

COVID-19 PARENTS AND STUDENTS BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

STUDENTS

BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE

Session 2

DEALING WITH MESSY RELATIONSHIPS

Encourage // Acts 9:26-28; 11:21-26

FIRST BAPTIST
KENNER
A LIFE
WORTH
LIVING

ONE SHEET

THE POINT: Encouragement strengthens relationships.

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Daily encouragement can provide a spiritual and emotional boost that helps us in many ways. We've been created to live in relationship with others, and we long for acceptance and affirmation. We need a healthy supply of encouragement from others in order to grow as God intends. Unfortunately, too many of us face a deficiency in this area. Without deeply and regularly experiencing the love and support of others, our lives can grow weak. And so can our relationships. Barnabas was a natural encourager. His life challenges us to be a source of encouragement to others.

► **Who has been the most encouraging person in your life?**

ACTS 9:26-28

Barnabas first shows up in Scripture as Joseph of Cyprus (Acts 4:36). The apostles had given him the nickname "Barnabas," which means "Son of Encouragement." He had developed a reputation of building others up, and when people in the early church thought of an encourager, they thought of Barnabas. In Acts 9, God used Barnabas to bring Paul to a place of influence. The apostles kept their distance from Paul. Based on his past record, he was not the kind of person a Christian would want to be around. Barnabas, however, realized that Paul was a changed man. He encouraged the apostles and believers to reconsider. The disciples opened the door and their hearts to Paul, and he soon became a force in spreading the gospel. Through the ministry of this one man, the gospel of Christ made it to Rome and western civilization. Barnabas likely knew nothing of Paul's soon-to-be ministry. Barnabas was simply doing what he had always done—helping a fellow believer take the next step in his spiritual growth.

► **When have you felt like the new kid on the block?**

► **What risks do you take when you put yourself on the line for an outsider?**

ACTS 11:21-24

The second lesson Barnabas taught is that we should encourage growth. Barnabas not only encouraged believers to accept another believer—he also encouraged them to grow spiritually. Barnabas did more than pay lip service to the joy of knowing Jesus—he embodied it. His message and his conduct were in sync. Barnabas would himself face many challenging circumstances. Many times, as he preached the gospel, Barnabas would face hostile Jews or Gentiles who were violently opposed to his message. After all, it flew in the face of their false beliefs, and he was leading people to faith in Jesus. It was likely challenging for him to continually encourage others when Barnabas himself needed encouragement. But he did!

► **How do we intentionally grow into the role of an encourager?**

► **When have you been blessed through the encouragement of others?**

ACTS 11:25-26

Kind words motivate growth, and we should all use our words to help those around us mature in their faith. We don't know what Barnabas said to Saul, but as the church in Antioch began to grow, Barnabas went to Tarsus to connect with Paul and bring him back to Antioch. God had gifted Paul in specific and special ways; Barnabas recognized this, and he invited Paul to Antioch to serve the church there. At one time, Barnabas had served as a mentor to Saul, pouring into him with encouragement and watching him grow up in the faith. Now Paul had matured to the point of being Barnabas's peer in ministry, and the two became a strong force for discipling new believers. Revival was evident as Saul and Barnabas used life-giving words to impact young Christians. Paul served in obedience to the call of God on his life. However, we can't miss the fact that God used Barnabas's encouragement to influence Paul's life and ministry.

► **What are some things that might get in the way of people using their spiritual gifts in the church?**

► **How can we actively encourage others to use their spiritual gifts?**
