

# unsung HEROES

Part # 1:

## Barnabas: Inspired to Encourage

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Gerald Thurman & Wes Porter

An unsung hero defined is, "a person who makes a substantive yet **unrecognized** or unacknowledged contribution to a cause."

The Bible is filled with many heroic figures whose stories of extraordinary courage **inspire** us.

However there are many people in the Bible who are often **overlooked**, but have played an **extraordinary** role in the life of the church.

God provides us with unsung heroes to inspire us to allow Him the **opportunity** to do seemingly impossible things **through** our lives.

### Central Point...

#### Heroic Encouragement

The growth of Christianity in the first century is generally attributed to the efforts of the Apostle Paul. However there was another individual that was crucial to the effort...

**Acts 4:32-37** *The group of believers were united in their hearts and spirit. All those in the group acted as though their private property belonged to everyone in the group. In fact, they shared everything.<sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles were telling people that the Lord Jesus was truly raised from the dead. And God blessed all the believers very much.<sup>34</sup> There were no needy people among them. From time to time those who owned fields or houses sold them, brought the money,<sup>35</sup> and gave it to the apostles. Then the money was given to anyone who needed it.<sup>36</sup> One of the believers was named Joseph, a Levite born in Cyprus. The apostles called him Barnabas (which means "one who encourages").*

As much as God's mighty acts expressed through the actions of the heroes of early Christianity was a source of inspiration, the commitment to **encouraging** others was just as inspiring.

### Focal Point...

#### Needs and Opportunities

God realizes our need for encouragement:

**Hebrews 10:24-25** *We should keep on encouraging each other to be thoughtful and to do helpful things.<sup>25</sup> Some people have gotten out of the habit of meeting for worship, but we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other, especially since you know that the day of the Lord's coming is getting closer.*

Encouragement is a crucial need because:

1. People are **hurting** more deeply than we know.
2. Realizing our need for God usually is a **result** of being encouraged.

**John 14:1-4** *"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.<sup>2</sup> There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?<sup>3</sup> When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.<sup>4</sup> And you know the way to where I am going."*

We are able to best encourage others by:

- **speaking** to the fear at the core of every person's life.
- 2 Corinthians 12:9-10** *9 But he said to me, "My grace is enough for you. When you are weak, my power is made perfect in you." So I am very happy to brag about my weaknesses. Then Christ's power can live in me. 10 For this reason I am happy when I have weaknesses, insults, hard times, sufferings, and all kinds of troubles for Christ. Because when I am weak, then I am truly strong.*
- **influencing** others to become more like Christ.

**Romans 14:19** *"So let's agree to use all our energy in getting along with each other. Help others with encouraging words;"*

**Philippians 2:5** *<sup>5</sup> In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.*

Why?

Because at their core, people are afraid and the Bible says that the **remedy** for fear is God's perfect love...

**1 John 4:18** *"There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life – fear of death, fear of judgment – is one not yet fully formed in love."*

Therefore, if we want to be encouragers, our goal must be to allow the love of God in **us** to speak to the fear in others...

Genuine encouragement occurs when our words are...

... **inspired** by love.

... **directed** toward fear.

## Four Steps to Genuinely Encouraging Words...

### 1. **Renew** your commitment.

We should be committed to speaking from our love to the fear in others for their **benefit**.

**1 Corinthians 10:24** “We want to live well, but our foremost efforts should be to help others live well.”

### 2. **Remember** the goal.

The goal of encouragement is to **move** others toward grace in salvation and growth in the Spirit.

**Acts 11:22-24** When the church at Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. <sup>23</sup> When he arrived and saw this evidence of God’s blessing, he was filled with joy, and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord. <sup>24</sup> Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in faith. And many people were brought to the Lord.

### 3. **Recognize** uniqueness in others.

People have unique personalities and unique past experiences. As a result, they have unique **perspectives**.

**1 Thessalonians 5:14** “Our counsel is that you warn the freeloaders to get a move on. Gently encourage the stragglers, and reach out for the exhausted, pulling them to their feet. Be patient with each person, attentive to individual needs.”

### 4. **Reach** out with words of life.

Consistently choose words that build others up and **reject** words that tear them down.

**Proverbs 10:11** “The mouth of a good person is a deep, life-giving well, but the mouth of the wicked is a dark cave of abuse.”

**James 3:7-12** <sup>7</sup> People can tame all kinds of animals and birds and reptiles and fish, <sup>8</sup> but no one can tame the tongue. It is an uncontrollable evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> Sometimes it Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! <sup>11</sup> Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? <sup>12</sup> Can you pick olives from a fig tree or figs from a grapevine? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty pool. praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it breaks out into curses against those who have been made in the

image of God. <sup>10</sup> And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth.

## Turning Point . . .

God-honoring encouragement can lead us into...

...a **new** or **growing** relationship with Jesus Christ.

...healing of our **hidden** hurts.

...genuinely **investing** ourselves into the lives of others.

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** “So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you’ll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind. I know you’re already doing this; just keep on doing it.”

### Our challenge:

**Seekers – You can only genuinely encourage others when you respond to the One who ultimately encourages you. You have to have Christ in your heart and allow Him to relive His life through you.**

To invite Christ into your heart, simply pray . . .

“Heavenly Father I **admit** that I have left you out of my life, but this morning, I **believe** that Christ is your Son and that He died for my sin of rejecting you and that you raised Him from the dead. I **confess** Him to be my Lord and Savior. In Jesus' Name, Amen

**Believers – simply ask God,**

Heavenly Father – I want to be an encourager like you loving others more than self, and investing in others what you have invested in me.