourage their growth. **Acts 11:19-26;**

19 Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. 20 But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. 22 Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. 23 When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. 25 Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. 26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was

that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Relief to Judea

Also, when God requested two men to be sent out to preach the gospel, it was Paul and Barnabas who were picked to go. **Acts 13:2**;

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “*Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.*”

When Paul did not want to take John Mark on the second trip because he quit on them during their first trip, Barnabas insisted on taking him along to the point of going separately- **Acts 15:36-40**.

What will people say about you?

Are the people you encounter daily so uplifted that you could be called the son or daughter of encouragement?

We all do not have the same talents. Some are better at encouraging people than others. Take note, it is a gift from God! We may not be excellent at each of these gifts in **Romans 12:3-8, I Corinthians 12:1-31**, but we should be able to show capabilities in each.

Encouragement is one of the duties of evangelists. **Titus 2:11-15**

Christians should encourage and edify each other. **1Thes 5:9-11**

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. Various Exhortations

Paul encourages us to encourage the timid and help the weak **1Thes 5:14**.

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, and be patient with all.

So many things can bring about discouragement and Christians are not exempted from them. Nehemiah had problems with rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. **Nehemiah 4:10**

10 Then Judah said, “The strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall.”

It does not help seeing other people who don't care having an easy time. **Psalms 73:2-3**.

It discouraging when things we hope for does not come as soon as we would like. **Proverbs 13:12**; *Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.*

Believers need to counter discouragement. It is not a one time act, but a daily task. **Hebrews 3:12-13**;

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Also, we need to think about how may encourage each other. **Hebrews 10:23-25**

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Conclusion

Dear beloved, being a Barnabas requires.

- 1. Sacrificing oneself- looking out for others best interest***
- 2. Servant qualities- meekness, humility, forbearance and submissive.***
- 3. Advocating for others and developing others- that is, develop and encourage fellow workers, teachers, and preachers etc.***
- 4. Live peaceably with all men in humility***

See I Peter 3:8-9.